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Report of the Presiding Bishop

We Are Church

This is also the theme of the 2015 synod assembly video. When asked what church means, people we interviewed often spoke about community or the good works their congregation performed. Some said that the best thing about their congregations wasn't programs, but people. It was rare that anyone mentioned God or spoke about an encounter with the transcendent. At the most recent first call assignments, some of our bishops noticed that candidates could write clearly and persuasively about justice, but very few of them mentioned Jesus. I don't believe our people lack faith or don't know Jesus, but I wonder if we have lost the language to speak about the love of God that is given to us in the crucified and risen Christ. Maybe we just assume Jesus. I am not quite sure I know what our silence about God is about.

The synod assembly video is intended not so much to impart information or to showcase the work we do together, but more of an invitation for us to understand church as abiding in Christ, to be intentional about spiritual disciplines, and to see church as God's beloved people gathered around word and sacraments. We are also working at the Lutheran Center to have more of a sense that we are a church body and not a secular corporation. To the Rev. Kevin Strickland's title, Director for Worship, we will add, and Pastoral Care. Pastor Strickland will be available to provide pastoral care for the churchwide staff and for the Conference of Bishops.

The Worship Jubilee, July 19-24, 2015 is also offered to congregations and worship leaders as a resource for renewing worship. Worship is at the heart of what we do. We have a wealth of musical traditions in the ELCA. We have the gift of liturgical worship. The Jubilee will connect people with these resources and with each other with the goal that those experiencing worship in our congregations might leave saying, "Surely, God was in this place".

We Are Lutheran

Being Lutheran in the ELCA is slowly (some might say too slowly) moving from an identification with the Midwest and Nordic/central European ancestry, to the reality that we are multi-ethnic and sing "A Mighty Fortress" in dozens of languages. While it is true that we are still overwhelmingly white, there is growing diversity in this church. If culture and cuisine no longer constitute Lutheran identity, then our theology must. It is more important now than it has been in decades to be very clear about the Lutheran way of telling God's story of redemption: we are existentially bound by sin, death and the power of the devil; Christ has set us free from this bondage; and we are now free to serve the neighbor (Galatians 5:1, 13-14).

Like youth, catechism is also wasted on the young. Of course we should continue to prepare our young people to affirm their baptisms, but now is the time for all of us to study Luther's Catechisms again together as the church. Your churchwide staff will begin reading and discussing the Small Catechism later this year with these three questions in mind 1.) What is the Lutheran version of the Christian narrative?; 2.) What words or concepts or parts of the Lutheran narrative need unpacking or restating to be most effective in the 21st century?; 3.) How does the work of my unit/team/position serve this narrative? Further, I will call this church to study the catechisms beginning at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly through Reformation Day 2017.

The observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is another component in strengthening our Lutheran identity. We have a staff team in place and a broad-based advisory committee. A key part of our effort is to act as an information clearinghouse for all 500th anniversary activities throughout the entire church. I encourage you to visit our website: www.elca500.org. We are also on Facebook at: "ELCA Reformation 500."

The theme for the 500th anniversary observance is "Freed and Renewed in Christ," with the tagline, "500 Years of God's Grace in Action." This will also be the theme for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, which will be designed to be a springboard for the 500th anniversary observance. To provide greater exposure to the witness and ministry of the ELCA during the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, there will be a concurrent gathering for non-voting members called "Grace Gathering" in New Orleans. We are planning for about 1,000 Grace Gathering attendees. The goals of this gathering are 1.) Equip attendees and their congregations to plan and conduct their own meaningful observances of the 500th anniversary; 2.) Increase the number of ELCA members who will take part in service-learning activities in New Orleans as part of the churchwide assembly; 3.) Give a large number of non-voting members exposure to a churchwide assembly and thereby enhance the perception of the ELCA with these potential ambassadors.

We Are Church Together

February's ecumenical pilgrimage to London, Geneva and Rome made it clear to me that the ELCA is part of the Church that spans the globe and the centuries. It's not just about us. It's not just about now. When we consider issues like the ecclesiology of a global church or the entrance rite for the Word and Service roster or ministry to and with same-gender families, or discuss *The Use of the Means of Grace* it is never, nor can it ever be, a conversation we have just among ourselves.

We know we can do more together than we can do separately. At this meeting, we will hear reports about the Mission Support Think Tank, Theological Education Advisory Council, the Campaign for the ELCA, the Women and Justice Social Statement Task Force, Word and Service Task Force, Ecclesiology of a Global Church, and the Declaration on the Way, as well as reports from the officers. It is an amazing amount of work that we do together in Jesus' name.

The 2015 Youth Gathering (July 15-19) is also an excellent opportunity to be church together. Nearly 30,000 youth and their advisors will meet in Detroit for worship, service learning, prayer, bible study and music—really loud music. Our synod bishops will also be present interacting with their youth. This is a signature event in the life of the ELCA. Research has shown that if young people have a significant religious experience in their teens, they are more likely to stay connected to church when they are adults.

Two new staff members will be helping us to be church together. Dr. Kathryn Johnson will come on board as Director for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations starting September 1, 2015. The Rev. Don McCoid, your current director, will serve until that time. It would be hard to overstate the debt of gratitude we owe Don for the work he has done on our behalf to work for the unity of the church. Well done good and faithful servant.

Also joining us as Natural Systems Coordinator is Associate in Ministry Mary Ann Schwabe. Mary Ann will serve as a resource to bishops and synods as they promote the well-being of rostered leaders and congregations, provide seminars and presenters on systems theory, and will provide a regular presence in the churchwide office to serve as a resource and support for our work together.

We Are Church for the Sake of the World

John 3:16 is perhaps one of the most quoted passages in the New Testament. It hangs on bed sheets in football stadiums, it is almost ubiquitous. It is also true. If God so loves the world, we should too. Lutherans show up – as ELCA and as The Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Together, with our companions in Central America, we are working with unaccompanied minors and the conditions in their countries of origin that force these children to flee. Through the LWF, we work with refugees and internally displaced people in Syria, Cameroon, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Kenya, Jordan, Ukraine, Iraq and many other places. We have made significant progress in controlling malaria and treating Ebola. We are developing a social statement on the social issue of women and justice and a social message on gender-based violence. We will begin the process of developing a vision statement on inter-religious relations. All of this good and hard, and sometimes dangerous, work is work we are able to do because we are church abiding in Christ, God's beloved people gathered around word and sacrament.

This call has been an adventure – sometimes good, sometimes overwhelming. There are still many things I am learning about this call, but one thing I know for certain – I don't do this work by myself. You, members of the Church Council, the churchwide staff, our rostered leaders and our people are all in this together. This is often exciting work, daunting work, frustrating work, but it is always holy work. Thank you for serving our Lord and this church with me.

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Report of the Vice President

I am so thankful for the season of Lent. It always seems to come at a perfect time, too! Life gets so hectic in the fall and early winter. By the time February rolls around, I am feeling exhausted. The shorter days and colder weather just seem to make me want to slow down. A person can only take so many days of 40 degree weather in a row! And, oh, those lows at night in the 30's. I know you'll agree: it has been a rough winter on Galveston Island.

The two weekends before Ash Wednesday in Galveston are quite eventful. Over 500,000 people come to our small island on the final weekend of what is reported to be the third largest Mardi Gras celebration in the country. Parties, balls, parades, costumes, floats, and beads – all part of the frenzy that ends abruptly on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Noise, lights, crowds of people, then a quiet church service with the reminder that we are but dust. A stark contrast. Wouldn't it be marvelous to think that all those people partying in the streets could be found the next day in the pews, participating in the Ash Wednesday services?

A person once told me that February and March are such a bad time of year for Mardi Gras. Why don't they hold it in the summer when the weather is better? Obviously, that person missed the whole point of Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday, Shrove Tuesday, as the eve of Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent.

Life is busy. We have to be engaged in life and all its demands. We have obligations, people to answer to, and families to support. Besides that, the old adage comes to mind – All work and no play makes Jill (or Jack!) a dull girl (boy!). Earthly pleasures – hobbies, interests, travel, etc. – sneak their way into the picture, too. It would be so easy to let that life consume us, and it often does. I know I can easily be caught in the web of life.

In the passage Romans 12: 2: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing, and perfect will," Paul is warning us of this trap: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Renewing the mind can be accomplished by quiet time, meditation, prayer, a walk, a run, or whatever gives you a chance to empty your thoughts of the cacophony of life. Refocusing on faith and the love of God has a cleansing effect. If we let that other world be our main focus, it will pull the life out of us.

Lent reminds us once a year to step away from the things that threaten to consume us. Just like Advent, it is a time to prepare. Lenten preparation comes from repentance and discipline. We are in training. Perhaps this year, the training will be more for endurance, concentrating on the long haul. It would be wonderful if the training and discipline in Lent carried beyond Easter, that the Lenten modifications in our lives can carry over to the rest of the year.

I am thankful for the wisdom of Paul and the reminder to focus on our life with God. With God as our center, we can strive to lead the church in His ways.

Other than work and family, I haven't been too busy since our last time together. The weekend following our council meeting, I returned to Chicago for the final meeting of the National Leadership Team meeting for the ELCA Malaria Campaign. It was a time to celebrate and to reflect on the amazing things that have been accomplished through the campaign. It was also a time to look at the impact of the programs we supported and to dream about the future. At the time of the meeting, we had hit the \$13 million mark. As I write this report, the total is over \$13.5 million. Of course, the real celebration will occur at the close of this year when we achieve the \$15 million goal. But this campaign is more than just raising money. This campaign is about changing communities and saving lives. What a blessing it is to be a part of such a generous church that can make such a difference in people's lives.

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In January, I traveled to Seguin, Texas, for the annual meeting of the Texas Lutheran University Corporate Board. Texas Lutheran University (TLU) is one of the 26 ELCA affiliated colleges and universities. Great things are happening at TLU which include completing a campaign to build a new residence hall and athletic complex that has transformed the campus. In addition, TLU is consistently ranked high in *US News and World Report and Princeton Review*. The ELCA is indeed fortunate to be in partnership with its colleges and universities where matters of faith and learning are important. These schools of higher learning are preparing students for lives of purpose and service in the world.

As one who has been a part of the council for about 18 years (6 on Church Council and 12 as Vice President), I have seen changes that have occurred over the years. One of the noticeable differences, and maybe you too have noticed, is that different councils take on different group personalities. Differences in leadership can be a good thing, and our council always seems to be just the right temperament that is needed at the time - a mark of the Holy Spirit working through us. In addition, this council is more full of energy and spark than usual. We, as a whole, want to use our time on council to make a difference, and are ready and willing to take action.

As I prepare for the Church Council meeting, I'm also preparing for synod assemblies. This year, I look forward to continuing the building of relationships with assemblies in the Metropolitan Washington DC and Northeastern Pennsylvania Synods. These visits give us a chance to strengthen the foundation of the church as a whole. I love getting a chance to see how the people of the ELCA use the gifts God have given them to make their part of the kingdom a better place.

I'm also looking forward to April and the warmer weather it brings. Perhaps I can get back to going jogging on the seawall. The warm breeze blowing over the gulf, the smell of the salty air, the boulevard coming alive again with islanders and tourist - this is my milieu for renewing my mind. I run and feel the pressures floating away and I connect with God through the beauty around me. It is my prayer that everyone find the right environment for this transformation, this renewal of the mind centered on God, not just during Lent, but all through the year.

Report of the Secretary

I began my report to the Conference of Bishops noting that the “extra year” between Churchwide Assemblies is now over, and we are rapidly moving into preparation for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. I am observing that the pace of the activity in the Office of the Secretary and in other offices and units is beginning to shift in preparation for this important event. That does not mean that the regular work of the units and offices is not being attended to; rather it is an observation that the work load for staff is starting to increase and intensify. All of this is a good sign as we pay attention to the many details involved in preparing for this assembly of this church.

Synods have been notified of their member allocation for the assembly. These members will be elected at Synod Assemblies this year. It is our intent to be “paperless” in New Orleans. We expect to be in regular email communications with the members of the assembly as they and we prepare to do this work. We will make the Guidebook App available to members as soon as it is ready and we have information to share. This will be a primary means of communication in advance of and at the assembly. Having had a positive experience in Pittsburgh, we are looking forward to making better use of this tool.

We are beginning to hear of possible memorials coming to the assembly. There will be much more activity on this front in the months ahead. As you hear of topics or “model memorials,” please let me know about them. In this way we can be proactive in preparing the background work important to the Memorials Committee who will be receiving these items. We can also work with the makers and the reference and counsel committees or resolutions committees to address potential problematic memorials. People do not always understand the polity of the church, and their memorials could be better written in order to accomplish their desired outcome. I have also asked the bishops to pay attention to financial implications of memorials for the synods and the churchwide organization. This should not be the determining factor for a memorials consideration, but attention should be paid to it.

As you attend various synod assemblies this spring, I would encourage you to be a resource to the assembly for the churchwide organization. You have a good picture of how this church is organized and actually works. This will help assembly members make better decisions when they have a clearer picture of how the church functions.

Word and Service Roster Recommendation

We anticipate action at the 2016 assembly on the proposals from the Word and Service Task Force. The recent meeting of the Conference of Bishops helped identify issues related to the proposal. It is important that the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and the Program and Services Committee coordinate our recommendations to this council and, ultimately, to the Churchwide Assembly. I believe that the Office of the Secretary has listened to the concerns that have been raised so far. The draft of the rewritten chapter 7 of the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions has tried to provide for appropriate flexibility while responding to the recommendations of the task force. The current edition of this work is in the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee section of NetCommunity. I invite your review as we prepare to decide what to finally propose at our November meeting.

The recommendations from the Word and Service Task Force are on the Program and Services Committee section of NetCommunity. The Conference of Bishops response to the early proposals from the task force and the Entrance Rite Discernment Working Group are also available there. As we prepare for our discussions of this, I would strongly encourage you to read these resources and ask the questions

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that may come to you. This is in anticipation of a recommendation coming from the council to the Churchwide Assembly that needs to be acted upon at our November 2015 meeting.

Officer Elections

At the November 2014 meeting of the Church Council I did a quick survey on the process of election for churchwide officers. I have used the same survey with the Conference of Bishops. The results of the bishops' survey are not available as I write this report. The council was very clear that the current method of electing the Presiding Bishop is the preferred method. 57% of the council indicated a preference for some form of pre-identification of persons for Vice President. 50% of the council indicated a preference for pre-identification for Secretary. A sub-group of the Executive Committee will review this and the survey of the Conference of Bishops. I would expect some further conversation on this as we prepare for the Vice President's election at the 2016 assembly.

If the decision is a form of pre-identification, there would not need to be a constitution or bylaw provision proposed. This could be accomplished through a continuing resolution. I want to emphasize that we have not written something for consideration yet.

Disaffiliations

I believe this could be the last time that this report will focus on the number of congregations that have disaffiliated. While there are anecdotal reports from synods of congregations taking first votes, it is true that the number of congregations voting to disaffiliate has decreased. In 2014, 14 congregations voted to disaffiliate. So far this year 1 has voted to disaffiliate. As you look at the 2015 Yearbook there were 52 congregations that withdrew, disbanded, consolidated or were removed in 2014. 16 congregations were received during that time period. To give a fuller picture, the Yearbook reports 131 congregations under development and 123 Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities. While the numbers of decline and disaffiliations have been sobering, it is important to also point to the number of new possibilities that this church is exploring. I look forward to the day that I can report an increase in the number of congregations in this church.

Risk Management

The Office of the Secretary and the Office of the Treasurer have been working with the Administrative Team in establishing an ongoing ERM (Enterprise Risk Management) process for the churchwide organization. Each unit will now have a "responsible risk owner" who will take the lead in mitigating risk exposures and help us map our potential risks. In a structure as complex as the churchwide organization, it is important to pay attention to potential risks and to mitigate them as much as possible.

It is also important to regularly review and emphasize the appropriate control measures that synod and congregations are using to guard against embezzlement. Paying attention to details before there is a problem builds trust in those working in the synods and by those entrusting their partnership support to the synod or congregation. It would be important to not only review the synodical procedures but to also encourage congregations to develop appropriate procedures.

Goals

As I have shared with the Church Council Executive Committee, Bishop Eaton, and the Office of the Secretary Management Team, I want to let you know of the professional goals that I have set for this year and probably beyond in some cases.

1. Continue to set the tone of service to the whole church from the Office of the Secretary
2. Continue planning for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly
3. To prepare for and work with the Legal and Constitutional Review committee on the amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions for presentation to the 2016 Assembly.
4. Work with the Mission Advancement Unit to expand the use of ECIS with synods and to standardize the terminology of the constitution with that used in the system
5. Work with the Office of the Treasurer in order to implement an Enterprise Risk Management process.
6. Work with IT and archives staff to develop protocols and processes for creating digital storage of roster files and other files in the Office of the Secretary. The hope would be to eventually expand this system to synod offices, but that will come later.
7. Begin planning for transitioning the yearbook from a printed book to some form of digital media, possibly as soon as 2018.
8. Continue to work on major revision of the Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Roster.

Acknowledgements

It is my pattern to remind you that the Office of the Secretary is more than just the secretary. I am delighted to have a strong staff. You know the good work that Phil Harris continues to do as General Counsel. We are pleased to welcome Tom Cunniff to the legal team. You will meet him at this meeting. I want to encourage you to introduce yourself to him. Tom is a good addition to our staff.

You see Sue Rothmeyer and Frank Imhoff recording the minutes of these meetings. We welcome Frank back after a well-deserved three month sabbatical. Sue is responsible for this team which also includes the management of the rosters, maintaining of documents and the archives of this church. Keeping the records accurate and available are priorities of this office.

You experience the hospitality and the hard work of the events planning team under the leadership of MaryBeth Nowak. They stand ready to assist in countless ways when you come to Chicago or any churchwide meeting or event. As we look to the Churchwide Assembly and the Grace Gathering, this team will be the ones making everything appear smooth and efficient. Much of our work in meetings of this church is supported by their good work.

I continue to enjoy the work that this call brings. As we begin to focus on the logistics and the work of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly I expect to see the learning curve increase its slope. We will do our work so that the members of that assembly can do theirs with confidence and with trust that they are doing the work of Christ's church. Thank you for your leadership in so many ways.

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Report of the Treasurer

**ELCA CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
2014 OPERATING RESULTS SUMMARY
FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDING JANUARY 31, 2015**

The churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America had total operating revenue and support of \$71.5 million for the twelve-month period ended January 31, 2015, \$1.1 million greater than expenses of \$70.3 million. Net revenue over expenses is favorable to the period budget by \$1.1 million, but \$1.8 million less than the twelve months ending January 31, 2014.

Revenue totaled \$67.4 million for the twelve-month period compared with \$70.8 million the previous year, a decrease of \$3.3 million or 4.7 percent. In addition, \$4.0 million in support was released from restriction or designation during the period. Total revenue and support for the twelve-month period of \$71.5 million was favorable to the budget by \$0.9 million or 1.3 percent, and constituted a decrease of \$0.9 million or 1.2 percent from the previous year. Expenses related to the current operating fund of \$70.3 million were below the authorized unit spending plans by \$0.2 million, and constituted an increase of \$0.9 million from the previous year.

Income from congregations through synods in the form of Mission Support income for the twelve months was \$48.4 million, favorable to the revised budget by \$0.4 million although representing a decrease of \$0.3 million or less than 1.0 percent compared to last year. The revised annual Mission Support budget for 2014 of \$48.0 million is \$0.8 million or 1.5 percent lower than the amount received in 2013.

Other unrestricted and temporarily restricted revenue and support available for the budgeted operations of the church amounted to \$23.0 million compared with \$23.6 million in the previous year. Income from Vision for Mission of \$1.5 million and Global Church Sponsorship (including missionary sponsorship) of \$3.2 million both exceeded prior year results. Endowment distributions of \$2.6 million resulted in favorable variances to both the current year budget and prior year. Income from bequests and trusts of \$2.8 million and investment income of \$2.8 million were favorable to the budget but lagged prior year results. The Mission Investment Fund provided grant support of \$1.8 million to the churchwide organization. Additionally, other income of \$4.4 million was received during the fiscal year.

Total contributions to ELCA World Hunger for the twelve months were \$19.3 million, favorable to the budget by \$0.3 million and prior year by \$0.6 million. The ELCA Malaria Campaign received gifts of \$2.8 million in the twelve months ending January 31, 2015, and has raised \$13.8 million campaign-to-date. ELCA members and partners contributed \$6.1 million for Lutheran Disaster Response in the twelve-month period, primarily in support of general undesignated programs and ongoing recovery efforts from Hurricane Sandy.

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA has raised \$44.8 million in revenue and commitments to date in its five-year, comprehensive campaign. This amount represents 24.5 percent of the total goal of \$198 million by January 31, 2019. In addition to results reported above, strong response to date has been in the areas of New Congregations, Fund for Leaders, Global Church-International Leaders: Women and Missionaries/Young Adults in Global Mission.

Report of the Conference of Bishops (CoB)

When the Conference of Bishops meets, we have, in one room, people who have been in almost every congregation in the ELCA. We come together from our local contexts to share what is going on in those local settings, and to do together the work of the wider church. We met March 5-10, 2015, and welcomed two members of the ELCA Church Council to our meeting. Marj Ellis and Louise Hemstead joined us for the weekend portion of our meeting. In addition, Vice President Carlos Peña is always present for at least part of the meeting, as is Treasurer Linda Norman. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Secretary Chris Boerger and CoB Chair Bishop Jessica Crist are members of both the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops.

Conference of Bishops meetings involve listening to many of the same reports on many of the same topics that the Church Council hears. But while the Church Council is frequently tasked with making decisions about these matters, the Conference of Bishops' role is generally advisory only. For example, while the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops both have extensive conversation on the draft of the Gender-Based Violence Social Message, it is the Church Council who will or will not adopt the message. As in so many issues, the Synodical Bishops also have the task of interpreting Churchwide actions to our people on the ground. We work cooperatively, but we have different roles, and different accountabilities.

From time to time, Bishops weigh in on matters that the Church Council has to decide. At our recent meeting, Bishops weighed in on the proposed changes in Word and Service rosters. Appreciative of the work that has been done by the Word and Service Task Force and the Entrance Rite Discernment Working Group, the CoB engaged in deep conversation about the decisions before the Church Council, and the implications in different parts of the church that we serve. In conversation with Bishops serving on both groups and with staff, the CoB overwhelmingly affirmed the formation of a unified roster for word and service. Less overwhelming, but still a clear majority, was the recommendation that the Church Council postpone decisions on the entrance rite and other related matters. (A significant minority of Bishops favored delaying both the unification of the rosters and the decision on entrance rite and other related matters.) Liaison Bishops at the Church Council will be prepared to give the Church Council further insight into our deliberations and recommendations.

The Conference of Bishops also voted to commend to the Church Council the final report of the Ecclesiology of the Global Church Task Force, and we voted to encourage continued work on the ecumenical document, "Declaration On the Way."

The Conference of Bishops, in conjunction with the Office of the Secretary, is responsible for decisions about the Roster. So at this meeting, as at all our meetings, the Roster Committee studied requests from Bishops for exceptions to the standard roster expectations, such as extensions of On Leave From Call status. The Conference as a whole makes the actual decision.

At this meeting, the Conference of Bishops did some internal business. We elected bishops to be Church Council Liaisons, starting with the fall 2015 meeting. Bishop Steven Talmage will continue to represent the bishops of Region 2; Bishop Suzanne Dillahunt will be representing the bishops of Region 6; Bishop Mary Froiland will be representing the bishops of Region 5; and Bishop Richard Graham will be representing the bishops of Region 8. We said farewells to retiring bishops Leonard Bolick and Ralph Dunkin. We adopted a quadrennial reorganization plan for the CoB Executive Committee that provides

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more flexibility and continuity of leadership. We discussed how and when we make statements as a Conference of Bishops, reviewing the variety of historical precedents that we have.

We also spent time discussing the proposals of the Think Tank on Mission Support, the Theological Education Advisory Council, the Ministry to and with Same Gender Families Working Group, and more. These conversations were all lively and engaged. We deeply appreciate the extra work that our colleagues on the staff, Church Council, and at large put into these important topics.

Most Bishops are involved in advocacy, both locally and nationally, based on the ELCA's social statements and messages. To enhance these efforts, and to channel the effectiveness of the Bishops, we are arranged into "Ready Benches" in six areas: Domestic, Middle East, Care of Creation, International, Immigration, and Justice is not Just Us. Ready benches meet during CoB meetings, and connect with Advocacy staffers. At this meeting the benches also contemplated a brief written description of the role of "Ready Benches" in advocacy.

Finally, the Bishops of the ELCA are an engaged and resourceful group of leaders who are eager to share their best practices and their concerns. So at this meeting we scheduled two sessions for "self-selected groups for topics of CoB interest." Groups included: Call Process; Multiple Funding Streams; Lay Schools; Think Tank; Use of the Means of Grace; Ecclesiology of the Global Church; Immigration; and Stewardship. All were welcome—Bishops, guests, and staff. Feedback was very positive. We will likely make this an ongoing practice.

We look forward to our ongoing work with you, and we hope to see some of you at the Youth Gathering in Detroit!

Bishop Jessica Crist, Chair
ELCA Conference of Bishops

Report of the Executive for Administration

Strategic Planning

At this meeting, you will receive the 2014 Annual Report of the Churchwide Organization's 2014-16 Operational Plan. The operational goals and objectives are structured under Presiding Bishop Eaton's four emphases. The report highlights significant achievements and set-backs for each objective in the plan. It also provides information on the cross-cutting commitments, risk assessment and key learnings. As you will see, this has been a busy year of faithful ministry for the organization and its partners. It has also pushed us to our capacity in the areas of staffing and technology. Please see Appendix A for an executive summary and report on the 2014 Annual Operational Plan.

You will also receive the 2015 Annual Plan at this meeting. (see Appendix B.) The Planning and Evaluation Committee will review the plan with staff and provide information about its review during the committee report time at this meeting. The goals and objectives remain basically the same as in 2014 (the plan is 2014-16), with necessary adjustments to program activities. Below you can see each goal identified with Presiding Bishop Eaton's four emphases.

Churchwide Organization 2014-16 Operational Plan Goals:

We are Church

- 1. Congregations are growing, vibrant in their worship life and diverse, and worshippers increase their engagement in and support for God's mission, locally and globally.**

We are Church Together

- 2. Members of this church are better connected with who we are as church, and relationships across this church's wider ecology are deepened and strengthened for evangelical witness and service in the world.**

We are Church for the Sake of the World

- 3. Impoverished and vulnerable people, locally and globally, achieve sufficient, sustainable lives and are accompanied in addressing the challenges of poverty, injustice and emergencies in their communities.**

We are Lutheran

- 4. Lay and rostered leaders are grounded in Lutheran theology and competent to serve the church we are becoming, and the leadership profile reflects this church's aspiration for cultural, generational and socio-economic diversity.**

We are Church Together

- 5. Leaders across this church are working together on strategies to address future sustainability of the ELCA, and the churchwide organization has a growing and sustainable base for mission.**

We are Church. We are Lutheran. We are Church Together. We are Church for the Sake of the World.

- 6. The churchwide organization is effective in fulfilling its roles and functions on behalf of the ELCA and further develops an organization culture characterized by strong leadership, accountability, competent and motivated staff, effective systems and learning.**

At the November 2014 Church Council meeting, the Planning and Evaluation Committee requested a brief history of strategic planning in the churchwide organization since the 2005 Plan for Mission. I have attached a summary to this report for information. (see Appendix C.)

Council Response to Questions at the November 2014 Meeting

As you know, strategic planning is an on-going process. Our work of reviewing and adjusting the Operational Plan is perennial. As part of that process, at your November 2014 meeting we asked you to give us your input related to Goal One using the following questions:

1. What outcomes should we strive for with our congregations?
2. What should we be measuring about congregations?
3. How do you understand your role as Church Council in relationship to our goal of becoming a more multicultural church?
4. How have or would you go about engaging becoming a more multicultural church in your congregation?

Your responses are recorded in Appendix D. You will notice that your responses to what we should be measuring about congregations are focused on measuring worship attendance as well as the number of people (including children) actively participating in the life of the congregation. These measurements are currently part of the Congregational Annual Report ([Form A](#)).

In addition, there was a suggestion we measure participation in “God’s Work. Our Hands.” Sunday which we have done on recent Congregational Annual Reports ([Form C](#)). On Form C, we have also asked about the congregation’s participation in the synod’s companion synod relationships, number of members participating in lay ministry programs, and whether or not the congregation has, or is in the process of, living out a mission plan.

In the past we have focused more on the involvement of children, teenagers and young adults in the life of the congregations, but we have not asked for counts recently.

On the other hand, you placed less emphasis on financial figures, which are currently a significant part of the congregation’s annual report. We will continue to ask these questions.

In addition to these more traditional measures, we are intent (working with the Office of the Secretary) on incorporating a set of new questions for the Congregational Annual Report. (These questions will replace an alternative set of questions on the form which will be retired.) The proposed questions are well tested in our work with the Vital Congregations Project, which is being sponsored by Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in five pilot synods.

The questions attempt to measure some of the “intangibles” noted by many of you which are central to congregational vitality. (See a sample set below.)

Please tell us how well each of these phrases describes your congregation. (The five point scale is from “hardly at all” to “very well.”)

1. Worship nurtures peoples’ faith
2. There is a clear sense of mission here
3. There is excitement about the future here
4. The congregation is a positive force in the community
5. This congregation is always ready to try something new

Please tell us how well your congregation does the following. (The five point scale is from “poorly” to “great.”)

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1. Building strong, healthy relationships among members
2. Incorporating newcomers into the congregation's life
3. Seeking out and using the gifts of members of all ages
4. Equipping members to share their faith with others
5. Addressing social concerns (helping those in need)
6. Managing disagreements in a healthy respectful manner
7. Interacting with the local community

Budget

We are grateful for a good year of income to budget. While we remain challenged by the decrease in mission support to prior years, we are thankful for the resources that we have to support the ministries of this church. We will be submitting a slightly revised 2015 Spending Authorization to the Budget and Finance Committee at this meeting. The primary adjustments are a \$327,000 decrease in current fund and a \$600,000 increase in the World Hunger budget. Please see the [Report of the Treasurer](#) for detailed information.

General Administration

We are in the final stages of a lease agreement for the seventh floor of the Lutheran Center. This will provide additional income for the organization and complete the use of space in our building.

We are pleased to be the recipient of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certificate. Congratulations to our building staff who have worked hard to make our building green.

Our Mission Advancement unit has integrated The *Lutheran* Magazine and communication staff groups. Please see Appendix E, Report on Mission Advancement – Strategic Communications, for details.

As of the beginning of this fiscal year, February 2015, staffing for the churchwide organization was as follows:

Total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions was 377. One hundred and twenty-five (125) positions are deployed. Sixty-seven (67) percent or 252 positions are located at the Lutheran Center. Eleven (11) positions are Youth Gathering positions. Eighty-five (85) positions are funded by restricted or designated funds and not mission support. Included in the 377 total are 100 term contract FTEs. In addition, there are 227 missionaries, of which 62 are Young Adults in Global Mission.

Augusta Victoria Hospital

In 2012, I was appointed by the Lutheran World Federation to serve on the Board of Directors of the Augusta Victoria Hospital, Jerusalem, Israel.

Mission Statement:

“The Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) is a health care institution of the Lutheran World Federation primarily serving the Palestinian population on behalf of the international family of Lutheran churches. The mission of the Lutheran World Federation is to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ by providing, in part, diaconal action, the alleviation of human suffering, and the promotion of peace, human rights and civil society with a global perspective. The AVH furthers this mission of peace, human rights, and participation in the creation of a civil society through its role of providing health care within the context of Palestine (East Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza), Israel and neighboring Arab countries without regard to race, creed, sex or national origin.”

What follows is a brief update on the financial situation of the hospital.

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Since February 2014, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), and the AVH Board, together with the LWF member churches and related agencies, have intensified their advocacy work to address the cash flow crisis of the AVH resulting from a delay of payments from the Palestinian Authority (PA) for patient treatments.

As a result of vigorous advocacy efforts in 2014, the European Union and USAID made designated payments to the PA intended to reduce the amount of money owed by the PA to AVH and other East Jerusalem hospitals.

These payments enabled the AVH to ensure that all AVH staff salaries were paid in full, that all loans were eliminated, that the vast majority of the AVH debts to medical and pharmaceutical suppliers were paid, and, most importantly, that the AVH was not forced to interrupt its life-saving oncology and nephrology treatments.

The PA continues to refer patients to the AVH for cancer and other treatment not available in Gaza or the West Bank. As of December 31, 2014, the PA owes the AVH 64.67 million NIS (or approximately \$16.6 million) for the period from May 15, 2014 to December 31, 2014.

The LWF is carefully monitoring developments affecting the ability of the PA to cover the costs of its referrals to all East Jerusalem hospitals, including the AVH, and is encouraging advocacy by friends and partners. LWF advocacy toward the US Congress is in coordination with the ELCA through its Washington, DC, office, and its Peace Not Walls campaign, and includes efforts of the Presiding Bishop, Conference of Bishops, its board member assigned to the AVH Board of Governance, and individual ELCA congregations and members.

Report to the ELCA Church Council
April 2015

**ELCA Churchwide
Organization
Operational Plan
Report for 2014**



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As we at the Churchwide Organization (CWO) strive to achieve the goals in this Operational Plan day-to-day and month-to-month -- and also to periodically assess and report on our progress -- we are finding in this plan a useful strategic framework and context. As we report to Church Council on the plan, we are able to see, both in detail and in broad strokes, an arc of progress that includes both challenges and accomplishments. Despite setbacks (which are inevitable), our strongest indicators for optimism and hope are the dedicated and talented staff and partners who seek to innovate wherever possible, steward resources carefully and creatively and set in motion initiatives that will make a difference.

Some of the challenges are familiar, well-documented and even longstanding. The declines in mission support and worship attendance continue to be of concern (though there is hope that the rate of decline in mission support is slowing). Some challenges are more internal and more current in nature, but no less important:

- Our membership is not as ethnically and racially diverse as we would hope.
- Finding talented, accomplished people who understand the ELCA and are committed to our mission to fill key staff positions takes considerable care and time. These lengthy searches, while necessary to ensure that those hired will succeed here, nevertheless have an impact on how well and quickly we can make progress in our work. This has impact across the organization, but recently most notably in Mission Advancement, Office of the Treasurer and Global Personnel positions (missionaries).
- Related (but not limited) to staffing, are the broader inter-related issues of capacity, resources to do the projects to which we have committed, staffing levels and workload. The Churchwide Organization is still searching for the optimal combination here, one that places a premium on agreed-upon priorities, recognition of limitations, staff well-being and success, and putting a scale and scope on work that helps assure we can make meaningful progress in an ordered, effective fashion. To give just one example of this, a critical area (and there are others) that often is at the nexus of these competing factors, and that illustrates the importance of making wise but often difficult choices, is Information Technology. So much of what we do depends on this infrastructure, and we ask a great deal of it.
- We are exploring how to better coordinate a regular dialogue among the leadership of Church Council, the Conference of Bishops and the Churchwide Organization to help set the future direction of this church.

We also take great encouragement in several important developments, accomplishments and initiatives in 2014:

- Entering its third year in 2015, “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday is a unifying activity that connects many members to a sense that they are part of the ELCA and that indeed, we are church together. 2014 saw a dramatic increase in participation over the inaugural year of 2013, and we receive steady and voluminous feedback from all sorts of members that they find this dedicated day of service to be one of the most effective and uplifting things we do together. It also is a highly visible public witness about this denomination.

- Our comprehensive response to the developing situation of Unaccompanied and Migrant Children (which was not anticipated in the 2014 annual plan) is an inter-unit/office initiative funded by Lutheran Disaster Response funds, that is focusing its efforts both domestically and internationally. This work involves advocacy, education, direct assistance and support for the work of partner agencies and ELCA congregations in supporting the migrant children and their families.
- We are tending well and intentionally to key relationships with partner organizations and companion churches in work we do together domestically and globally. We have accompanied others in the challenges of poverty, injustice and a growing number of disasters around the world by expanding the ELCA's International Relief and Development program. We have made a significant impact on global policy decisions, and deepened the ELCA's commitment to be a church committed to the eradication of hunger and poverty through direct advocacy and constituency engagement. Units/offices engaged in this work include Congregational and Synodical Mission, Global Mission, Mission Advancement and Office of the Presiding Bishop.
- We are addressing major churchwide leadership issues through our financial support of seminaries and seminary students, through an improved candidacy process, through a restructured network of ELCA colleges and universities, through a critical examination of how we deliver theological education and through the work toward unifying the three lay rosters.
- The new Leadership Development Program for CWO staff is an important step toward developing our "bench strength" among staff who may be positioned for future leadership roles. Some units also are providing new leadership development activities for their staff members.
- Human Resources staff is working with ethnic communities to enhance the CWO's recruitment strategy and identify qualified candidates of color.
- *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* completed its first year on Jan. 31, 2015, with a strong performance. So far the campaign has raised nearly \$45 million, representing 23 percent of the five-year, \$198 million Jan. 31, 2019, goal. In addition, the campaign has received another \$3.4 million in current gift commitments and \$10.8 million in planned gifts for the priorities of the campaign. The campaign and other fundraising activities in Mission Advancement (Good Gifts, Vision for Mission, etc.) are a significant counterbalance to the trend in declining mission support. An initiative with great promise is peer-to-peer or "team" fundraising, which is now being piloted.
- The ELCA's observance of the 500th anniversary of The Reformation has launched and will be a key part of proclaiming the distinctive Lutheran witness to the Gospel. The focus of the observance is as much forward as historical and emphasizes that The Reformation is a continuing movement. The observance theme is "Freed and Renewed in Christ: 500 Years of God's Grace in Action." Key upcoming related activities will be the Worship Jubilee event in Atlanta summer of 2015 and a "Grace Gathering" concurrent to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.
- The first version of an enterprise-wide framework for project planning and management is being used by several offices and programs to make project implementation more effective.
- Registration for the Youth Gathering is 28,100.

Finally, many Churchwide Organization staff members, including the senior leaders group, have affirmed the value of this Operational Plan in driving decisions in their teams about setting work priorities and in maintaining a focus on achieving progress toward targeted results. The plan is an essential tool in our shared work and in becoming more efficient and effective.

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes selected and significant achievements and setbacks of the six strategic goals of the 2014-16 Operational Plan. The report is framed by the Presiding Bishop's four emphases. In addition, there are separate report sections on cross-cutting commitments, risk factors, key learnings and organizational effectiveness associated with the Operational Plan.

WE ARE CHURCH

The ELCA is a church that belongs to Christ. Worship is at the center of our life together, and the crucified and risen Lord is at the center of our worship. When we gather for worship, we connect with believers everywhere.

The strategic goal of the ELCA Churchwide Organization Plan for 2014-2016 that embodies this emphasis is:

Strategic Goal 1: Congregations are growing, vibrant in worship life and diverse, and worshippers increase their support and engagement in God's mission, locally and globally.

Significant Achievements

Objective 1: Existing congregations and worship communities engage in renewal to deepen their spiritual life and faith practices, welcome and retain worshippers and refocus for effective mission in their communities.

- A total of 154 congregations were approved to receive Partnership Support Grants for renewal in 2015 at the July 2014 Review Table.
- In fall 2014, the Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM) unit conducted a review and audit of the documentation required for the development of new and renewing ministries receiving churchwide funding. Audit/review results were communicated to synod bishops and Directors of Evangelical Mission (DEM).

Objective 2: New congregations and worship communities established in areas where the ELCA does not currently have an active presence and in ways that enrich those faith communities and the diversity of this church.

- A total of 53 New Ministry Starts were approved. This brings the total to 331 congregations under development in the ELCA. Currently, 68 percent of the new ministry starts are among ethnic-specific or multi-racial communities, with 40 percent of the new ministry starts being among communities experiencing poverty or economic hardship.

Objective 3: Synods and congregations have capacity in mission planning and are effective in developing ministry strategies that are relevant to their communities, address poverty and build the diversity of this church.

- Published “Building Healthy Communities Together: A Framework for Area Ministry Strategies (AMS) in the ELCA.” Held four webinars introducing AMS framework which were attended by 46 DEMs and Synod staff members.
- Conducted three trainings in Cross Cultural Dialogue in three communities in Minnesota during January 2015. One, two-part training at Luther Seminary in October 2014.

Objective 4: Congregations and synods grow in their understanding and commitment to gender justice and racial justice.

- Conducted two Process Builders trainings for the Social Statement on Women and Justice process, involving 55 synods.
- Gender justice keynotes/workshops held at synod gatherings and other events.
- Presiding Bishop issued a video message on racial justice in December 2014.

Objective 5: ELCA synods and global companion churches grow in capacity for witness and service through mutual accompaniment.

- We increased the capacity of ELCA congregations and leaders for vibrant witness and service in culturally diverse contexts through a deepened understanding of the connection between witness and service and ELCA’s model of accompaniment. New settings where this capacity-building took place included ELCA Synod Assemblies, Glocal youth events, ELCA mission network regional gatherings, ELCA seminaries, and among global companions.

Objective 6: Youth and young adults from diverse backgrounds participate in domestic and global service and this experience deepens their faith and church engagement.

- Placed 62 Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) in 2014. The YAGM program has already achieved 70 percent of the 2016 volunteer goal.
- Asian Lutheran Conference attended by 114 participants; 36 were young adults.
- Young adults participated in both United Nations & International AIDS Conference.
- Established new process for Fund for Leaders candidate selection to encourage and support more diversity among scholarship recipients, specifically persons of color and for whom English is a second language.

Objective 7: Communication channels and ELCA events support growing engagement of members in ELCA's local and global ministries.

- Produced three YAGM videos for recruitment and sponsorship/fundraising.
- Promotional efforts and new resources for "God's work. Our hands." Day of Service completed. More than 2,000 downloads for the Day of Service toolkit; awaiting information from Form C about participation baseline. Executed co-branded campaign with LIRS, including mailing to all congregations, to promote participation in World Refugee Day. Plans are already in place for 2015 National Youth Gathering and 2016 Churchwide Assembly.
- Rolled out new social media policies and launched new social media platforms for specific networks and interests. Consistent growth in Facebook fans and Twitter followers -- reached 60,000 "fans" on Facebook in January 2015. Since the beginning of 2014 we've realized a 17 percent growth in Facebook and a 12 percent growth in Twitter followers.
- Launched pilot of collaborate.elca.org as an online work group collaboration platform.

There are overall indicators, termed Headline Results Indicators (HRI), in the Operational Plan. These HRI's provide a picture of how well a goal is being achieved. Since we are currently at the beginning of this plan's three-year cycle, most of the current reporting is baseline information that will be tracked over the next two years to help determine impact. For example, Figures 1 and 2 show worship attendance in the ELCA from 1988 through 2013. After 2000, worship attendance declined at a faster rate, typically down 2 to 3 percent through 2009. Immediately after the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, worship attendance declined by 8 percent as congregations left the ELCA. Since 2011, the annual rate has returned to a 3 percent decrease.

Fig. 1

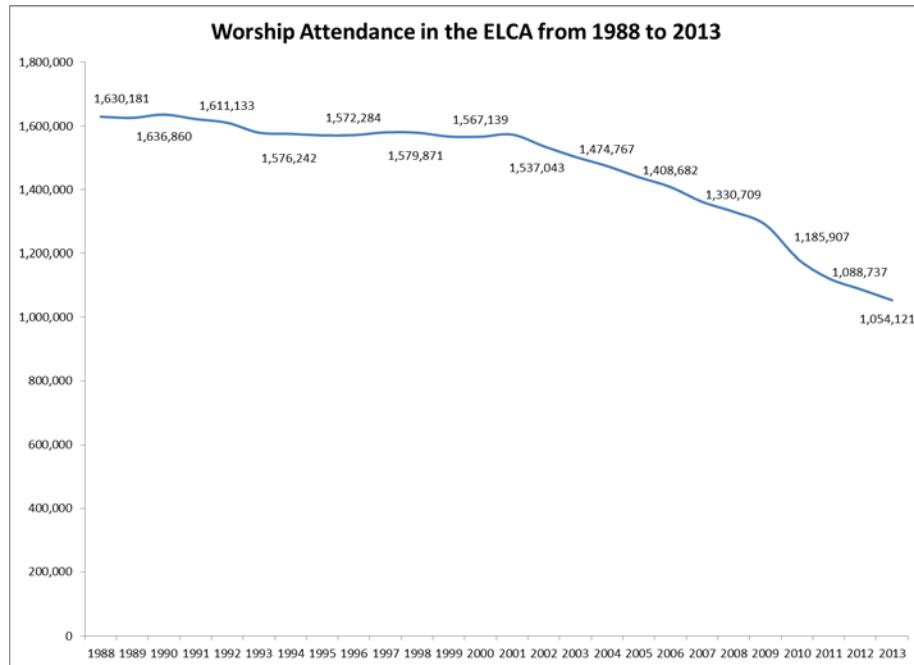
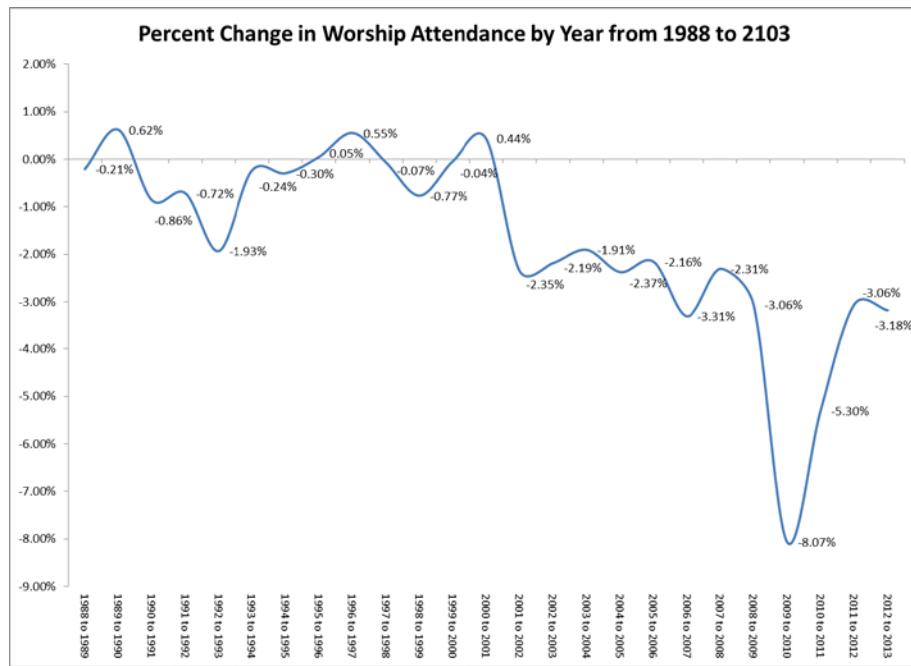


Fig. 2



As shown in Figure 3, since 2004 the total number of congregations in the ELCA has declined by about 1,000 congregations. About two-thirds of this loss is the result of congregations leaving the ELCA due to the actions of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. As shown in Figure 4, over the same period, the ELCA has organized just over 50 congregations. Since 2010, the number of new ministries under development has increased as has the number of new ministries that are organized as new congregations.

Fig. 3

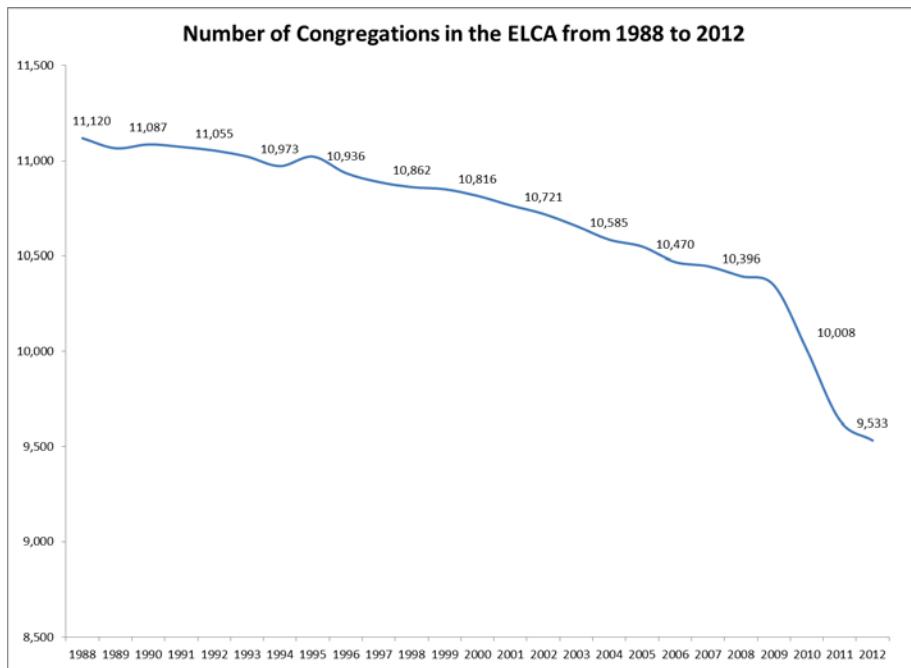
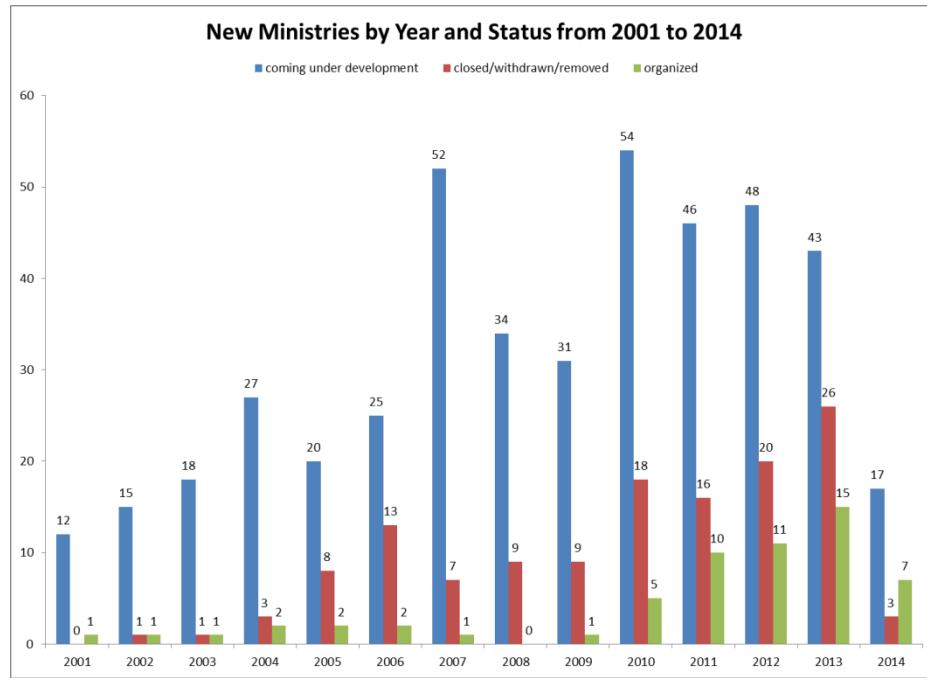
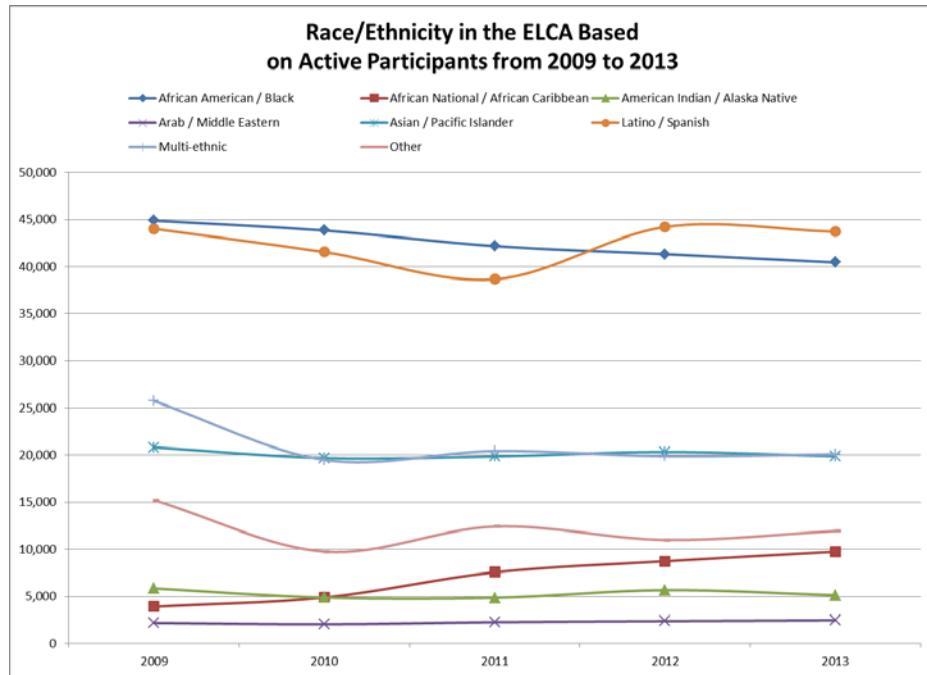


Fig. 4



In 2009, at the urging of many ethnic-specific congregations, the basis for measuring the racial/ethnic diversity of the ELCA was changed from baptized membership to active participants. As shown in Figure 5, the number of people of color or language other than English participating in ELCA congregations has remained flat with this exception: there has been a decrease in the number of African American/Black participants and an increase in the number of African National/African Caribbean participants.

Fig. 5



Setbacks

- While the current registration for the Youth Gathering is strong (over 28,100) it is lower than the expected registration goal of 35,000.
- A lower than expected number of applications for Global Personnel positions were received, including for the International Horizon program.
- Young Adults in Global Mission Senegal program implementation was delayed due to the Ebola crisis in West Africa. YAGM program in Australia was also placed on hold at the request of the companion church. It is anticipated that both programs will begin in 2016.

WE ARE LUTHERAN

We are a church that proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ and believes that through this gospel we are justified by God's grace through faith. Our roots are in Christ, scripture, the Lutheran Confessions and in our theology that continues to be shaped over time.

The strategic goal of the ELCA Churchwide Organization for 2014-2016 that embodies this emphasis is:

Strategic Goal 4: Lay and rostered leaders are grounded in Lutheran theology and competent to serve the church we are becoming, and the leadership profile reflects this church's aspiration for cultural, generational and socio-economic diversity.

Significant Achievements

Objective 1: Lay and rostered leaders have a deep understanding of theology in the Lutheran tradition and are equipped for ongoing discernment in this church's local and global contexts.

- Held a gathering of seminary Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) directors and faculty. All of the present TEEM directors from PLTS, Atlanta, Austin, Gettysburg, LSPS in Austin and Philadelphia Seminary were represented at the consultation. As a result, the first joint seminary Spanish Language TEEM track has been created. These classes will be a combination of on-line courses and on campus intensives.

Objective 2: Lay and rostered leaders have the range of competencies needed for leadership in a changing church.

- Completed a series of regional consultations in each of the nine regions, and areas of competencies for mission leaders have been identified and will be an important piece in the new ELCA candidacy process. This information has been widely shared with candidacy committees, Conference of Bishops and will be presented to the Church Council at the April 2015 meeting.
- The Word and Service task force continued its work on the unification of the three lay rosters. Alongside the work of the Word and Service roster, a smaller work group has been appointed by the Church Council tasked to identify the entrance rite that will be used for coming into the new unified roster. A report will be presented to the Church Council at its April 2015 meeting.

Objective 3: The ELCA roster system provides for a more flexible and responsive process for calling leaders and encourages new leadership.

- Launched a new roster mobility system in June 2014 that is functioning well.
- Developed a "New Candidacy Manual" to strengthen the ELCA's candidacy process. This manual retains the important steps in our candidacy process and refocuses areas to meet the present leadership needs of the ELCA.

Objective 4: Youth and young adults gain experiences that utilize and develop their leadership abilities and gifts.

Youth Gathering:

- Registered 289 Gathering Volunteer Corps participants.
- Registered 268 Young Adult Servant Companions.
- Registered 335 Community Life volunteers.
- Registered 550 participants for the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event.
- Registered 40 participants for the Definitely Abled Youth Leadership Event.

Objective 5: Leaders in companion churches have opportunities to develop their leadership capacities, with specific strategies directed to young adults and women.

- The ELCA's accompaniment of companion churches has contributed to an increase in their capacity for witness and service. What this means is that new visions for theological formation are being developed in Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia/Pacific, new Lutheran bodies are coming into existence in East Africa and in Asia, and men, women and children around the world are growing deeper roots in a Lutheran identity. Moreover, specific strategies directed toward young adults and women leaders were implemented. For example, seven women from the Global South were invited to participate in the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Objective 6: The profile of lay and rostered leaders reflects this church's aspiration for equity and diversity with respect to gender balance, men and women of color and languages other than English and young adults and youth.

- Facilitated a theological gathering of African National Leaders at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.
- Partnered with The Episcopal Church for discernment event for Young Adults of Color, June 2014, in Berkley, Calif. (17 ELCA young adult participants; 50 total).
- Hosted "Elisha's Call 2014," ELCA Young Adults of African Descent leadership/discrimnent event at the Lutheran Center, October 2014 (18 participants from 7 cities).
- Held Leadership Training for Dinka Community Christ Lutheran, Wyoming, Mich., Sept. 13, 2014.

To date, there are no specific measures to share related to the Headline Results Indicators for this goal. However, some indicators that have been identified for data collection include:

- Evidence of change in content of education curricula, progress toward leadership competency framework.
- Number of emerging young leaders and examples of their impact.
- Measure of diversity in ELCA's local and global leadership (race, language, ethnicity, gender, age).

Setbacks

- Working with multiple groups across the church on the important issues related to leadership has required more time and flexibility than originally planned. This has slowed or delayed some actions. However, the partnerships are critical for this work. Also, some shifts in staffing responsibilities created some delays.

WE ARE CHURCH TOGETHER

Since its beginning the ELCA has been one church body organized in three interdependent expressions, congregations, synod and the churchwide organization, which enable and support each other to grow in faith and put faith into action. These expressions are part of a wider church ecology that includes seminaries and colleges, social ministries, affiliated agencies and companion churches around the world. The ELCA is also committed to our full communion partners and to continued dialogue with ecumenical partners locally and globally. We believe that together we achieve things on a scale and scope that we could never do otherwise.

Two strategic goals of the ELCA Churchwide Organization for 2014-2016 embody this emphasis:

Strategic Goal 2: Members of this church are better connected with who we are as church and relationships across this church's wider ecology are deepened and strengthened for evangelical witness and service in the world.

Significant Achievements

Objective 1: The ELCA continues to articulate what it means to be Lutheran in today's world and deepen its understanding of the theological basis for identity and shared mission.

- Participation in the second annual "God's work. Our hands." Sunday in 2014 increased significantly from the inaugural 2013 year for this churchwide dedicated day of service. An estimated 2,000 congregations took part.

Objective 2: Youth and young adults are actively shaping our understanding of what it means to be church.

- Selected two young adults to serve on Lutheran World Federation Global Reformers Network.
- YAGM modeled what it means to be part of ELCA in and beyond local congregations by implementing an international community/discipleship house with the YAGM alumni network in the Metro D.C. Synod.

Objective 3: The ELCA lives out its strong commitment to being part of a global communion of Lutheran churches journeying in faith, witness and service.

- Thrivent made a major grant for the 500th observance of the Reformation. In addition, a new communication manager has been hired to improve awareness and understanding about the ELCA's observance.

Objective 4: The CWO strengthens its capacity and effectiveness in directly communicating with members.

- There currently are 462,977 active (with valid addresses) individual records in ELCA Constituent Information System and 60,894 active organization records. There are approximately 160,000 primary email addresses in ECIS. This is a new baseline after the merger of multiple Listserv and independent lists.

Objective 5: Relationships between ELCA's leaders are strengthened for effective future governance and stewardship of the ELCA.

- The Administrative Team and the CoB established a joint Listserv for improving communications. The Executive Committee of the CoB and the Administrative Team also met together.
- A new process for new bishop formation was established – focusing on formation rather than orientation. The results of the new process have been a much more relational focus and have been well received.

Objective 6: ELCA's relationships with full communion partners are deepened for a shared faith journey, witness and service.

- The fifth anniversary of full communion between the ELCA and the United Methodist Church was celebrated. New partnerships have begun through work on congregational vitality and advocacy.

Objective 7: ELCA's engagement in ecumenical dialogues and relationships contributes to the unity of Christ's people and visible expression of that unity.

- Major progress was made on the inter-religious case studies project, which has become the foundation for a possible ELCA Inter-Religious Vision Statement.

Strategic Goal 5: Leaders across this church are working together on strategies to address future sustainability of the ELCA and the churchwide organization has a growing and sustainable revenue base for mission.

Significant Achievements

Objective 1: Church leaders engage in discussion, devise and implement strategies for sustainability that meet the challenges faced by congregations, synods and the CWO.

- The Presiding Bishop appointed a Mission Funding Think Tank from the Conference of Bishops to address the decline of mission support in this church. The Think Tank will present its recommendations for the ELCA Church Council at its April 2015 meeting.
- Held a Synodical Treasurers Conference with 30-40 treasurers and bookkeepers participating.

Objective 2: The CWO and synods collaborate in planning and action to strengthen stewardship, mission interpretation, gifting and planned giving.

- With the addition of a Director of Gift Planning; Manager of Gift and Trust Administration; and Manager of Prospect Review, Research and Analysis; the ELCA Foundation has been able to institute a proactive, holistic approach to gift planning that is based on philanthropic intent. This approach helps us to plan for the future vision and sustainability of the Foundation and its partnership with synods and related entities.
- Data on current and planned gifts is being shared with ELCA Foundation's partners and synods, which allows for more efficient fiscal planning for today and in the future. Also instituted activity-based metrics in order to monitor and assess donor interaction and synod relationships. Implemented a strategy to develop and maintain partnership relationships.
- Fifty-seven synods have completed or are in the process of completing the ELCA Macedonia Project. These synods will have received about \$600,000 from a Thrivent grant and contributed more than \$200,000 in funds. Outcomes have indicated positive growth in mission support dollars in these synods.
- There are more than 40 synods with an active Mission Interpretation Ministry. In most synods, this includes a network of Mission Interpreters who share stories in their congregations on a regular basis. In some synods this includes an active partnership with the synod communicator to bring synod and churchwide stories to congregations.

Objective 3: The Campaign for the ELCA is successfully launched and communication and messaging about the campaign reaches synods, congregations and members and generates a groundswell of support.

- The first year of *The Campaign for the ELCA* was completed 7 percent ahead of overall current income goal. There are commitments, current gifts and planned gifts totaling over \$59 million for goals within the campaign, which inspires volunteers, staff and prospective donors.
- The campaign met or exceeded all income goals for individual programs with the exception of Global Church Sponsorship.

Objective 4: Responsibility for the campaign goals and strategies is shared by all churchwide offices and units and by the ELCA's three leadership tables.

- Held a campaign one-year celebration in February 2015 to update staff on campaign success, inform about annual theme (congregations). Mission Funding and the campaign teams have worked together to host a quarterly meeting for new employees to talk about how they can join in.
- Held two inter-unit Campaign Table meetings to inform fundraising staff on programmatic updates and give programmatic staff updates on fundraising.

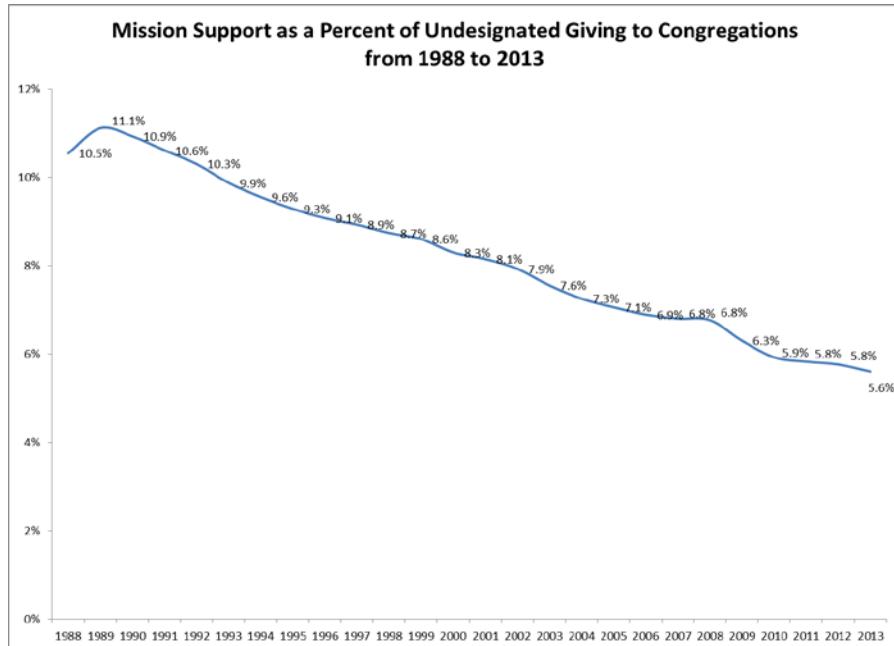
- Percent participation in the campaign:
Campaign Steering Committee 100%
Conference of Bishops 88%
Church Council 80%
Churchwide Administrative Team..... 100%
Churchwide Senior Leadership 85%
Bishop's Advisory Council 78%

Objective 5: The CWO fundraising model optimizes the donor experience, stewards donors through different types and levels of contribution and increases giving.

- The ELCA's first major-gift initiative was launched resulting in a 189 percent increase in gifts of six figures or more.
- At the intersection of stewardship and technology: 150 congregations are participating in an online giving pilot project with Vanco that generated \$430,000 of online gifts from September through December.
- Developed peer-to-peer (team) fundraising system for launch in 2015.

With respect to Strategic Goal 5, one indicator is to examine the percent of each congregational budget that is shared with synodical and churchwide ministries. As shown in Figure 6, since the beginning of the ELCA, mission support as a percent of undesignated giving to congregations has declined regularly and consistently.

Fig. 6



Setbacks

- Development of an online collaboration platform was delayed, affecting the communication work of the Reformation 500th anniversary group.
- Discussion is still pending among the leadership tables of the CWO, the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops about shared leadership for setting directions for this church.
- Lack of specificity around plans for using some of the campaign funds has put constraints on the ability to raise funds for those programs.
- Continued lagging fundraising performance in Global Church Sponsorship has spurred a full review of that development program and strategic approach.

WE ARE CHURCH FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD

As members of the ELCA, we believe that we are freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. We do God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus Christ's name throughout the world. ELCA members are part of a strong global network of people living out their faith, serving the neighbor and making the world a better place. The ELCA also reaches out to and works beside other faith communities to promote understanding and build relationships for a better world.

The strategic goal of the ELCA Churchwide Organization for 2014-2016 that embodies this emphasis is:

Strategic Goal 3: Impoverished and vulnerable people, locally and globally, achieve sufficient, sustainable lives and are accompanied in addressing the challenges of poverty, injustice and emergencies in their communities.

Significant Achievements

Objective 1: ELCA's international relief and development program expands and is effective in addressing priority needs identified by companion churches and local development partners.

- We made a significant impact on global policy decisions, and deepened the ELCA's commitment to be a church committed to the eradication of hunger and poverty through direct advocacy and constituency engagement on food security, the opening of U.S. diplomatic relations with Cuba, peace in the Middle East, climate change and humanitarian relief in the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

Objective 2: ELCA expands its role in international disaster response and humanitarian assistance and works effectively with its global operating partners.

- Provided \$1.75 million to 19 disaster responses in 14 countries and regions (\$830,000 directly to bilateral companions, \$925,000 to partners such as the Lutheran World Federation's Department for World Service): China, India, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Central African Republic, Central America, Malaysia, Ukraine, Iraq, Bosnia/Serbia, Philippines and Israel-Palestine. Global Mission is also working to grow mutual capacity for more effective project planning, monitoring and evaluation within these countries.

Objective 3: ELCA congregations are effectively contributing to alleviation of poverty, hunger and marginalization in their communities.

- The domestic hunger program distribution totaled \$821,050. These grants supported local congregations and agency initiatives.
 - Advocacy - \$15,000
 - Development - \$158,075
 - Organizing - \$116,300
 - Relief - \$531,175

Objective 4: The Lutheran Disaster Response U.S. and Caribbean, with its affiliates and partner synods, is effective in responding to domestic disasters and capacities for disaster preparedness and response are strengthened.

- Raised \$2.8 million in domestic disaster relief for 2014.
- Distributed \$5.1 million.
- Tending the relationships with Lutheran Immigration and Relief Service (LIRS) and Lutheran Services in American (LSA) are part of the infrastructure needed to accomplish our work in this area. LIRS Refugee Academy and LSA's work with colleges and universities internship program are examples of this collaboration.

Objective 5: Development and humanitarian assistance reaches the most vulnerable and marginalized people in communities and embeds principles of gender and racial justice.

- Provided key financial support to build up the capacity for missional engagement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land's (ELCJHL). The ELCJHL is a powerful beacon of the continued Christian presence in the Middle East and is a focal point for ELCA congregational and synodical engagement in God's mission to the world.

Objective 6: ELCA leaders have a deeper theological understanding of the connection between witness and service and ELCA's model of accompaniment.

- Increased the capacity of ELCA congregations and leaders for vibrant witness and service in culturally diverse contexts through a deepened understanding of the connection between witness and service and ELCA's model of accompaniment. Increasingly, accompaniment values and corresponding practices are framed by the theologically-informed lenses of racial and gender justice. This capacity-building work is taking place in a growing variety of new settings using a group of diverse musicians, presenters and facilitators, over half of whom are People of Color. New settings include ELCA Synod assemblies, Glocal youth events, ELCA mission network regional gatherings and ELCA seminaries.

Objective 7: The CWO improves the way it measures, communicates and accounts for the impact and effectiveness of domestic and international World Hunger programs and partnerships.

- Shared 52 malaria stories, 14 World Hunger stories and 28 project summaries.

Objective 8: ELCA is known as a church committed to the eradication of hunger and poverty, and networks across this church are actively engaged in World Hunger campaign efforts, programs and advocacy.

- ELCA World Hunger Program exceeded \$19 million budget for 2014, with contributions of \$19.3 million.

- To strengthen the ELCA's domestic advocacy, all State Public Policy Office directors now report and relate to the Program Director for Domestic Advocacy, and the state staffs have been fully integrated with our Washington, D.C., Advocacy office.

Objective 9: The CWO leads and joins with other Lutheran agencies, ecumenical and inter-religious partners for national and international advocacy, strategically leveraging expertise for maximum impact on issues of common concern.

- The ELCA has taken a strong leadership position in the larger faith advocacy context. As such, we now sit on the leadership committee for the broader interfaith coalition and are beginning to lead the community to think and act more strategically. An example of a success in the last quarter of 2014 is that the ELCA led the interfaith community to use its annual retreat to plan – rather than simply report out – around the common theme of racial justice. The hope is to position the ELCA to lead the larger community in reviving the faith voice in racial justice for the next year.

Setbacks

- We are still working to more fully evaluate the impact of World Hunger grants, categories and indicators for monitoring and reporting. We are in the process of implementing an online self-reporting grant software system.

CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

The Churchwide Organization has a responsibility within the three interdependent expressions of the ELCA to act as careful stewards of its resources such as money, staff, technology, and its constitutional obligations. The strategic goal of the ELCA Churchwide Organization for 2014-2016 that addresses this responsibility is:

Strategic Goal 6: The churchwide organization is effective in fulfilling its roles and functions on behalf of the ELCA and further develops an organization culture characterized by strong leadership, accountability, competent and motivated staff, effective systems and learning.

Significant Achievements

Objective 1: Church governance structures are equipped and adequately supported to be effective in their governance roles and processes on behalf of this church.

- Implemented suggestions from the August 2014 Church Council retreat. The fall Church Council meeting included more time for engagement and interaction with reports and more time for small group discussion.
- Implemented a new way of processing the reports of Church Council and Churchwide Assembly resolutions that allows for more feedback from both churchwide staff as to what is a realistic timeline and from Church Council in setting priorities and expectations.

Objective 2: The CWO develops a stronger performance management and results culture in its operations and leaders are held accountable for budgets, plans and results.

- Performed quarterly budget reviews with all churchwide units.
- Used the Annual Operation Plan to document progress on program activities and analyze results.

Objective 3: Processes for staff recruitment, orientation and development are efficient, comprehensive and aligned to the CWO's priorities.

- Began to revise the processes bringing new staff into the organization.
- Church Council approved a revised personnel policies manual for the churchwide organization.

Objective 4: Common frameworks and approaches to gender justice and racial justice guide the CWO's work and its employment/workplace policies and practices.

- Human Resources staff is working with ethnic communities to enhance the CWO's recruitment strategy and identify qualified candidates of color. Also, developed a strategy to increase the number of global personnel of color, including YAGM.
- Units engaged in workshops, retreats and staff meetings on the topics of gender and racial justice.

Objective 5: CWO staff grow in their ability to articulate and communicate the theological rationales for programs, activities and decisions.

- Piloted a Leadership Development Program with 15 participants from staff across the organization. The program focus included an understanding of being Lutheran, as well as effective leadership and management strategies.

Objective 6: The CWO achieves enterprise-wide adoption of processes, systems and technologies that optimize results, increase efficiency and are adaptable to new needs.

- The first version of an enterprise-wide framework for project planning and management is being used by several offices and programs to make project implementation more effective.
- Major system enhancements/implementations within the CWO included:
 - Rolling out Lync to CSM, MIF and MA deployed staff,
 - Encrypted email,
 - New printer/copiers,
 - GiftWrap deferred giving software upgrade,
 - Intranet enhancements,
 - and launch of My.ELCA pilot groups (closed work groups of online community).

Setbacks

- Several staff vacancies and long searches to recruit qualified people for positions, especially in the Office of the Treasurer and Mission Advancement, have led to delays in progress and detracted from improving service to the organization.
- More effort is needed to determine a strategy for how church governance will evolve in the new triennial cycle.
- The process for developing a curriculum on understanding the Lutheran faith among CWO employees has been slightly delayed.

CROSS CUTTING COMMITMENTS

Theological discernment and formation – ensuring our evolving identity and self-understanding, our worship and our practice of mission continue to be grounded in Lutheran theology.

Gender justice – embedding gender analysis in all aspects of the churchwide organization's work and make gender equity a commitment in our work within the ELCA and through the programs we manage.

Racial justice and ethnic diversity – living out the commitment to being a multicultural church, in the churchwide organization and throughout this church, and working against racial discrimination within the church and society.

Youth and young adults – embracing youth and young adults as vital to the worship life, mission and future sustainability of this church and raising them up as leaders in all its expressions.

Significant Achievements

The current registration for the ELCA Youth Gathering exceeds over 28,100. The MYLE (Multicultural Youth Leadership Event) is at capacity with 553 registered and DAYLE (Definitely-Abled Youth Leadership Event) has 40 registered for Detroit.

The Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM) has already achieved 70 percent of the 2016 volunteer goal. Further, YAGM modeled what it means to be part of the ELCA in and beyond local congregations by implementing an intentional community/discipleship house with the YAGM alumni network in the Metro DC Synod. Three YAGM videos for recruitment and sponsorship/fundraising were completed, and distribution is beginning.

Consultations have been held in every synod of the church, in the nine regional gatherings, conversations with seminary presidents and deans and a number of young adults who have helped in reshaping our candidacy manual.

Sixty-eight percent of the new ministry starts are among the ethnic or multi-racial communities with 40 percent among communities experiencing poverty or economic hardship.

Human Resources staff is working with ethnic communities to enhance the CWO's recruitment strategy and identify qualified candidates of color.

Development of the Social Message on Gender-based Violence.

We increased the capacity of ELCA congregations and leaders for vibrant witness and service in culturally diverse contexts through a deepened understanding of the connection between witness and service and ELCA's model of accompaniment. Increasingly, accompaniment values and corresponding practices are framed by the theologically-informed lenses of racial and gender justice. This capacity-building work is taking place in a growing variety of new settings using a group of diverse musicians,

presenters and facilitators, over half of whom are People of Color. New settings include ELCA Synod assemblies, Glocal youth events, ELCA mission network regional gatherings, and ELCA seminaries.

Seven women from the Global South were invited to participate in the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Set-backs

Young Adults in Global Mission Senegal program implementation delayed due to the Ebola crisis in West Africa. YAGM program in Australia also placed on hold at the request of the companion church. We anticipate being able to start both programs in 2016.

The Social Message about Gender-based Violence will need extra time to be completed.

As with all organizations, there are certain risks that the Churchwide Organization must address and manage. For the 2014 Operational Plan, these risks fell into three main categories: Finances, Technology/Systems, and Operational. The following is a brief description of the primary risks that either could or do affect the organization. Included in the description is a statement about how these risks are currently being addressed.

Finances

The Churchwide Organization continues to be challenged to meet its income goals, which reduces its ability to fund a variety of grants and programs. Factors that can affect our ability to achieve income goals include weakness in the economy, national and global issues and continuing decline in ELCA membership. In addition, there are specific programs, such as New Ministry Starts, which relied on funding that Thrivent has shifted away from denominations. These financial challenges are being addressed in at least two ways – through the Bishop’s Mission Support Think Tank, and through specific ministry appeals within *The Campaign for the ELCA*.

The upcoming transition to a new charitable remainder trust administrator and investment manager, if not managed successfully, could lead to declining income. Staff in Mission Advancement, as well as staff in the Office of the Treasurer, are consulting with a gift planning and investment management company for recommendations to strengthen the program. In addition, careful attention is being paid to donor communication.

Technology/Systems

Protecting the confidentiality of constituent data is of great importance. As data is combined into one primary system, and as certain pieces of data are shared throughout the three expressions of the ELCA, the Mission Advancement unit continues to set up necessary restrictions to confidential information.

The increasing complexity of Information Technology systems has the potential to reach beyond the Churchwide Organization’s capacity to internally manage all systems. In addition, there are rising maintenance and other infrastructure costs for the systems already in place. The Office of the Treasurer is examining the costs and benefits to purchasing managed services and buying technology as a service. In addition, each unit is asked to maximize efficiencies with the systems it has and to monitor costs.

Operational

With rapidly changing contexts in certain regions of the world and the possibility of unforeseen risks (e.g., a new health epidemic), the need for contingency planning for all Global Mission personnel across the world is at an all-time high. The Global Mission unit is working to develop all necessary contingency plans.

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff, especially in the area of development, has been a challenge. In addition, recruiting a large and diverse cross-section of candidates for all vacancies in the Churchwide Organization is a high priority. One way of addressing this has been for the staff of Human Resources to work with recruiting firms. In addition, Human Resources is strengthening its relationships with leaders of the ethnic-specific communities in order to publicize positions and identify candidates.

KEY LEARNINGS

The churchwide organization is using the Operational Plan to become a more intentional learning organization. Churchwide staff identified the following key learnings during 2014.

Anticipate and plan for the impact of leadership changes and new opportunities for engagement among ELCA global companions. For example, in 2015 in East Africa it will be necessary to work closely with new and emerging dioceses. This will require additional resources to develop and expand companion synod relationship and assignment of Global Personnel.

The reaction to Bishop Eaton's brief greetings at the Islamic Society of North America Convention in Detroit made it very clear that we need to focus our efforts on developing an inter-religious vision statement, a complement to the ecumenical vision adopted in 1991. In addition, there is a major educational opportunity within the ELCA around Islam.

There is a real opportunity for Lutheran-Catholic dialogue and reconciliation at all levels in the years between now the 2017 (500th anniversary observance of the Reformation).

Unaccompanied and Migrant Children Initiative (this is a "Contribution Beyond the Plan"): We have learned that this crisis must be addressed in both the local and global dimensions. The events which push young people from their Central American homes must be ameliorated, as well as conditions they find when they cross into the US. We are also learning how important a good immigration lawyer can be in making a difference in asylum cases—which can be a life or death matter for these refugees.

The Operational Plan is driving a greater emphasis on measuring impact for evaluation and planning purposes and is making clear the importance of intra and inter-unit collaboration. Intentionally building trusting and collaborative relationships (within and across CWO units and offices) has revealed many benefits and promises a more cohesive and effective organization, working more effectively toward our shared goals.

Any major action coming to Church Council from a task force/advisory/working group should have at least one council member included as a participant, if at all possible. Not having a youth or young adult council member on the advisory/planning group for the youth and young adult campaign case statement seemed problematic.

Some ways work could proceed better in CWO: Achieve enhanced clarity through more specific communication, and reduce the instances of committing to projects that have an overly-optimistic schedule for completion.

Congregational and Synodical Mission's *Creating Healthy Community* initiative has been powerful as it has galvanized colleagues into new leadership that has resulted in their planning and taking leadership collectively over key initiatives in the unit. The impact is deeper and more lasting.

ELCA Churchwide Organization 2014-16 Operational Plan - Annual Plan 2015

Dated February 27, 2015

Goal One	Original Headline Result Indicators	2015 Focus for Headline Result Indicators	Strategic Emphasis Connection
Congregations are growing, vibrant in their worship life and diverse, and worshippers increase their engagement in and support for God's mission, locally and globally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *% increase in worshipping membership/participation in ELCA *Number of new congregations/worship communities launched *Number of congregations/synods actively engaged in congregational renewal *Evidence of increased diversity in church membership/worshippers *Evidence of increased capacity for global missional engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increase in worship attendance in the ELCA *Number of new ministries funded *Number of congregations actively engaged in renewal *Increase in the number of people of color or language other than English among active participants in the ELCA 	We are church.

Objectives	2015 Progress Indicators for each Objective	2015 - Major programs and activities	Lead	Supporting
1. Existing congregations and worship communities engage in renewal to deepen their spiritual life and faith practices, welcome and retain worshippers and refocus for effective mission in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *A minimum of 150 ministries receive renewal grants *An increase in the number of participants in Planned Coaching Training From Ethnic Specific Communities *75% of Synods have Mission Tables with plans in place that include building ethnic ministry capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide training, technical support, and resources for renewing congregations through: a) Synodical mission planning; b) Coaching re-developers; c) Building leadership capacity within renewing congregations; and d) Engaging ethnic specific ministries *Provide, monitor and assess the impact of partnership support grants for strategic renewal initiatives *Renewing Congregations campaign case statement finalized and Congregations Campaign Table convened for development of implementation and grant criteria process 	CSM Contacts: Mark Burkhardt, Neil Harrison, Albert Starr	MA Contacts: Ron Glusenkamp

2. New congregations and worship communities established in areas where the ELCA does not currently have an active presence and in ways that enrich those faith communities and the diversity of this church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *45 synods achieve 1 or more new starts *At least 50% of new starts are within communities of color and/or deep poverty *8 ecumenical new starts achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide training, technical support, and resources for new congregations/worship communities through: a) Synodical mission planning; b) Developing mission developers and lay evangelists; and c) Strengthening the work of the churchwide New Starts Networks *Provide, monitor and assess the impact of grants for new congregations/worship communities *New Congregations campaign case statement finalized and Congregations Campaign Table convened for development of implementation and grant criteria process 	CSM Contacts: Mark Burkhardt, Ruben Duran	Appendix B
3. Synods and congregations have capacity in mission planning and are effective in developing ministry strategies that are relevant to their communities, address poverty and build the diversity of this church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increased learning in educational Area Ministry Strategy events (i.e.. WebEx, seminars, etc.) *Synods demonstrate a clearer understanding and commitment to the CWO-synod partnership through the Evangelizing Congregations Missional Plan *Those in the ELCA Community Organizing Cohort deepen their capacity as trainers, developing new and diverse leaders in their ministry settings, and launching innovative proposals for ministry sustainability models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Develop, implement and monitor Area Ministry Strategies (AMS), through engagement and training of synod leaders, focusing on specific issues or audiences such as domestic hunger, young adults, ethnic specific or geographic (ie. Rural, urban, etc.) *Provide training as well as ongoing resources and network support for the ELCA Community Organizing Team, including ethnic-specific leaders *Strengthen the Churchwide-Synodical relationship through <i>Moving Deeper in Mission</i> event participation and engagement. *Provide training, ethnic/language-specific resource development, and leadership development targeting the use of "One Body, Many Members" 	CSM Contacts: Amy Walter-Peterson, Sue Engh, Albert Starr	

4. Congregations and synods grow in their understanding and commitment to gender justice and racial justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *In the summer of 2015 synods will use the new liturgy celebrating the 45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women at their synod assemblies *Process Builders (related to the social statement, <i>Women and Justice: One in Christ</i>) will be recruited and trained to continue synod listening events *Topics of gender and racial justice are highlighted in CWO publications and events *Increased advocacy, raised level of awareness , and new ministries among/with incarcerated persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide 2015 Youth Gathering prep work as well as at-the-event teaching sessions, plenaries and service engagement that focuses on and addresses racial and gender justice *Continue research and resource development that highlights the 45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women (2015) *Support and facilitate the processes for both the social statement, <i>Women and Justice: One in Christ</i> and the social message on gender-based violence *Carry forward implementation of the Criminal Social Justice Statement resolutions. *Develop and share stories and messages through various channels that help members move toward a more equitable and inclusive vision of the ELCA. EX: Bishop Eaton's Video on Racial Justice 	CSM Contacts: Heidi Hagstrom, Molly Beck Dean, Cherlyne Beck, Judith Roberts, Rozella White,	OPB and MA Appendix B OPB Contacts: Mary Streufert, Roger Willer, Victoria Flood MA Contacts: Forrest Meyer
5. ELCA synods and global companion churches grow in capacity for witness and service through mutual accompaniment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *15 Glocals - 2 Glocals offered internationally *100% country plans and regional strategies, as well as budgets, in place by end of 2015 - Evidence of impact via Program Monitoring and Evaluation data and examples *5 Students receiving International Leader Development Program scholarships participate in GM regional gatherings and other ELCA events *10% increase in International Leadership Development Program scholarships awarded in academic year 2015 (baseline 2014) *YAGM alumni engagement in stewardship/ sponsorship, congregational involvement, recruitment/ engagement, & networking is strengthened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Continue cross-unit (GM-CSM) work to identify venues for Glocal events *Develop resources and offer learning modalities that increase the capacity of synods and other networks (World Hunger, Global Mission Companion Synod Network, youth) to engage in global and local mission using accompaniment values and practices *Strengthen capacity of companion churches for mission and ministry through relationships (including ongoing church-to-church and companion synod relationships), program support and events, and sharing of personnel *Area desks offer support strategies in their regions for evangelical witness (outreach- accompanying new and emerging churches) and services (development and capacity building) – with new country initiatives in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East/North Africa (review and update country plans) *Provide grants and scholarships to students and scholars in support of companion churches (International Leadership Development Program) *Support and encourage Young Adults in Global Mission volunteers to engage in ministries that are priorities of companion churches and bring their skills and knowledge back into ministries of the ELCA *Accompany companion churches in developing strong programs for youth *Send global personnel to requesting companion churches 	GM Contacts: Sunitha Mortha, RMs, Franklin Ishida, Raquel Rodriguez, APDs, Andrea Walker, Benyam Kassahun, Toni Daniels, Tammy Jackson, Heidi Torgerson, Stephanie Berkas	CSM Contacts: Mark Burkhardt

6. Youth and young adults from diverse backgrounds participate in domestic and global service and this experience deepens their faith and church engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Ten ELCA Young Adult Participants in Asian Lutheran International Conference *Increased engagement of youth and young adults in ELCA networks and service agencies *Achieve 85% of the 2016 targets for the YAGM program (2016 targets are 90 volunteers & 3 new country programs) *10% increase in YAGM volunteers from ethnic specific backgrounds *Multiple articles in The Lutheran magazine on domestic and global service participation opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Asian Young Adult and Asian leader engagement, education and network development through the Asian Lutheran International Conference - building relationships between Asian leaders/ministry both in the US and internationally *Recruit and support young adults to participate in the Young Adults in Global Mission Program including young adults of color and from different ethnic backgrounds and language backgrounds *Engage a diverse cross-section of youth and young adults in the work for their area of the campaign, National Youth Gathering, Hunger Networks, etc. *Promote youth and young adult engagement opportunities through multi-channel communications 	GM	CSM and MA Appendix B
7. Communication channels and ELCA events support growing engagement of members in ELCA's local and global ministries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *3% increase in number of resource downloads and resource orders *5% increase in Facebook fans and Twitter followers *5% increase in Facebook reach and impressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Promote utilization and adoption of collaborate.elca.org as work group communication platform *Implement an integrated engagement strategy that uses improved website content, increased social-media activity (including promotion of online giving), media relations and PR, and selected events such as "God's work. Our hands. Sunday" and pilot regional Networks for Mission gatherings 	MA	OT Contacts: Jon Beyer, Suhail Qumri

Goal Two	Original Headline Result Indicators	2015 Focus for Headline Results Indicators	Strategic Emphasis Connection
Members of this church are better connected with who we are as church and relationships across this church's wider ecology are deepened and strengthened for evangelical witness and service in the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Members are better informed about ELCA and feel connected with this church in and beyond their congregation/local community *Evidence of deeper and more cooperative relationships with Conference of Bishops *Number of joint ministry projects with full communion partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increase in number of congregations participating in "God's work. Our hands." Sunday *Increase in the extent to which typical congregants understand themselves to be part of the ELCA *Number of congregations participating in the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation Observance 	We are church together.

Objectives	2015 Progress Indicators for each Objective	2015 - Major programs and activities	Lead	Supporting
1. The ELCA continues to articulate what it means to be Lutheran in today's world and deepen its understanding of the theological basis for identity and shared mission.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Communicate Lutheran identity and theology through public policy statements from churchwide leaders, pastoral messages from the Presiding Bishop, articles in several ELCA printed and online publications, earned news media coverage of our public messages/statements, and promotion of study/discussion resources for congregations on the ELCA's social statements and messages *Assist the whole church in preparation for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation 	OB Contacts: Marcus Kunz, Jim Echols, Kathryn Lohre	MA, CSM, GM MA Contacts: Forrest Meyer, Mikka McCracken CSM Contacts: Rozella White GM Contacts:
2. Youth and young adults are actively shaping our understanding of what it means to be church.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Develop programs and resources for the 2015 Youth Gathering, MYLE and DAYLE events - specifically focused on theological education; leadership development; community engagement through service in Detroit; and racial, gender and disability awareness - to engage youth and young adults to grow as leaders of this church *Actively promote youth and young adults in the Youth Gathering and its related activities (e.g., "Walk for Water"), in Campus Kitchens, and in year-long Lutheran Volunteer Corps placements *Input gathered from young adults listening sessions in four geographic locations; Ft. Lauderdale, Phoenix, Denver and Seattle. 	CSM Contacts: Heidi Hagstrom, Molly Beck Dean, Rozella White, Rachel Bouman	MA, GM, OT MA Contacts: Forrest Meyer, Dan Rift GM Contacts: Sunita Mortha, Karin Brown, Stephanie Berkas OT Contacts:

3. The ELCA lives out its strong commitment to being part of a global communion of Lutheran churches journeying in faith, witness and service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *East and Southern Africa Desk participates in 3 LWF sub-regional events and gatherings *Increase in the number of ELCA staff and members participating in LWF events and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Identify issues of mutual concern and common agendas among global companion through participation in the regional expressions of the communion *Continue to support and promote programs of the LWF - specifically the "SW Detroit Cooperative Venture @ Grace in Action" - as well as resources connected with Ecumenical and Inter-Religious dialogues - specifically "From Conflict to Communion" *Continue and encourage participation by ELCA staff and members in LWF 	<p>GM Contacts: APDs, Raquel Rodriguez</p>	<p>OPB and MA Appendix B OPB Contacts: Elizabeth Eaton, Kathryn Lohre MA Contacts: Dan Rift</p>
4. The CWO strengthens its capacity and effectiveness in directly communicating with members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *3 % growth in number of records in ECIS *3% increase in email addresses in ECIS *Increase the number of ELCA synods using ECIS to 20 *3% growth in newsletter subscriptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Make ECIS available to all ELCA synods as their database system to manage rostered leaders, lay leaders and congregation data. *Fully integrate ECIS with all of our online technologies to help enhance the quality of data in ECIS and acquire more email addresses for ELCA members *Develop, launch and administer an email newsletter subscription system 	<p>MA MA Contacts: Forrest Meyer, Ala Rasoul</p>	<p>OT OT Contacts: Pat Negaro</p>
5. Relationships between ELCA's leaders are strengthened for effective future governance and stewardship of the ELCA.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Engage with the CoB and Church Council in ways that build trust, improve relationships and establish shared priorities and directions – priority focus areas are congregational vitality and renewal, support for the Campaign, church sustainability, mission funding, and global mission engagement 	<p>OPB Contacts: Wyetta Bullock, Walter May</p>	<p>MA, CSM, and GM MA Contacts: Margaret Payne CSM Contacts: Stephen Bouman, Evelyn Soto GM Contacts: David Wunsch</p>

6. ELCA's relationships with full communion partners are deepened for a shared faith journey, witness and service.	*2 Joint State Public Policy Offices Opened	<p>*Explore and engage with our ecumenical, full-communion and inter-faith partners - specifically The Episcopal Church and United Methodist Church - to develop joint mission starts, to engage in advocacy, and to develop ethnic specific ministries - specifically within the American Indian/Alaska Native communities</p> <p>*Continue strategic conversations for shared local ministries to enable cooperative mission and ministry</p>	CSM Contacts: Evelyn Soto, Stacy Martin	OPB OPB Contacts: Kathryn Lohre	Appendix B
7. ELCA's engagement in ecumenical dialogues and relationships contributes to the unity of Christ's people and visible expression of that unity.	**"Declaration of the Way" document is completed	<p>*Participate in on-going dialogues and maintain relationships with key conciliar bodies -paying specific attention to the US Conference of Bishops, as well as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and the Mennonite Church</p> <p>(See also GM work in Goal 3, Objective 6)</p>	OPB Contacts: Kathryn Lohre		

Goal Three	Original Headline Result Indicators	2015 Focus for Headline Result Indicators	Strategic Emphasis Connection
Impoverished and vulnerable people, locally and globally, achieve sufficient, sustainable lives and are accompanied in addressing the challenges of poverty, injustice, and emergencies in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Number of people, communities reached through World Hunger programs, type of assistance received - domestic/global and dollars allocated through partners *Number of people and communities assisted through disaster response - domestic and global and dollars allocated to and through congregations and partners *Number of world hunger leaders active in their congregations and communities *Common narrative in use and a more integrated domestic and global World Hunger strategy *Increased engagement with World Hunger (WH leaders network, congregations, synods, ELCA events and funds raised) *Evidence of ELCA impact on domestic and global policy/decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *World Hunger funding - comparisons of distributions to partners * Disaster Response funding - comparisons of distributions to partners 	We are church for the sake of the world.

Objectives	2015 Progress Indicators for each Objective	2015 - Major programs and activities	Lead	Supporting
1. ELCA's international relief and development program expands and is effective in addressing priority needs identified by companion churches and local development partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *500 acts of technical assistance rendered (desk review of proposals, field visits, workshops etc.) *At least 40 new World Hunger International projects supported in at least 15 countries (disaggregated by country and category/sector) *Proportion of World Hunger funds allocated to bilateral companion churches increases to 40% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Support global companion development of new or expanded relief and development programs based on local needs and priorities *Support opportunities for global companions to participate in professional conferences/events in their area of expertise *Build capacity of global companions in planning, monitoring, and evaluation (PMI) *Support global companion development of Malaria Campaign exit strategy 	GM Contacts: Iris de Campos	
2. ELCA expands its role in international disaster response and humanitarian assistance and works effectively with its global operating partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *10% of LDR-I funds allocated to activities that have integrated frameworks *Increased amount of funds provided to LWF and ACT Alliance for capacity building of companions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide timely and strategic allocation of LDR-I funds per new LDR-I funding guidelines to global companions and partners which are aligned with integrated DRR, recovery, and sustainable development frameworks, HAP, Sphere, and Core Humanitarian Standards *Transition select disaster response projects to World Hunger-funded programs that integrate disaster risk reduction (DRR), recovery and sustainable development *Integrate disaster risk reduction (DRR), recovery and sustainable development frameworks into LDR-I programming and allocate more funds to these activities *Gather information on the use and impact of disaster response funds to promote awareness of LDR and ELCA's global work *Provide leadership and GM representation on governance boards and committees of LWF, ACT Alliance, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, and WCC 	GM Contacts: Vitaly Vorona, Iris de Campos, Megan	

3. ELCA congregations are effectively contributing to alleviation of poverty, hunger and marginalization in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *80-130 key leaders trained to adopt collaborative forms of community organizing *50-100 leaders are exposed to Community Organizing principles; 10-25% of them pursue deeper engagement in organizing as a result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide a new and re-formatted efficient, effective and well-managed domestic hunger grants process that includes on-line resources, capacity-building training and support, monitoring and evaluation tools *Domestic Hunger Initiative (DHI) Implementation Team provides leadership and focus on accomplishing their plan through the engagement of a new generation of leaders involved in their communities in the margins *Provide continued inter-unit, multi-agency (LIRS), interdisciplinary and international effort – including consultations, grant assistance, leadership development, effective bilingual communication, local community support, on-site participation and engagement for the Unaccompanied & Migrant Children Initiative; enhance relationships with LDR and affiliates *Provide training, education, engagement, network support and leadership development that will addresses the alleviation of poverty, hunger and marginalization in our communities - specifically focusing on implementation of the ELCA HIV/AIDS Strategy and Hunger Network development that includes Community Organizing strategies and skills *Begin using and disseminating the new ELCA World Hunger brand messages and narrative background paper as basis for the work of ELCA World Hunger 	CSM	MA	Appendix B MA Contacts: Dan Rift
4. The Lutheran Disaster Response US and Caribbean, with its affiliates and partner synods, is effective in responding to domestic disasters and capacities for disaster preparedness and response are strengthened.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Contact with synods and/or affiliates will be made within 48 hours of the disaster *1 re-affiliation of an SMO into the LDR network *75% of affiliates will have asset maps completed and shared in their region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide timely response and consultation to disaster sites - assisting through on-sight support, financial and other resources aid, monitoring and evaluation of local efforts *Develop an enhanced and more effective approach to both the domestic and international work of LDR that leads toward greater inter-unit collaboration, communication, creative innovation and sharing best practices *Launch and utilization of collaborate.elca.org work group *Expand network of LDR affiliates and provide training for network capacity building 	CSM	OT	OT Contacts: Jon Beyer
5. Development and humanitarian assistance reaches the most vulnerable and marginalized people in communities and embeds principles of gender and racial justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increase articles in The Lutheran on humanitarian assistance across the globe *Number of sites served 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Implement a screening tool to ensure programs funded through World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response fit with broad funding criteria and reflect commitment to the Rights Based Approach, assisting the most vulnerable and marginalized people and addressing discrimination, gender inequity and racism *Gather and share stories of success and good practice *Provide opportunities for vulnerable people to directly share their voice and experience on the global stage through conferences and events 	GM	CSM and MA	CSM Contacts: Josselyn Bennett MA Contacts: Rich Duncan

6. ELCA leaders have a deeper theological understanding of the connection between witness and service and ELCA's model of accompaniment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *4 accompaniment resources produced *Accompaniment survey to measure behavior is modified to more effectively gauge impact on global mission engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Develop training of new leaders through the YAGM program *Create a way to track the use and articulation of accompaniment as a guiding principle of mission *Provide opportunities for leaders to participate in global immersion experiences, based on a theological and practical understanding of accompaniment *Promote the YAGM as a model that reflects the theological connection between witness and service, and share stories that exemplify this *Work to adapt the framework of accompaniment for ecumenical and interreligious relations 	GM Contacts: Sunitha Mortha, RMs, Heidi Torgerson, Brittany McGhee	MA and OPB Appendix B MA Contacts: Forrest Meyer OPB Contacts:
7. The CWO improves the way it measures, communicates and accounts for the impact and effectiveness of domestic and international World Hunger programs and partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Grant management system implemented for all grant applications *Multiple articles in The Lutheran on domestic and international grants and their impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Strengthen capacity to measure, report and communicate project outcomes and impact – the difference that grants are making for individuals and communities *Develop a strategy for 2016 implementation of the new electronic performance monitoring and evaluation system for domestic and international World Hunger projects focusing initially on improved capability in collating, using and communicating program data (funds used, who is assisted, where and how) *Develop a system to gather and share stories from programs funded through World Hunger and LDR *Apply a common narrative for the core messages about CWO efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty; embed this narrative in program management and fundraising *Engage and expand World Hunger Leaders network 	GM Contacts: Sunitha Mortha, Carl Stecker, Iris de Campos, Megan	CSM, MA and OT CSM Contacts: Joe Young, Michael Stadie MA Contacts: Forrest Meyer OT Contacts: Suhail Qumri

8. ELCA is known as a church committed to the eradication of hunger and poverty, and networks across this church are actively engaged in World Hunger campaign efforts, programs and advocacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *20% increase in WH network contacts *Lead 2 campaigns with State Public Policy Offices *6-10 companion synod leaders participate in Ecumenical Advocacy Days to advocate on behalf of issues of concern to companions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Work with Networks - especially the World Hunger Network, volunteers, leadership tables and partners in an effort to secure the funding needed for programming that will eradicate hunger *Provide for coordinated public policy advocacy through our SPPO staff network, stronger partnership with LOWC in New York, effective communication strategies and intentional monitoring and evaluation of our impact towards the eradication of hunger and poverty *Increase awareness and fluency of public policy, and provide enhanced advocacy efforts through ethnic and culture-specific leaders, networks and their communities *Maintain a strategic presence and influence with UN offices in New York and Geneva on issues of concern to people in poverty and this church *Gather and raise up issues of concern identified by companion churches and other relief and development partners in relevant domestic and international fora and mobilize ELCA networks to strengthen this advocacy 	MA	<p>CSM, GM and Appendix B</p> <p>CSM Contacts: Stacy Martin, Albert Starr</p> <p>GM Contacts: Dennis Frado, Christine Mangale, RMs</p> <p>OT Contacts: Pat Negaro</p>
9. The CWO leads and joins with other Lutheran agencies, ecumenical and inter-religious partners for national and international advocacy, strategically leveraging expertise for maximum impact on issues of common concern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *One shared advocacy alert or other engagement opportunity with an inter-religious partner *At least one shared Hill Day of visits with all national Lutheran partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Develop and implement a shared Advocacy Ministry Plan that includes a new policy lens protocol framed by those affected by poverty, discrimination and conflict; environmental and climate change concerns; and stronger partnerships with inter-faith, inter-religious coalition and organizations *Amplify the voices of people living in poverty as UN member states prepare the post 2015 Development Agenda as they relate to poverty, discrimination and conflict (human rights, peace, gender equality, gender discrimination and violence against women and girls, HIV and food security) *Convene and lead discussion with companion churches and LWF about the church living in Muslim dominant contexts *Engage in inter-religious dialogues to build relationships and strengthen partnerships on issues of common concern including the conflict in Israel and Palestine. 	CSM	<p>GM, OPB and MA</p> <p>GM Contacts: Dennis Frado, Franklin Ishida</p> <p>OPB Contacts: Kathryn Lohre</p> <p>MA Contacts: Dan Rift</p>

Goal Four	Original Headline Result Indicators	2015 Focus for Headline Result Indicators	Strategic Emphasis Connection	B
Lay and rostered leaders are grounded in Lutheran theology and competent to serve the church we are becoming, and the leadership profile reflects this church's aspiration for cultural generational, and socio-economic diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Evidence of change in content of education curricula, progress toward leadership competency framework *Number of emerging young leaders and examples of their impact *Measure of diversity in ELCA's local and global leadership (race, language, ethnicity, gender, age) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Demonstrated change on a Lutheran Theology assessment (baseline in 2015) *Increase in the number of young adults in the various networks of the ELCA 	We are Lutheran.	

Objectives	2015 Progress Indicators for each Objective	2015 - Major programs and activities	Lead	Supporting
1. Lay and rostered leaders have a deep understanding of theology in the Lutheran tradition and are equipped for ongoing discernment in this church's local and global contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Recommendations from the Theological Education Advisory Council for the CoB and the Church Council will be completed by the fall of 2015. *Two lay certificate programs will be started. One in Atlanta and another in Texas. *Latino Pastors and leaders will increase their knowledge and connectedness to the ELCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Through TEAC, address a system of networked theological education; explore financial systems and stability for theological education; and develop adaptive educational practices *Develop and provide relevant ethnic and culture specific TEEM and M.Div. programs *Support and guide Women in Theological and Religious Studies and Global Lutheran Women's Scholarship Network 	CSM Contacts: Jonathan Strandjord, Greg Villalon,	OPB OPB Contacts: Kenneth Inskeep, Jim Echols, Mary Streufert
2. Lay and rostered leaders have the range of competencies needed for leadership in a changing church.	*Word & Service recommendations developed to present to 2016 CWA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Identify leadership characteristics and competencies for missional leaders through a variety of engagement opportunities in regional and churchwide consultations/gatherings *Continue providing training, resources, educational opportunities and leadership development for multiple audiences - both lay and rostered, including all the ethnic communities, in a variety of languages *Coordinate and expand the Latino Lay School project *Continue to develop the forthcoming Case Studies Project on Inter-Religious Relations as a resource for building competencies in ecumenical and inter-religious relations that can be shared with colleges, seminaries, lay schools, and congregations 	CSM Contacts: Greg Villalon, Cherlyne Beck, Hector Carrasquillo, Albert Starr, Joseph Bocko	OPB OPB Contacts: Kathryn Lohre

3. The ELCA roster system provides for a more flexible and responsive process for calling leaders and encourages new leadership.	*Revised candidacy process in place and trainings planned for 2015 *Trainings related to the revised candidacy process have been conducted	*Continued partnership and conversation among churchwide units and offices on mobility and RLP process *Train candidacy committees and relevant staff on the updated and revised Candidacy Manual *Improve technology systems for updating and managing information on rostered leaders, record keeping and data security *Expand the number of synods trained and using ECIS system	CSM Contacts: Greg Villalon, Cherlyne Beck, Andrea Young, Sandra Mejia	OS, OT, OPB and MA OS Contacts: Sue Rothmeyer, Chris Boerger OT Contacts: Pat Negaro OPB Contacts: Marcia Johnson MA Contacts: Ala Rassoul	Appendix B
4. Youth and young adults gain experiences that utilize and develop their leadership abilities and gifts.	*Core Leadership Team and Youth Leadership Summit participants are providing increased leadership within their synods and congregations. *Evidence of YAGM alumni engagement with wider ELCA young adult and other networks.	*Strengthen and grow Young Adult networks through training, education and experiential global/domestic learning opportunities - including the Peace Not Walls (PNW) initiative, young adult leaders' visit to the Holy Land, and opportunities for YAGM alumni to exercise their leadership skills in the wider ELCA *Finalize Youth & Young Adult campaign case statement; convene Youth & Young Adult Campaign Table for development of implementation and grant criteria process *Develop, plan and implement the ELCA Young Adult Cohort group and strategy as a collaborative space for justice-minded young people to lead the church and bridge the leaders of today and tomorrow	CSM Contacts: Heidi Hagstrom, Rozella White, Cherlyne Beck, Paul Amlin, Mark Burkhardt	GM and MA GM Contacts: Brittany McGhee, Stephanie Berkas MA Contacts: Dan Rift	
5. Leaders in companion churches have opportunities to develop their leadership capacities, with specific strategies directed to young adults and women.	*Number of education grants allocated will increase *Increased number of global women supported *35-40 young adults hosted as camp counselors from LWF partner churches and their capacity for witness and service is built	*Provide educational grants to individuals endorsed by global companions and institutions for study programs through the International Leadership Program *Support leadership opportunities for global women within the ELCA Campaign *Implement the International Camp Counselors Program which target young adults	GM Contacts: Sunitha Mortha, Tammy Jackson	CSM CSM Contacts: Mark Burkhardt	
6. The profile of lay and rostered leaders reflects this church's aspiration for equity and diversity with respect to gender balance, men and women of color and languages other than English and young adults and youth.	*Increased participation in Horizon Apprenticeship Program *Increased number of Youth and Young Adults Identified for Leadership Development	*Engage and gather Ethnic Associations strategically to enhance and increase the identification of leaders from the ethnic communities, including youth and young adults *Develop more effective recruitment strategies *Engage in research that looks at trends related to ordained/rostered women in this church as we approach the 45th anniversary of women's ordination	CSM Contacts: Albert Starr, Rozella White, Paul Amlin, Cherlyne Beck	OPB OPB Contacts: Rhondean Johnson, Kathryn Lohre, Victoria Flood, Mary Streufert	

Goal Five	Original Headline Result Indicators	2015 Focus for Headline Result Indicators	Strategic Emphasis Connection
Leaders across this church are working together on strategies to address future sustainability of the ELCA and the churchwide organization has a growing and sustainable revenue base for mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Evidence of leadership tables developing strategies on sustainability *Evidence of new models of sustainability captured through case studies *On track to three year targets for the Campaign *Increased % of the congregational budget is shared with synodical and churchwide ministries *Increased donor retention and major gifts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Meeting campaign contributions by category and overall *Increase in World Hunger income *Convene Leadership Tables for strategies in sustainability 	We are church together.

Objectives	2015 Progress Indicators for each Objective	2015 - Major programs and activities	Lead	Supporting
1. Church leaders engage in discussion, devise and implement strategies for sustainability that meet the challenges faced by congregations, synods and the CWO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Participation by 50% of synods in theology of stewardship webinars *CoB Mission Support Think Tank proposal to the 2015 Church Council Spring meeting *Financial Services Organization Business plan complete and 6 to 10 participants identified. *Financial Services Organization ready for launch in February 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide education resources, tools, coaching and training opportunities for congregational leaders, synod and Churchwide staff including the development of a Theology of Stewardship *Offer Building Capacity training workshops for ethnic and language specific audiences and congregations *Initiate and continue conversations on church sustainability at key ELCA leadership tables and forums *Develop and implement a 2015 marketing/communications plan for stewardship - through communication (stories, etc.) and education, share with members and the world the theological call to action we embrace as Lutherans *In partnership with MIF, investigate, develop and pilot a centralized Financial Services Organization to provide support to synods and regions 	CSM Contacts: Mark Burkhardt, Keith Mundy, Albert Starr	MA, OPB, and OT MA Contacts: Rich Duncan, Forrest Meyer OPB Contacts: Wyvetta Bullock OT Contacts: Bob Benson
2. The CWO and synods collaborate in planning and action to strengthen stewardship, mission interpretation, gifting and planned giving.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *1% increase in mission support in participating Macedonia congregations *Increase in the number of synods that currently participate in the Lutheran's synod insert effort from 34- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide financial support, training, coaching to DEMs, synod staff and other leaders through the Macedonia Project, Synod Stewardship/Mission Support Tables, congregational resources and consultations *Create a sustainable self-funding model for the ELCA Foundation, asset based giving program, and CGA program *Engage in a new strategy of partnership and dialogue in addressing/creating a strategy to find a faithful response to the 20 year decline in Mission Support with key leaders in different responsibilities/roles 	CSM and MA? CSM Contacts: Mark Burkhardt, Keith Mundy MA Contacts: Rich Duncan	OT, MIF, OPB OT Contacts: Linda Norman MIF Contacts: OPB Contacts: Wyvetta Bullock

3. The ELCA Campaign is successfully launched and communication and messaging about the campaign reaches synods, congregations and members and generates a groundswell of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Campaign materials produced for Year Two Campaign Themes and Spanish materials *Congregational toolkit for year two released *Synod treasurers and vice presidents engaged in the campaign 	<p>*The directive of the CWA regarding the Campaign for the ELCA will be met through a comprehensive communications/marketing, development, education and advocacy approach that addresses the campaign goals and focuses the WHOLE Churchwide Organization on a commitment to success</p>	MA Contacts: Ron Glusenkamp	Appendix B
4. Responsibility for the campaign goals and strategies is shared by all churchwide offices and units and by the ELCA's three leadership tables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Over 70% participation in the Campaign or payroll deduction program by CWO staff 	<p>*Promote the campaign and emphasize this priority with local leaders, Churchwide organization partners and networks (youth, young adult, outdoor ministry and disability ministries)</p>	MA CSM Contacts: Mark Burkhardt, Greg Villalon	CSM and GM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Disability campaign case statement finalized and Disability Campaign Table convened for development of campaign plan, leadership development strategy and resource planning 	GM Contacts: David Wunsch	
5. The CWO fundraising model optimizes the donor experience, stewards donors through different types and levels of contribution and increases giving.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *All gifts through MRS processed in 3 days and within service level agreement for accuracy. All other gifts processed within 7 days of receipt *Reduced number of gift processing adjustments *Target # of peer to peer events achieved and target amount of donations received *100% increase in monthly partners program: reach the 1,000-member mark *5% increase in major giving; 3% increase in planned giving 	<p>*Improve the user experience for our constituents in all our online platforms (e-store, resource center, giving pages)</p> <p>*Enhance and expand the peer to peer fundraising platform and leverage this system for other campaign components and initiatives</p> <p>*Embrace new strategies that steward engagement of constituents with multi generational approaches to increased donor loyalty, number of donors and growth of gift size</p>	MA Contacts: Annette Shoemaker, Ala Rasoul, Rich Duncan	OT OT Contacts: Pat Negaro

Goal Six	Original Headline Result Indicators	2015 Focus for Headline Result Indicators	Strategic Emphasis Connection
The churchwide organization is effective in fulfilling its roles and functions on behalf of the ELCA and further develops an organization culture characterized by strong leadership, accountability, competent and motivated staff, effective systems and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Satisfaction and effectiveness of Church Council support and development *Continued improvement in embedding organization-wide planning, reporting and monitoring *Evidence of change in representation and participation of women and people of color in CWO programs and networks *Measure of staff morale and satisfaction *Effective enterprise-wide adoption and use of new systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Looking into various IT metrics 	We are church. We are Lutheran. We are church together. We are church for the sake of the world.

Objectives	2015 Progress Indicators for each Objective	2015 - Major programs and activities	Lead	Supporting
1. Church governance structures are equipped and adequately supported to be effective in their governance roles and processes on behalf of this church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Level of satisfaction/productivity increases based on feedback on Council meetings *Approval of election schedule prior to spring 2015 CC meeting; communicate actions to synods by May 2015 *Distribution of Nomination Matrix to synods by March 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Continue to improve and develop Church Council processes and capacities, focusing on effective governance education and strategic planning, paying particular attention to the facilitation of responses to synodical resolutions; feedback from the 2014 retreat; and elections for officers and nominating committees *Determine a strategy for how church governance will evolve into a triennial cycle connected with the triennial Assembly, focusing on processes and structures for governance, attending to constitutional matters, identifying skills needed, and building connections between synods and Church Council *Review what the triennial assembly cycle means for the churchwide office's work program, staffing and budgeting 	OPB Contacts: Jodi Slattery	OS and OT OS Contacts: Sue Rothmeyer OT Contacts: Jon Beyer
2. The CWO develops a stronger performance management and results culture in its operations and leaders are held accountable for budgets, plans and results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Budget allocations determined and monitored by operational plan goals as well as by unit *Results oriented management competencies defined and used in performance review *Return on Investment mechanisms established as part of planning for significant new activities and priorities listed here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Build organization-wide capacity in fiscal analysis, data analysis, and communication of the scope, focus and impact of programs with priority to domestic and global World Hunger grants; congregational development and renewal; and member engagement 	OPB Contacts: Wyetta Bullock	OT OT Contacts: Christopher Carpenter-Majors

3. Processes for staff recruitment, orientation and development are efficient, comprehensive and aligned to the CWO's priorities.	*Feedback from first cohort of the Leadership Development Program helps to shape future leadership development training *Feedback from new employees and supervisors regarding the new on-boarding program helps to shape ongoing orientation efforts	*Implement a new on-boarding program that is more comprehensive in length as well as in topics, including specific attention to the Churchwide organization's cross-cutting commitments *Improve recruitment and selection processes, specifically addressing gender and racial equity *Implement a performance review process across the Churchwide organization that aligns with the Operational Plan, has a results orientation, and positively impacts staff morale	OPB Contacts: Rhondean Johnson, Marcus Kunz	OT OT Contacts: Mike McCorkle, Joe Clairmont	Appendix B
4. Common frameworks and approaches to gender justice and racial justice guide the CWO's work and its employment/workplace policies and practices.	*Increased knowledge among staff of the Frameworks of Race and Gender Justice *Racial & Gender Equity tools "Choice Points" embedded in CSM	*Develop and implement HR procedures to deal with racist and sexist behavior exhibited by staff *Develop and document frameworks and guidance on gender justice and racial justice and how these lenses should be applied in different aspects of the CWO's work, including its accompaniment model *Provide racial and gender justice leadership training across the CWO *Provide anti-harassment training provided for new personnel as well as current personnel to address sexist, racist, ageist, and bullying behaviors	OPB Contacts: Mary Streufert, Rhondean Johnson	CSM and GM CSM Contacts: Judith Roberts, Evelyn Soto GM Contacts: Sunitha Mortha, David Wunsch	
5. CWO staff grow in their ability to articulate and communicate the theological rationales for programs, activities and decisions		*Provide structured staff sessions for theological exploration and learning for key staff that need to be equipped to communicate these rationales to others *Ensure Lutheran history, teaching and practice is part of staff orientation and staff development	OPB Contacts: Marcus Kunz, Rhondean Johnson		
6 . The CWO achieves enterprise-wide adoption of processes, systems and technologies that optimize results, increase efficiency and are adaptable to new needs.	*Evidence of increasing utilization by users; successful achievement of post-implementation evaluation criteria established and measurements reported for effectiveness, efficiency and process optimizations for projects and system improvements related to the following systems: ECIS, Intranet, elca.org web site and extranet enhancements as detailed in other goals and objectives, processes and tools for communication with and between all staff, records and information management - data systems and use (program rollout; technology and process enhancements; records retention and archiving, data warehouse), Infrastructure upgrades and enhancements, financial systems and process analysis (Gift Wrap; Trust Processor), financial systems integration Phase 2, Enterprise Risk Management, SRAS	*Roll out framework for and develop a detailed process to support enterprise-wide strategy for pre-implementation engagement and post-implementation support and evaluation of major system and technology investments - the enterprise-wide strategy must include a mechanism for prioritization *Identify priority systems development and improvement for key business needs outlined this plan and according to operational and programmatic needs *Develop and implement an Enterprise Risk Management program	OT Contacts: Jon Beyer	OS OS Contacts: Sue Rothmeyer	

ELCA CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
Strategic Planning History 2005 - 2014
Summary Document

Prepared for the
Planning and Evaluation Committee
of the
ELCA Church Council
April 2015

The Planning and Evaluation Committee of the ELCA Church Council has the responsibility to monitor and review the work of the ELCA Churchwide Organization. This work is done in cooperation with the Executive for Administration in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

The churchwide organization's strategic plan is the foundation and framework for the monitoring, review and evaluation of the organization's work. Progress on the work is presented annually to the Church Council. The Planning and Evaluation Committee receives performance updates and information regarding the work at each of its meetings.

What follows is a brief history of the planning in the organization beginning in 2005.

In 2005, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted The Plan for Mission. At that time, there were 10,549 congregations and 4.8 million members. The Plan for Mission included:

Mission Statement

Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world.

Vision Statement

Claimed by God's grace for the sake of the world, we are a new creation through God's living Word by the power of the Holy Spirit;

Gathered by God's grace for the sake of the world, we will live among God's faithful people, hear God's Word, and share Christ's supper;

Sent by God's grace for the sake of the world, we will proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, serve all people following the example of our Lord Jesus, and strive for justice and peace in all the world.

The mission and vision statements were adopted for the whole church. The Plan for Mission also included five strategic directions for the churchwide organization.

- **Support congregations** in their call to be faithful, welcoming, and generous sharing the mind of Christ;
- Assist members, congregations, synods, and institutions and agencies of this church to **grow in evangelical outreach**;
- **Step forward as a public church** that witnesses boldly to God's love for all that God has created;
- **Deepen and extend our global, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships** for the sake of God's mission; and
- Assist this church to **bring forth and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders** whose vocations serve God's mission in a pluralistic world.

The five strategic directions of the Plan for Mission were designed to serve the churchwide organization through 2012. In 2009, the Cabinet of Executives of the churchwide organization adopted two Strategic Priorities that continued the work to implement the Plan for Mission, and enabled the organization to focus its efforts. The priorities set forth were affirmed by both the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council.

The churchwide organization, working collaboratively with congregations, synods, agencies and institutions and other partners, will give priority to:

1. accompanying congregations as growing centers for evangelical mission; and
2. building capacity for evangelical witness and service in the world to alleviate poverty and to work for justice and peace.

In June 2010, the Office of the Presiding Bishop appointed a design team and outlined a process to restructure the churchwide organization. The design team consulted with the Cabinet of Executives, the Church Council's Executive Committee, the Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops, the liaison bishops to the Church Council, and the planning team of the Living Into the Future Together Task Force (LIFT). The process was reviewed and updated with the full Church Council at its August 4, 2010 meeting. The Church Council's Planning and Evaluation Committee served as consultants in this process. The design took into account the work of the LIFT Task Force up to that point. The ELCA Church Council approved the new organizational design at its November 2010 meeting.

The churchwide organization structure is composed of the following offices and units:

- Office of the Presiding Bishop
- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the Treasurer
- Congregational and Synodical Mission
- Global Mission
- Mission Advancement

There are four Separately Incorporated Ministries:

- Publishing House of the ELCA - Augsburg Fortress
- Board of Pensions - Portico
- Mission Investment Fund
- Women of the ELCA

The 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted recommendations from the LIFT Task Force that included the role of the churchwide organization as follows:

- accompany congregations and synods;
- build the capacity of this church for evangelical witness and service;
- continue to build and strengthen mutual and interdependent relationships;
- model and promote the vision of a multicultural, multi-ethnic church;
- coordinate this church's global mission and its international development and relief work;
- lead its theological reflection and deliberations on identity and mission;

- lead, in collaboration with the Conference of Bishops, synod leaders, and the Church Council, in exploring opportunities to grow current support, including direct appeals, planned giving, and endowment management.

In 2011, the churchwide organization developed an enterprise-wide biennial strategic plan for the first time. Up until then, each unit had its own plan. This pattern had developed from the fact that units had their own boards for many years in the churchwide organization. The 2011-13 Operational Plan was rooted in the two strategic priorities, while still continuing work in the areas of the five strategic directions.

Currently, the churchwide organization has a 2014-2016 Operational Plan. The plan has two parts, a Strategic Intent and an annual operations plan. The plan is framed by the Presiding Bishop's four emphases:

- We are church;
- We are Lutheran;
- We are church together; and
- We are church for the sake of the world.

There are six goals to the plan:

Goal 1 – Congregations are growing, vibrant in their worship life and diverse, and worshippers increase their engagement in and support for God's mission, locally and globally.

Goal 2 - Members of this church are better connected with who we are as church and relationships across this church's wider ecology are deepened and strengthened for evangelical witness and service in the world.

Goal 3 - Impoverished and vulnerable people, locally and globally, achieve sufficient, sustainable lives and are accompanied in addressing the challenges of poverty, injustice and emergencies in their communities.

Goal 4 – Lay and rostered leaders are grounded in Lutheran theology and competent to serve the church we are becoming, and the leadership profile reflects this church's aspiration for cultural, generational and socio-economic diversity.

Goal 5 – Leaders across this church are working together on strategies to address future sustainability of the ELCA, and the churchwide organization has a growing and sustainable revenue base for mission.

Goal 6 - The churchwide organization is effective in fulfilling its roles and functions on behalf of the ELCA and further develops an organization culture characterized by strong leadership, accountability, competent and motivated staff, effective systems and learning.

The work of the churchwide organization is monitored and evaluated based on the goals and objectives in the Operational Plan. An annual report will be presented to the Church Council. The report will be framed around the strategic goals, major achievements, setbacks, with a critical analysis of the cross-cutting commitments, key relationships and management of risk and resources. The Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Church Council, working with staff, will use the plan to review and evaluate the work of the churchwide units.

**ELCA Church Council
Responses to Questions
Report of the Executive for Administration
November 9, 2014**

Question #1: What outcomes should we strive for with our congregations?

Mission/Ministry

- Mission focus.
- Make them missional.
- Be a “home base” for social ministry.
- Minister joyfully, no matter what.
- A focus on mission rather than numbers.

Worship Attendance

- Paying attention to worship attendance.
- Growth.
- 60% worship attendance (60% of baptized members) at least once per month.
- Worship attendance is one important metric, better than the membership numbers (depth of participation in faith practices and engagement).

Engagement with the World

- Engagement with our community beyond our church walls.
- Be a church without walls.
- Becoming more multicultural.
- Every congregation should know and understand they are part of a wider church – the synod, the ELCA.
- Conduct surveys to determine how congregational members feel about their connection to other people and God through their church.
- 80% of baptized membership engaged in some form of ministry or service (inside or outside the congregation) weekly (other than worship).
- At least one member involved in global.
- Some involvement of a local ministry, e.g. food pantry, habitat.
- Building relationships with other congregations in the synod.

Children/Young Adults

- Focus upon setting a conscious goal of inclusion of children at church.
- Engagement of young adults. Create an environment that meets them where they are.
- Keep kids in church after they are confirmed, in college, too.
- 100% of baptized youth are remembered by the congregation.
- 100% of youth who worship in the congregation know they are loved.
- Greater balance between young and old.

Education

- Engagement with scripture.
- 50% of adult members are involved in adult education.
- Educate members to be Lutheran Christians.

Miscellaneous

- Current focus seems to be on quantitative measurement. Is there a way to begin measuring qualitative results?
- Faithfulness in word and sacrament.
- Transformation, change of heart, mind, perspective.
- As a church, we do live in abundance.
- The ELCA would recognize congregations have immediate needs and provide resources to help with finances, a new roof, etc.
- Outcomes that are genuine.

Question #2: What should we be measuring about congregations?

Mission/Ministry

- Accompaniment.
- Ministry.
- How are we assessing the impact of all ministries? Not only numbers on Sunday morning worship attendance.
- How is the vibrancy of ministry measured?

Worship Attendance

- Attendance.
- Number of people in worship and Sunday school.
- Number of Sundays a family unit attends.
- What is worship attendance?
- Attendance and multiple Sunday attendance, or participation.
- Compare worship as a percentage of membership, not gross numbers.
- Deeper understanding of attendance.
- How many people are in the church building on Sunday mornings?
- How many people are in worship each week in your congregation?
- Which days of the week does your congregation worship regularly, and how many people attend?

Other Attendance

- God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday: number of churches participating, number of members participating.
- Add the following to the Personal Record: attendance at annual business meeting, number of adults involved in leadership positions, number of income streams and amount from each.
- Activity level daily.
- How many people are in and out of the church building in one week?

Engagement with the World

- Conduct surveys to determine how congregational members feel about their connection to other people and God through their church.
- Ecumenical engagement.

Children/Young Adults

- Percentage of children in church on a Sunday.

Education

- Engagement with scripture.

Money

- Organizational health, e.g. focus of congregation, how money spent.
- Money given to all causes.
- More information on “giving units,” not just dollars donated.
- What percentage of pastors currently serving in parish calls are paid at or above synod guidelines?

Intangibles

- Find a way to measure enthusiasm.
- Measure less, and less frequently. Without buy-in, measurement is meaningless.
- What the congregation thinks, reflects its gifts.
- That congregational work is of a faithful purpose? Measurable.
- How can we measure spiritual growth? A survey for congregation members, asking number of people you know (relationships), spiritual value.
- Qualitative over quantitative.

Miscellaneous

- Survey of pastors in congregations and their view on how congregation is doing – pull measurables to move forward with.
- Measure what congregations feel they do well and what congregations feel they need help with.

Question #3: How do you understand your role as Church Council in relationship to our goal of becoming a more multicultural church?

- Support of more Spanish language materials.
- Congregations should reflect their communities demographically.
- To build an understanding we are different and hold up the differences.
- Recognize the privilege we have and use it any way we can.
- Diversity of ideas.
- To hold up the call for multicultural goal for our church.
- Just because it's hard, we cannot give up.
- Is there a distinction between a multicultural ELCA vs. integrated congregations?
- Do we mean something beyond strictly membership statistics?
- Continue to raise the question and find partners, local and national.
- Share and promote stories of successes at the congregational level.

- Give our full support and attention (110%) to mission starts in ethnic communities.
- Being sure/ensuring that there is ample and ONGOING mission support money for ethnic and multicultural congregations.
- Absolute commitment and leadership around this goal.
- Make decisions that fund and support the work that will lead us to become a more multicultural church, even when resources become scarce.

Question #4: How have or would you go about engaging becoming a more multicultural church in your congregation?

Attitude/Intention

- Start on our knees.
- Invite, invite, invite.
- Be welcoming.
- Be a welcoming church to all and those who are other-cultural who visit are welcomed just as much as a non-multi/other-cultural person.
- Mindful of the answer to “Why” be more multicultural.
- Consciously become less mono-cultural.
- Ask the multi-cultural question in the congregations we are a part of. How many “set” it as a goal and plan it?
- [Not] continuing to do the same thing; change, try a new angle.
- Needs to be intentional work.
- Seems to work well in small congregation because the hospitality is easily felt. Can be hard to maintain growth.
- Be a role model and encourage congregational members to become a more multicultural church.

Worship

- Have worship at alternate times (evenings, weekdays).
- Identify what we do well as a congregation, promote that aspect (whether it is Sunday school or not) and link it to worship. Because worship is where we find/hear the gospel, and that is what will keep members there.
- Changing the images and the physical characteristics of the church space.
- Use music.

Language

- Keep at it. Watch language.
- Consider offering ESL classes and/or Bible studies for immigrant communities.
- Use Spanish liturgy and songs.
- Access congregations’ language assets.

Leadership

- Use Latino leaders.
- Worship leaders could educate and inform congregations.

Education

- Access synod and churchwide resources.
- Share ideas where they are successful.

Engagement with the World

- Need to know your community.
- Go to Latino organization to inform, advertise, invite.
- Connecting with students at local universities with intentional outreach from the beginning.
- Our suburban congregation has partnered or done exchanges with several urban and/or ethnic congregations in our synod, doing pulpit swaps, visiting each other's services, etc.
- Currently working with the local Assemblies of God congregation on a Spanish-speaking service.
- Our rural congregation has a companion congregation in Tanzania. This rural Tanzanian church has concerns as do we, and we share our lives together across the globe.
- I believe most of the multicultural youth in our community worship regularly with us. However, 30 miles away, there are many more we should care for.

Miscellaneous

- Presiding Bishop someday who is a person of color.
- Mission starts directed toward Asian and Latino populations.
- Accompaniment.

Report on Mission Advancement - Strategic Communications

The Mission Advancement unit has responsibility for the communications, publications, marketing, digital media/video, news and media relations work of the churchwide organization. The Executive Director, Mission Advancement and the editor, *The Lutheran*, last reported to the Planning and Evaluation Committee in November 2012 regarding *The Lutheran* magazine. This report is to briefly highlight actions of the subsequent two years and share current planning.

In 2012, *The Lutheran* initiated a process to consider the future of the magazine, an ELCA publication of more than 24 years standing. Despite its impressive track record, the review was triggered by a concern about declining circulation and future financial viability of the magazine. A consultant, Lyla Rogan, facilitated the process to gather thinking from the magazine's Advisory Committee, ELCA churchwide leaders and units, the ELCA Church Council and separately incorporated ministries. A survey of subscribers and ex-subscribers solicited feedback from the magazine's current audience.

While different views emerged from the Rogan review about the future direction for the magazine, there was convergence of thinking with respect to:

- affirmation of *The Lutheran*'s past contribution
- appreciation of the magazine by its current readers and the importance of continuing to satisfy their needs
- concern about the real challenges facing the magazine
- the need for a magazine of some form into the future that serves the ELCA and people participating in the church
- the importance of reaching and engaging a new readership
- the future strategy having at its core an on-line product or products with digital access and links to social media
- the future product/s being better integrated with ELCA's other information, publication and communication plans.

There was also consensus on the following commitments:

- To continue the current print magazine for at least the next two years for its existing subscribers and readers and to make some enhancements to design, artwork and content.
- To develop over the next 12 months a proposal for a new on-line product with digital access for phones and tablets, incorporating social media and comprehensive links to relevant resources and media.

Since a major conclusion was that the magazine's future cannot be considered in isolation from other print and online products, resources and publications of the ELCA churchwide organization, the consultant further recommended a communications audit that would include all external messaging, including *The Lutheran*. The firm selected to perform the audit was Jasculca Terman Strategic Communications of Chicago. The Communications Audit was completed in mid-2014.

The audit confirmed some things we already knew, but also provided insight from several perspectives that helped us to chart a course moving forward. Among several conclusions, the audit found that:

- There is not currently one flagship publication or general communication tool/channel for ELCA members.
- Our communications channels are diffuse and not coordinated.
- We have multiple story brands located in separate groups within Mission Advancement.

- *The Lutheran* magazine's circulation has declined over the years and that it will not be sustainable in the long term as a subscription-based publication.

The first step in implementing the recommendations from the Communications Audit was to form one integrated staff group. Effective February 9, 2015, Mission Advancement restructured its communications staff from two work groups (Marketing Communications and *The Lutheran*) into one new team called Strategic Communications. The move to a single communications group is consistent with the vision behind the creation of the Mission Advancement unit that called for clear, consistent and strategic communications.

Forrest Meyer is director of this new team, which comprises two groups, Publications and Communications & Marketing. The Communications & Marketing group provides communications and marketing planning for churchwide units, mission funding programs and gift planning programs. It will also provide communications support for donor stewardship, the ELCA's brand identity, for major churchwide events, for the fostering of member engagement via social media and online communities, and for the ELCA's web presence and video productions. The work of the Publications group includes *The Lutheran* magazine, TheLutheran.org, *Seeds for the Parish, Stories of Faith in Action, Living Lutheran*, editorial/copyediting services, graphic design and artistic direction, and public relations and media relations. We have decided to stop publishing, by year end, two publications: *The Little Lutheran* and *The Little Christian*. With current subscription numbers and other related revenue and resource factors, ceasing publication is prudent and necessary.

As a result of the new design, some staff positions were eliminated, some were created and all will be involved in new ways of operating together. The total number of staff was unchanged except one person was moved from independent contractor to regular employee status.

Next Steps

Secretary Chris Boerger met with *The Lutheran* Advisory Committee in March to review the provisions related to *The Lutheran* publication and discuss what the new integrated structure might mean for the continuing resolutions as currently written. Secretary Boerger also described the changes in the constitution and church since the time the resolutions were written. Actions to amend these provisions will be proposed for the November 2015 meeting of the ELCA Church Council.

A full implementation plan will be completed in 2015 with a hoped-for effective date of February 2016.



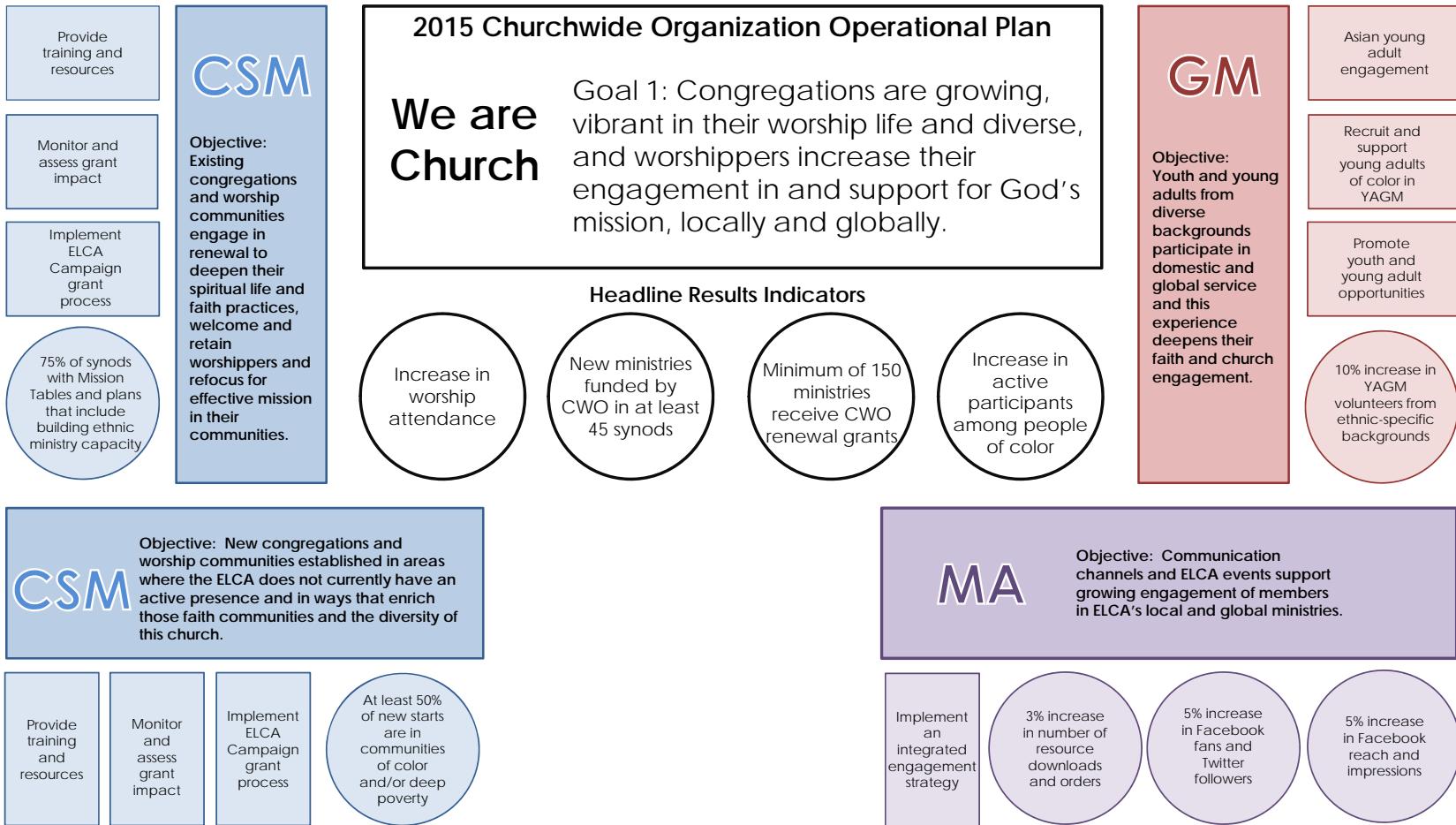
Legend

Activity or Program

2015 major programs and activities for achieving the objective

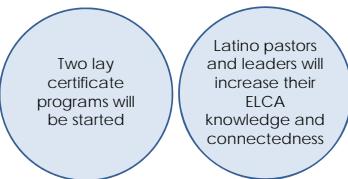
Progress Indicator

A 2015 indicator that the objective is being achieved



Address networked theo. ed. and explore financial stability

Develop and provide relevant culture specific TEEM and M. Div. programs



Latino pastors and leaders will increase their ELCA knowledge and connectedness

Implement youth and young adult grant work connected with the Campaign

Strengthen young adult networks through training, education, and experiential learning



Research trends related to ordained and rostered women in this church

Develop more effective recruitment strategies



CSM

Objective: Lay and rostered leaders have a deep understanding of theology in the Lutheran tradition and are equipped for ongoing discernment in this church's local and global contexts.

CSM

Objective: Youth and young adults gain experiences that utilize and develop their leadership abilities and gifts.

CSM

Objective: The profile of lay and rostered leaders reflects this church's aspiration for equity and diversity with respect to gender balance, men and women of color and languages other than English and young adults and youth.

Identify characteristics and competencies for mission leaders

Coordinate and expand the Latino Lay School project

Provide training and resources to both lay and rostered in multiple languages and communities

Word and Service recommendations developed to present to 2016 Churchwide Assembly

CSM

Objective: Lay and rostered leaders have the range of competencies needed for leadership in a changing church.

2015 Churchwide Organization Operational Plan

We are Lutheran

Goal 4: Lay and rostered leaders are grounded in Lutheran theology and competent to serve the church we are becoming, and the leadership profile reflects this church's aspiration for cultural, generational and socio-economic diversity.

Headline Results Indicators

Demonstrated change on a Lutheran theology assessment

Increase in young adults in various ELCA networks

GM

Objective: Leaders in companion churches have opportunities to develop their leadership capacities, with specific strategies directed to young adults and women.

Provide educational grants through the International Leadership Program

Support leadership opportunities for global women through the Campaign



CSM

Objective: The ELCA roster system provides for a more flexible and responsive process for calling leaders and encourages new leadership.

Train candidacy committees and relevant staff on the revised Candidacy Manual

Improve systems for updating and managing rostered leader data

Continue cross-unit work on mobility and Rostered Leader Profile



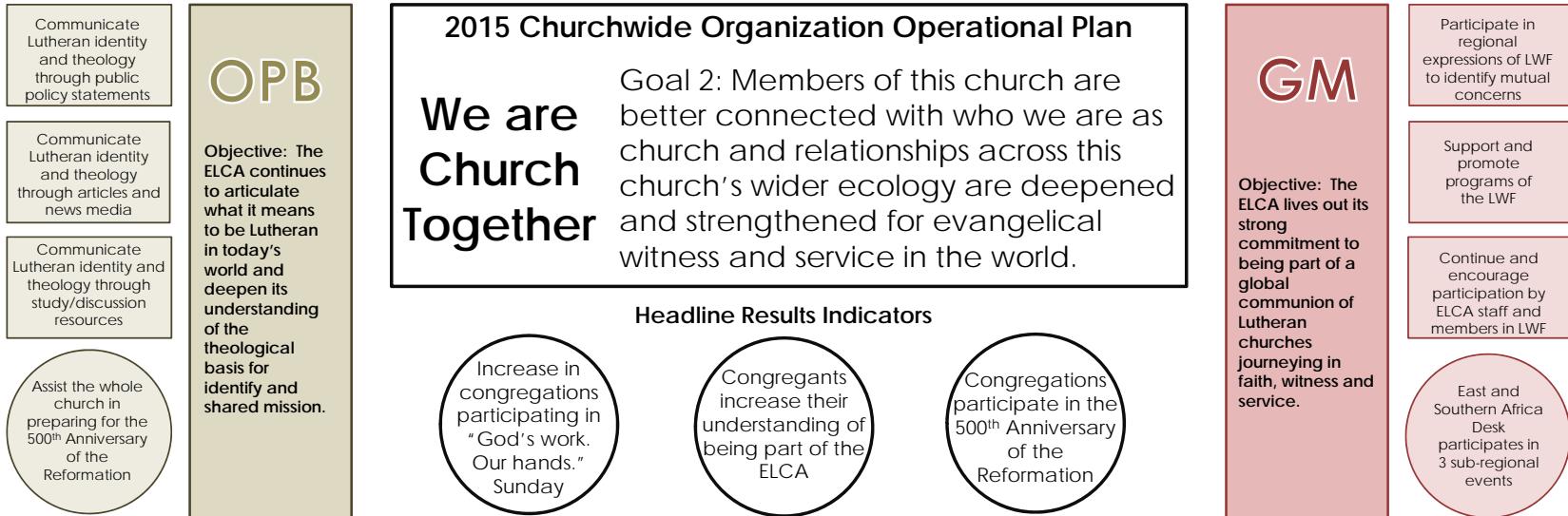
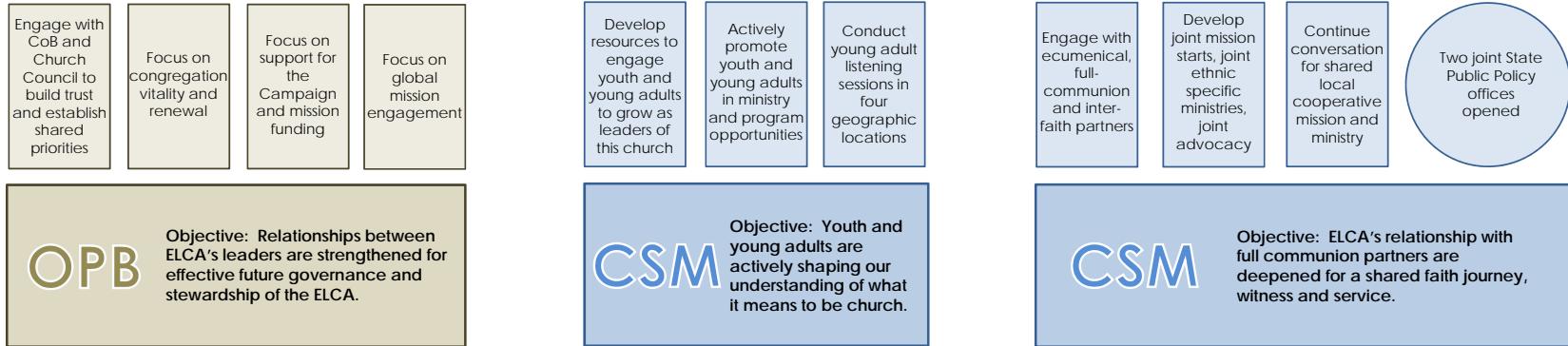
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Activity or Program

2015 major programs and activities for achieving the objective

Progress Indicator





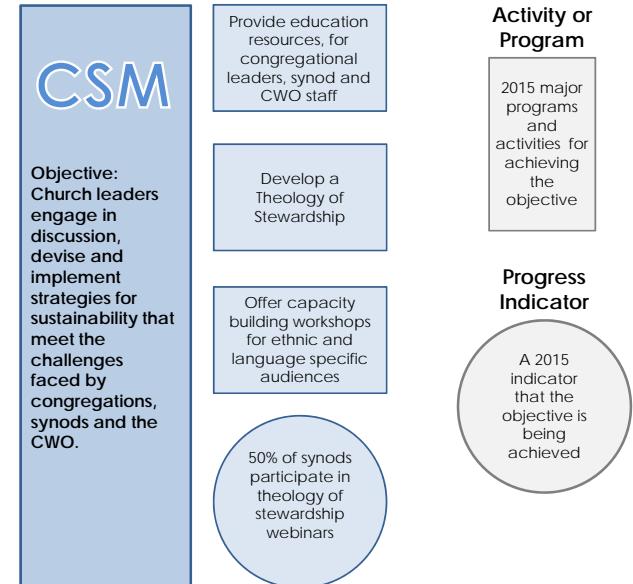
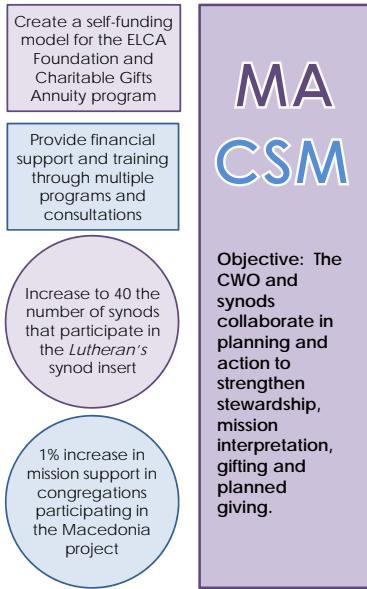
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Activity or Program

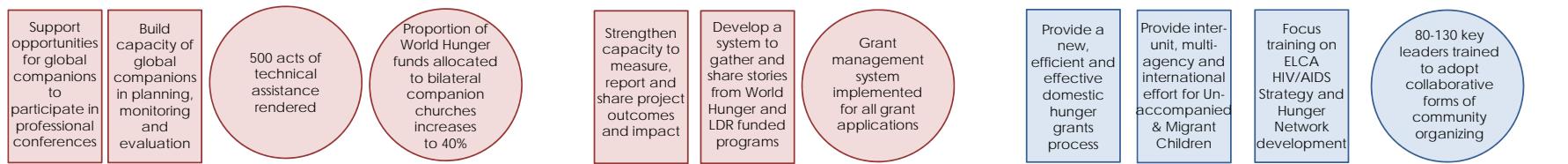
2015 major programs and activities for achieving the objective

Progress Indicator

A 2015 indicator that the objective is being achieved



Legend



Legend

Activity or Program

2015 major programs and activities for achieving the objective

Progress Indicator

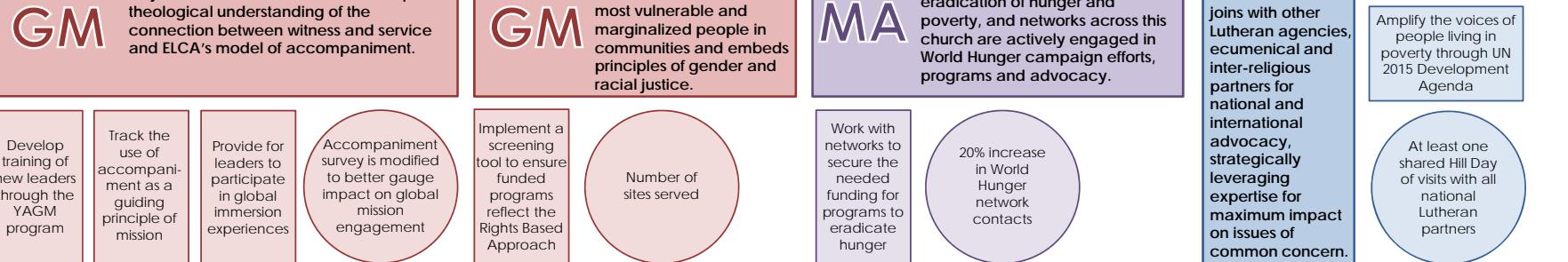
A 2015 indicator that the objective is being achieved

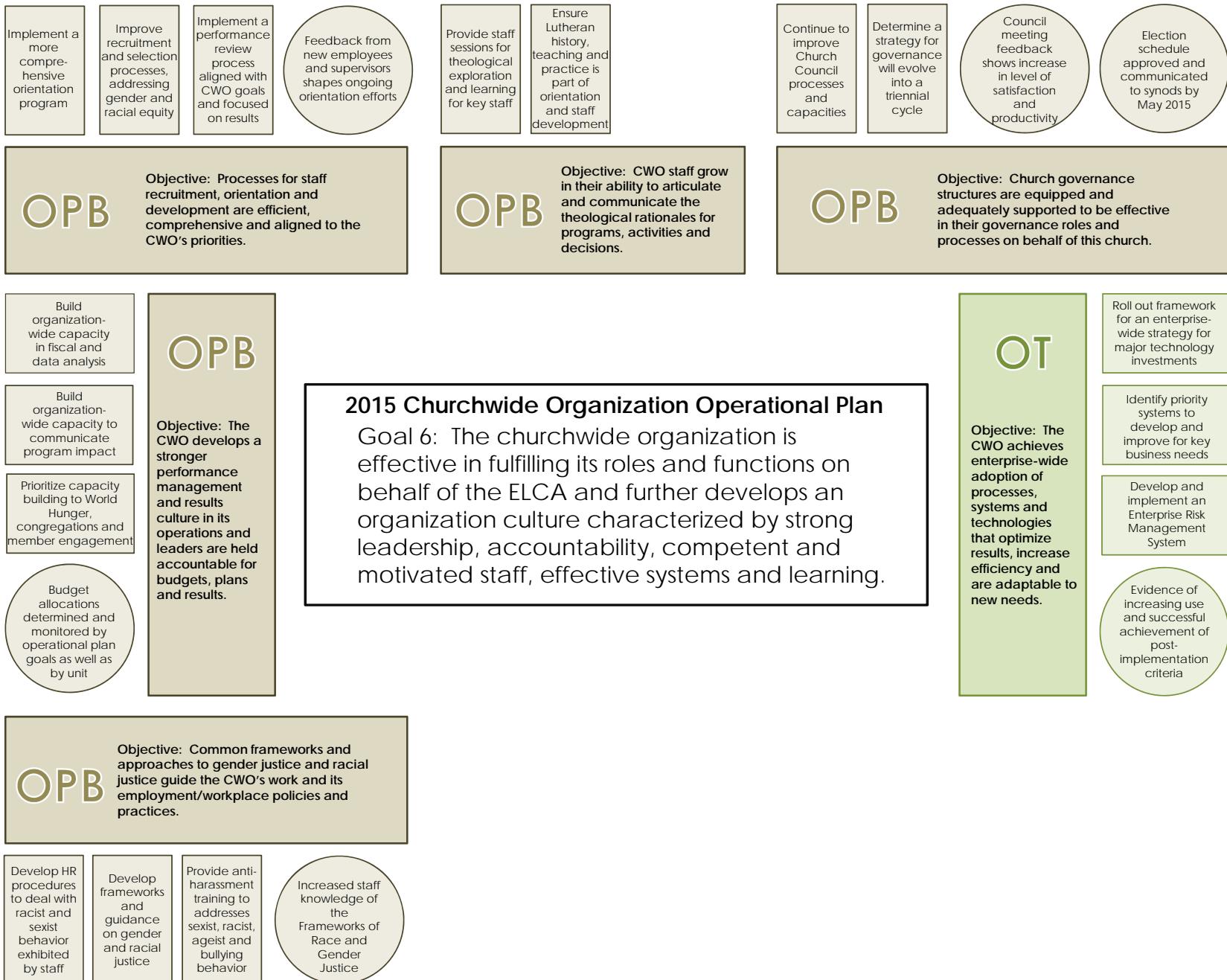
2015 Churchwide Organization Operational Plan

We are Church for the Sake of the World

Goal 3: Impoverished and vulnerable people, locally and globally, achieve sufficient, sustainable lives and are accompanied in addressing the challenges of poverty, injustice, and emergencies in their communities.

Headline Results Indicators





Legend

Activity or Program

2015 major programs and activities for achieving the objective

Progress Indicator

A 2015 indicator that the objective is being achieved

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA

Coordination and leadership for the comprehensive campaign approved by the 2013 Churchwide Assembly is provided by Mission Advancement. Through several featured priorities, *The Campaign for the ELCA* seeks to:

- Increase the ELCA's capacity to support congregational renewal and the planting of new congregations
- Form and support new lay, ordained and global leaders for mission
- Encourage and form lay youth and young adult leaders
- Support disability ministries
- Bolster the commitment to walk with global companion churches in shared witness
- Expand efforts to address poverty and hunger

In addition, the campaign is in alignment with the [Churchwide Operational Plan](#) goal five: "Leaders across this church are working together on strategies to address future sustainability of the ELCA and the churchwide organization has a growing and sustainable revenue base for mission."

Having completed the first twelve months of this unprecedented, comprehensive campaign, we have seen a positive response from across our church illustrating the significance of this work. The church owes a great deal of thanks to the volunteers of the Campaign Steering Committee and the Bishop's Advisory Council, as well as many very generous lay and rostered leaders, who are stepping forward to extend the impact of the campaign. In the following report, you will get a glimpse at the work that has taken place to lay a solid foundation for the next four years. And with this foundation now in place, we are gearing up for the second year of the campaign.

While the campaign is entering its second year, we are already seeing amazing things accomplished through first-year gifts. The first class of International Leaders-Women will be starting at ELCA colleges, universities and seminaries this fall, the Young Adults in Global Mission ministry launched the Rwanda country program last year and will launch the Cambodia program this August, the ELCA Malaria Campaign is nearing its financial goal of \$15 million and many more exciting things are in progress.

This year we are focused on the 2015 annual campaign theme, Congregations, which includes ELCA New Congregations, Renewing Congregations and Disability Ministries, while still supporting gifts to whatever area most appeals to the passion of the donor and gifts that are given for the campaign where needed most.

❖ Cash and Commitments

- We have received \$44.7 million in cash gifts since the launch of the campaign. Through our work with multi-year commitments, we have a total of \$48.2 million (approximately 24.4% of our \$198 million goal) in cash and commitments to the priorities of the campaign.
- We saw a 21.3% increase in major gifts to ELCA ministries between 2013 and 2014. In addition, there was a 67% increase in six-figure or more gifts. Increases in the various gift ranges are as follows:

Gift Range	2013	2014	Percent Change
\$5,000-\$24,999	133	158	18.8%
\$25,000-\$49,999	14	16	14.2%
\$50,000-\$249,999	19	21	28.5%
\$250,000-\$499,999	1	2	100%
\$500,000+	2	8	300%
Total	169	205	21.3%

- While planned gifts for the campaign do not count toward the cash goal approved by the Churchwide Assembly, they are critical to the future sustainability of these priorities. To date, we have been notified of \$10.8 million in planned gifts toward the ministries of the campaign.
- In order to support the planned gift commitments of members toward campaign priorities, the Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA acted to establish the *Always Being Made New* endowment fund. This endowment will support ongoing priorities of the churchwide organization for congregations, leadership development, poverty and hunger and global church.
- Three additional endowments were also established where none currently existed to support specific priorities for Disability Ministries, International Leaders-Women and Youth and Young Adult Ministries.
- The ELCA Foundation gift planning staff has grown to 19 and is deployed across the country to assist members in making planned or current gifts to support the campaign priorities.
- Since the approval of *The Campaign for the ELCA* at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly, there has been a significant push to engage our leadership groups in the campaign. The level of participation through gifts and commitments is currently as follows:

Leadership Group	Participation Rate	Total number of commitments
Campaign Steering Committee	100%	12
Conference of Bishops	88%	57
Church Council	80%	36
Churchwide Administrative Team	100%	7
Churchwide Senior Leadership	85%	35
Bishop's Advisory Council	78%	7

- From 2013 to 2014, the number of Churchwide staff contributing to ELCA ministries via the payroll contribution program grew from 116 to 158, an increase of 36% in participation. A campaign thank-you event was hosted in February to acknowledge staff for their contributions.
- A major gift donor elected to do early fulfillment of their \$2 million campaign commitment with \$500,000 going to ELCA New Congregations, Renewing Congregations, Young Adults in Global Mission and International Leaders-Women each, allowing critical work to get underway.

❖ Campaign Communications

- In late January, congregations and synods received the 2015 Annual Theme Toolkit equipping them with resources to support and promote this year's annual campaign theme—Congregations—including ELCA New Congregations, Renewing Congregations and Disability Ministries.
- Various materials reporting on the first year of the campaign are currently in development, including a news release, annual report and video, and will be distributed later this spring.
- Campaign ads are appearing in various issues of *The Lutheran*, as well as the Women of the ELCA's magazine, *Gather*. A feature article on the International Leaders-Women priority will appear in the October 2015 issue of *Gather*.
- Mini-case statements, which provide more detail regarding the various campaign priorities, are now available for ELCA Fund for Leaders, ELCA Malaria Campaign, International Leaders-

Women and ELCA New Congregations. A mini-case statement for each of the remaining campaign priorities will be made available by late April.

- The 90-second campaign video featuring Bishop Eaton is now available to the public, in both English and Spanish, on the ELCA YouTube channel.
- Two new Young Adults in Global Mission videos—one for development and one for recruitment (short and long versions)—are now available for use and may also be found on the ELCA YouTube channel.
- The March 2015 issue of *The Lutheran* highlighted the ELCA Malaria Campaign with a cover story, “Our malaria moment.” The story illustrated how the campaign is making an impact across the world due to the generosity of our members.

❖ **Campaign Steering Committee (CSC)**

- The CSC, under the leadership of Loren and MaryAnn Anderson, meets twice a year and stays in touch with a monthly newsletter between meetings.
- Two additional members, Duane E. Sander and Dr. Tanisha Pitre, have been added to the CSC and will join the group at the upcoming meeting in April.
- Due to scheduling conflicts, Bishop Claire Burkat has resigned from the committee. Bishop Brian Maas continues to serve as a representative of the Conference of Bishops.

❖ **Synod Engagement and Support**

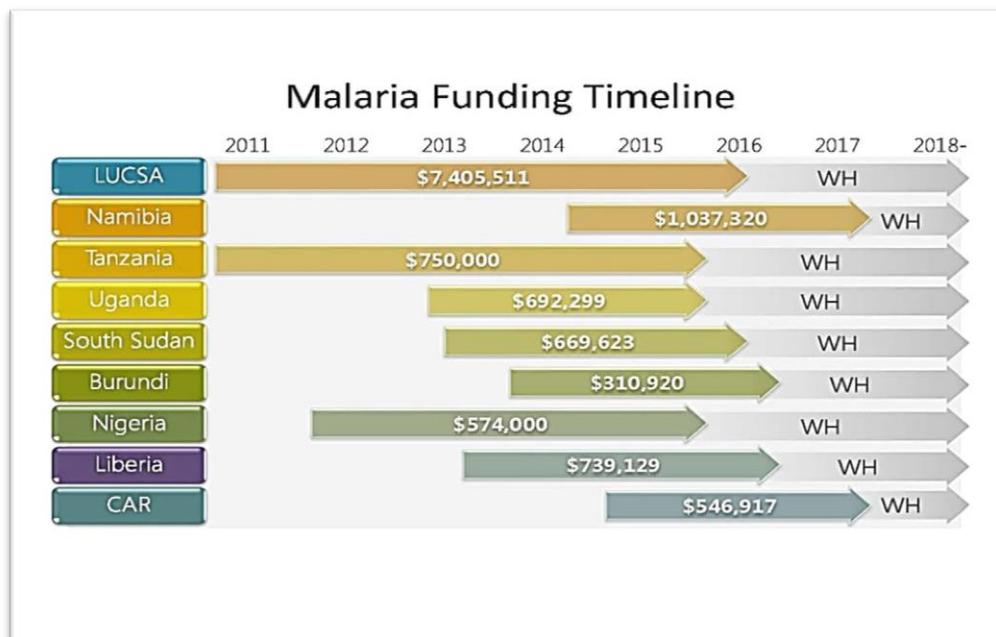
- Churchwide representatives will provide campaign information and updates at this year's synod assemblies and campaign information will also appear in the synod assembly one-pagers. Campaign team members, by request, will be at a number of the upcoming assemblies, as well.
- Synods will receive an updated report of their campaign fundraising to-date prior to synod assemblies. The report will include gift income through synods and received directly by the churchwide organization.
- Campaign events in collaboration with synods to garner support for the campaign:
 - Networks for Mission events in Regions 6 and 3 – Fall 2014*
 - Atlanta – November 2014*
 - Baltimore – Fall 2014*
 - Chicago Area Advent Celebration – December 2014*
 - Denver – January 2015
 - Rocky Mountain Synod Council – January 2015
 - San Diego – January 2015*
 - Arizona – February 2015
 - Florida – February/March 2015
 - Baltimore – March 2015
 - Upstate New York – March 2015
 - St. Louis – March 2015*
 - Sacramento – April 2015
 - Fargo/Moorhead – April 2015
 - St. Paul/Minneapolis – April 2015
 - Some scheduled events were cancelled due to weather and are actively being re-scheduled.

*Events with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton present.

❖ Program Updates

- **ELCA Malaria Campaign**

- The ELCA Malaria Campaign is now supporting the malaria programs of companions in 13 countries in Africa. The newest programs are in Burundi and Namibia.
 - To date, almost \$14 million, or 93% of the \$15 million goal, has been raised. We anticipate achieving the goal following World Malaria Day in April 2015.
 - The 2015 synod assemblies will be an important occasion for thanking ELCA members, congregations and synods. Synods have been encouraged to build approximately 10-12 minutes into their assembly agendas for time to acknowledge the anticipated successful completion of the ELCA Malaria Campaign. A special 2-3 minute video was produced to be shown during that time. A Malaria campaign volunteer leader in each synod was identified to facilitate the time and offer words of thanks – and also share the news that while the dollar goal of the campaign is nearly met, the work of ending malaria will continue through ELCA World Hunger’s focus on diseases of poverty.
 - As the fundraising responsibilities for the ELCA Malaria Campaign are now winding down, Jessica Nipp Hacker has transitioned her work from Coordinator of the ELCA Malaria Campaign to Director for Donor Relations and Donor Stewardship in Mission Advancement. This is a new position that has been developed to assist the unit in enhancing our donor stewardship practices. Her former assistant, Allison Beebe, continues to provide coordination for the ELCA Malaria Campaign.
 - Because many of our partners will elect to continue their malaria programming past the 2015 ELCA Malaria Campaign end date, programming will continue under the umbrella of ELCA World Hunger. In many places, malaria work will become more integrated with the other health-related work happening in a country. Below is a chart showing the continuation of funding for various malaria programs through ELCA World Hunger.



- **ELCA World Hunger**

- The anticipated growth in giving through the opportunity of the campaign has made it possible for new initiatives to get underway.
- In addition to increasing the Diakonia work by \$1 million from ELCA World Hunger, Global Mission is aligning a spending down of other restricted funds with the hunger-related budget, resulting in a total increase for diaconal work of \$1.8 million. This allows an early start of project work that could be continued in 2016 and 2017 with further growth in giving to ELCA World Hunger. New work is primarily in bilateral grants to global companion churches, with the largest expansion taking place in sustainable development, health, situations of migration, and work among marginalized communities (including the Roma people.)
- The expansion of work to address hunger in the United States by approximately \$300,000 is aiming at longer-term systemic change in keeping with recommendations from a domestic hunger program review process. Initial expansion is primarily in strategic hunger-related grants and in work on advocacy focused on new arrival groups to the United States, especially migrant and unaccompanied children.
- Growth in networking opportunities that draw groups in the ELCA even deeper into a commitment to work together on hunger is also a priority. This is a cooperative venture across all units.
- The groundwork is being laid for larger growth potential in 2015 and 2016 through the ELCA Youth Gathering, an annual theme focus year for hunger within the campaign (2016), the transition from the malaria focus to a broader topic of health and hunger, new congregation-oriented resources and continued work on articulating focus and the case for ELCA World Hunger.

- **Congregations**

- **ELCA New Congregations**

- 20 new ministries already were approved to start this year with a goal of 50 additional proposals for the remainder of the year.
- There are 372 new ministries under development (an increase of 16 from 2014) with 56% among ethnic or multicultural communities and 24% among people of the working class and still experiencing poverty.
- A recruiter has been contracted to help identify qualified candidates for the director for congregational support position after over a year of posting and interviews have not identified the candidate.
- Ruben Duran, the ELCA's program director for new congregations, recently spoke with *The Christian Century* regarding our church's growth and strategy around planting new congregations. In it, Duran identifies the power of listening to our communities and neighbors.

- **Disability Ministries**

- The Campaign Table for Disability Ministries met in early December 2014 to discuss the priorities of the program and the potential impact of its various components.
- The priorities of the program, as outlined in the case statement, are to provide internships, immersion experiences and scholarships to help us equip leaders to serve the church, our communities and the world.

- The conveners are dedicated to developing networks, being advocates and becoming a strong, relevant resource in the area of disability ministry. The group continues to further discuss the program via email and conference calls.
- An endowment was established to support specific priorities for Disability Ministries.
- A budget is being compiled early this spring to drive the work moving forward. Priorities regarding granting structure will be determined once the budget is established.
- **Renewing Congregations**
 - A granting meeting will take place this spring to review and distribute the first wave of renewal grants. Grants will be given in three different categories:
 - Synod Strategies: Renewal grants initiated by the synod to impact a group of congregations in the synod, such as all rural congregations.
 - Fast Growth Grants: Renewal grants for congregations already in the renewal process, but are growing at a very rapid pace and outgrowing their resources. These grants give an infusion of funds for three years to help them employ new staff and acquire other necessary resources.
 - Area Ministry Strategies: Grants for pilot projects affecting congregations clustered in relatively close proximity who intentionally want to reengage in the community and revitalize their ministries together.
- **Global Church Sponsorship**
 - The director for Global Church Sponsorship has recently resigned and the program coordinator has retired. During this time of transition to new leadership, the overall fundraising strategy is being reviewed and some program restructuring is expected.
- **Missionary Sponsorship and Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)**
 - Support is expected to provide roughly half the cost of support for all categories of missionary service and has historically focused on long-term missionaries and a close, "covenant" relationship with sponsoring congregations.
 - With fewer missionaries who make international service a lifetime vocation, it has been increasingly challenging to maintain the level of income. Efforts are underway to strengthen communications between sponsors and missionaries, invite new sponsors and increase retention of current sponsors upon the return of missionaries.
 - There are currently 61 YAGMs serving in international locations.
 - Recent program growth has been made possible through *The Campaign for the ELCA* with gift commitments already secured for program expansion in Rwanda (2014) and Cambodia (2015).
 - The YAGM Senegal program implementation is delayed due to the Ebola crisis in West Africa. The new YAGM program in Australia has also been placed on hold at the request of the companion church. We anticipate being able to start both programs in 2016.
 - Nearly 160 applications were received for 2015/2016. We have capacity to place 76 YAGM volunteers for this new program year, which represents a nearly 21% increase from 2014.
- **International Leaders-Women**
 - Major gifts received in early 2015 will fully fund efforts for the 2015 fiscal year.

- Scholarship applications have been invited, with many already being submitted. Recipients will be notified of scholarships later this spring.
- Six ELCA colleges and universities have elected to take part in the program, including Augsburg College, Capital University, Gettysburg College, Luther College, Newberry College and Wittenberg University.
- Last October, a gathering of global women in Wittenberg, Germany took place with participants from a variety of different countries. Two more of these seminars will take place this year, one in April and one in August. These gatherings are made possible through the campaign.

- **Global Ministries**

- Four of the fourteen campaign projects are underway, including projects in Zambia, Serbia, Myanmar and South Sudan.
 - The conflict in South Sudan has slowed down the progress of the construction of the Lutheran Center in Juba, which has had an impact on the engagement of key constituencies and fundraising potential.

- **Leadership**

- **ELCA Fund for Leaders**

- The ELCA Fund for Leaders endowment is now almost \$46 million.
- For the current (2014-2015) academic year, 241 students are receiving scholarships from the ELCA Fund for Leaders, totaling \$1.45 million in distributed scholarships.
- A new scholarship initiative has been developed to encourage candidates of color and first language other than English to enter seminary. This is a change from past practices that guaranteed an equal number of scholarships to each seminary regardless of whether it resulted in a diverse candidate pool. While seminaries will not experience a decrease in the number of scholarships currently provided, the churchwide organization will earmark future funds to ensure that we are developing diverse and gifted leaders for the future of the ELCA.

- **Youth and Young Adult Ministries**

- \$2 million of the \$4 million goal for the program will be available through grants to congregations, synods and partner ELCA ministries to encourage collaboration and creativity over the next four years.
- Grant requests for projects/programs showing collaboration, creativity, serving youth and young adults of color, serving communities/persons living in poverty, supporting youth and young adults in key leadership roles, faith formation for youth and young adults, and starting new ministries or enhancing current efforts will be considered.
- The suggested granting process and guidelines will be given to a variety of constituents across the ELCA for feedback. Key decisions will be made in the coming weeks.
- A permanent endowment was established to support priorities for Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

The support of the ELCA Church Council is critical to the success of the campaign. Thank you for your efforts to tell the story of this church and for encouraging a deeper engagement and support during this opportunity that we have together through *The Campaign for the ELCA*.

Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions

1. Israel and Palestine

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA13.06.25]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Southwestern Texas, Saint Paul Area, Rocky Mountain, Southeast Michigan, Oregon, Sierra Pacific, Northwest Washington, Greater Milwaukee, Southwest California, Southeastern Iowa, New England, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Indiana-Kentucky, Lower Susquehanna, Upper Susquehanna, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., synods related to Peacemaking with Justice in Israel and Palestine;

To reaffirm the commitment of this church to:

- Continue its awareness-building, accompaniment, and advocacy on behalf of a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine;
- Learn more about the experiences of both Israelis and Palestinians and their mutual fears, aspirations, and hopes;
- Work to convey the concerns and perspectives of Palestinians and Israelis that dispel stereotypes and caricatures and promote better understanding;
- Lift up the voices within both communities, especially those of victims of violence, that seek peace with justice through nonviolent responses to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
- Continue to help alleviate the humanitarian needs of all of those affected by the conflict;
- Support U.S. funding that promotes peace and cooperation for all parties to the conflict; and
- Continue to pray for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land;

To reaffirm the 2011 Churchwide Assembly action [CA 11.04.27] “to commend the policy, ‘ELCA Economic Social Criteria Investment Screens,’ to the members, congregations, synods, and agencies of this church; and to decline to undertake a review of the investment of funds managed within the ELCA but to commend these recommendations to the Office of the Treasurer, the Office of the Secretary, the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, the Mission Advancement unit, and the ELCA Board of Pensions for consideration;”

To refer to the Global Mission unit, the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, the Mission Advancement unit, the Office of the Secretary, the Office of the Treasurer, and Portico Benefit Services the matter of evaluating possibilities for investing in specific Palestinian economic endeavors and other projects that would promote peace and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians; and to provide a report with recommendations to the April 2014 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from Global Mission unit (April 2014)

At this time, our progress report is that conversations are ongoing with the various churchwide units as well as Portico Benefit Services. We would appreciate the opportunity to make a fuller report, including a comprehensive strategy, to a subsequent meeting of the Church Council.

Church Council Action (CC14.04.13e)

To receive the response from Global Mission and to grant an extension for a final report and possible recommendations; and

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

Response from Global Mission unit (April 2015)

The 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly Action (CA13.06.25) requested, inter alia, a number of churchwide offices and units to evaluate “possibilities for investing in specific Palestinian economic endeavors and other projects that would promote peace and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians”. The offices and units were Global Mission (GM) unit (convener), the Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM) unit, the Mission Advancement unit, the Office of the Secretary, the Office of the Treasurer, and Portico Benefit Services. GM convened representatives of these entities and the Mission Investment Fund (MIF) on March 9, 2015.

In addition to those entities mentioned above, GM requested a GM person with accounting expertise who resides in Jerusalem, to undertake an initial informal survey of Palestinian investment possibilities. Other GM and CSM staff collected information about the activities of other churches and church-related organizations with respect to Palestinian investment. The information and findings were shared with those attending the March 9, 2015 meeting.

Staff also held an initial conversation with Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in January and consultation will continue with him prior to the preparation of a final report. Among the topics discussed on March 9 were: background on earlier policy statements about economic measures; definitions of “investment” (economic, social, etc.) in this context; the range of recent financial support to the region by the ELCA; a continuum of possible economic instruments or measures that should be examined; and an outline of investment initiatives by other church-related entities in the region.

GM staff will continue to study these and other topics, and in the context of a small working group, craft language for the representatives of this ad hoc committee to review and discuss for a final report.

In consultation with Bishop Younan of the ELCJHL, the ad hoc committee, through GM as convener, will bring a final report and possible recommendations to the Church Council meeting in fall 2015.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**Recommended:**

To receive the progress report from the Global Mission unit regarding Israel and Palestine; and

To request that a final report with possible recommendations be presented to the Church Council at its November 2015 meeting.

2. Immigration Reform-Welcoming Migrants and Refugees*Churchwide Assembly Action [CA13.03.09]*

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod related to 75 years of welcoming immigrants and refugees through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS);

To declare Sunday, June 22, 2014, as Refugee Sunday; and

To request the presiding bishop to:

- invite congregations to tell the stories of their acts of welcome to refugees and immigrants—signs of witness, mercy, and life together;
- utilize ELCA communications mechanisms to share these stories and inspire action throughout 2014; and
- encourage congregations and organizations to engage with and support the LIRS mission of welcoming the stranger through gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

Church Council Action (CC13.11.69i)

To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, to bring a report on its activities related to welcoming migrants and refugees by the April 2015 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from Office of the Presiding Bishop (April 2015)

On June 22, 2014, congregations throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commemorated the day as Refugee Sunday. Other congregations celebrated Refugee Sunday on another Sunday that worked better for their local communities. This commemoration was an opportunity to engage more intentionally with ELCA congregations and encourage them to share their stories of their acts of welcome to refugees and immigrants. We are grateful to the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod for bringing this memorial to the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and to the assembly for boldly declaring June 22 as Refugee Sunday. This is a report on the activities related to welcoming migrants and refugees as part of that commemoration.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) staff and churchwide organization staff met in the fall of 2013 to discuss various strategies to engage Lutherans in Refugee Sunday. One of the ways was the creation of the Refugee Sunday kit, which served as a free resource for congregations to fully experience the event. It was mailed to each congregation and distributed at ELCA events such as synod assemblies. It included a signed letter by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, posters, suggestions for worship and celebration, stories of refugee journeys, and more.

The worship resources provided in the kits enabled congregations to make Refugee Sunday a part of their service. Many people reported enjoying the hymn suggestions and sermon notes, which set the tone and enriched the church service. Hymn choices were cited as the most used piece of worship activities. Litany for Refugees was used widely among participating congregations, but the ‘return information’ slips produced fewer than 30 new contacts.

A second letter was signed by Bishop Eaton, Ms. Linda Hartke, president of LIRS, the Rev. Stephen Bouman, executive director of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, Bishop Roy Riley, former bishop of the New Jersey Synod, and Bishop Michael Rinehart, bishop of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, encouraging congregations to engage with Refugee Sunday.

We also spread the word about Refugee Sunday across our networks such as Women of the ELCA, LivingLutheran.org, Seeds for the Parish and the LIRS blog series. LIRS also created a video, available through the LIRS website, to inspire participation and to use as a resource. The video titled, “Courageous Journey’s”, featured Syrian refugee Omar al-Muqdad. It shares the story of LIRS, lifted up the 75th anniversary of LIRS and promoted a ministry of welcome. “Courageous Journey’s” was shown at Refugee Sunday celebrations and synod assemblies across the country.

An ELCA news story (<http://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/7678>) was written promoting June 22 as Refugee Sunday. It also included ways that congregations are welcoming migrants in their communities and shared that the ELCA is addressing the crisis of the thousands of unaccompanied minors coming to the United States to escape violence and dangerous situations in their home countries.

LIRS representatives raised awareness of 2014 Refugee Sunday through their presence at:

- a. Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Mission Area Assembly, April 25-27
- b. Western Iowa Synod Assembly, May 2-4
- c. South Central Wisconsin Synod Assembly, May 3-4
- d. Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Assembly, May 8-10
- e. Southeastern Synod Assembly, May 30-June1
- f. Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly, May 30-June 1

- g. New Jersey Synod Assembly, May 30-June 1
- h. Florida-Bahamas Synod Assembly, June 20-22
- i. Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering, July 24-27

LIRS reported 3,403 Refugee Sunday web page views and 990 ELCA kit web page views.

The Refugee Sunday web materials included links to video, sermon notes, digital version of kit materials, Bible study activities and announcements.

There have been several stories posted on the Lutheran Disaster Response blog about congregations sharing their stories of acts of welcome as well as social ministry organizations that are providing services to refugees and immigrants. LivingLutheran.org also has a number of stories. These are indeed signs of our witness, mercy and life together.

Important lessons were learned from the first Refugee Sunday. LIRS plans in the future to explore ways to support local congregations as they learn about Refugee Sunday and incorporate it into the congregation's year of worship. LIRS envisions three areas of focus to engage a wider swath of the Lutheran community: involvement of youth and young adults; grow congregation participation; and expand promotion to increase awareness. ELCA has given \$20,000 in 2014 year-end funding to LIRS for Refugee Sunday materials in 2015. Refugee Sunday can be celebrated on June 21, 2015 or any Sunday that works for congregations.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the report of the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding Refugee Sunday and activities related to welcoming migrants and refugees; and

To give thanks to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service for their ongoing work in engaging and supporting congregations and organizations to be places of welcome for refugees and migrants.

3. Confirmation (Motion O)

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA13.06.30]

RESOLVED, that the ELCA discontinue published use of the term "confirmation" as it relates to the education tradition of the ELCA from all future publications (curricula, model constitutions, hymnals, etc.); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the ELCA discontinue practice of "confirmation" as it relates to the ritual of passage for youth or young adults into voting membership in congregations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA fully implement Luther's doctrine of vocation as the rationale and basis for preparation for lifelong discipleship; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA encourage congregations to develop and establish rituals of passage into adult discipleship and ministry, such that those congregations' baptized members who recognize and who are able to articulate God's call to practice their various vocations and Spiritual gifts as disciples of Christ in the world also receive the public recognition and affirmation of those gifts and vocations by the congregations into which and among whom those individuals live out their vocations and Spiritual gifts; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the ELCA become centers of lifelong and intergenerational study of Scripture and catechesis, worship and service, prayer and giving; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the ELCA end "confirmation" as ritualized right of youth who have completed required steps and requirements.

Church Council Action (CC13.11.69m)

To refer Motion O: Confirmation to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit; and

To request that a report and possible recommendations be presented to the April 2015 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from Office of the Presiding Bishop (April 2015)

Motion O from the 2013 Churchwide Assembly was referred to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for a report and possible recommendations to the April 2015 meeting of the Church Council.

In the third, fourth and fifth resolved clauses, the resolution requests actions that many ELCA congregations have already undertaken and that the ELCA churchwide organization and synods through Directors for Evangelical Mission are actively encouraging. The first, second and sixth resolved clauses ask for the ELCA as a corporate body to act in a way that does not honor the principle of interdependence, specifically congregational decision-making about effective ministry in local contexts.

For these reasons the Office of the Presiding Bishop, after consulting with the Conference of Bishops and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, recommends no additional action.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding confirmation;

To acknowledge the continued work undertaken by ELCA congregations and synods in equipping people for lifelong discipleship and ministry;

To decline to discontinue the use of the term ‘confirmation’ in ELCA publications;

To decline to discontinue the practice of confirmation as it relates to the ritual of passage for youth or young adults into voting membership in congregations; and

To decline to ask congregations of the ELCA to end “confirmation” as a ritualized right of youth who have completed required steps and requirements.

4. Voting Rights

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA13.06.29]

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America call upon local, state, and federal governments to guarantee the right to vote to all citizens and to discourage or eliminate all laws, ordinances or regulations that would have the effect of racial and ethnic discrimination in the exercise of that right; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Presiding Bishop and synodical bishops of this church be urged to support publically and stand as an advocate to proposed local, state, or federal legislation and regulations that, consistent with this church’s social teaching, seek to guarantee to all citizens the right to vote; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Conference of Bishops be requested to include, as part of one of its 2014 meetings, an educational session on voting rights; and be it further

RESOLVED, that members, congregations, and synods of this church be encouraged to “promote public life worthy of the name” by speaking out as an advocate and engaging in local efforts such as voter registration and supporting legislation to guarantee the right to vote to all citizens; and be it further

RESOLVED, that appropriate churchwide staff be requested to identify and publicize resources for members, congregations, and synods of this church to advocate for voting rights for all citizens.

Church Council Action (CC13.11.69i)

To refer Motion H: A Social Policy Resolution Concerning the Guarantee of Voting Rights to All Citizens to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit; and

To request that a report be presented by the April 2015 Church Council meeting.

Response from Office of the Presiding Bishop (April 2015)

In response to the Voting Rights resolution, the ELCA Conference of Bishops had an educational session about the voting rights legislation at its 2014 fall meeting. Ms. Julie A. Fernandes, a senior policy analyst at the Open Society Foundations, joined the Conference of Bishops meeting by video conference to speak to the voting rights legislation.

Ms. Kwame L. Pitts, the author of the resolution and a student at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, was present at the Conference of Bishop's educational session. Ms. Pitts described her personal interest in the history of the Voting Rights Act, the effects of a Supreme Court decision declaring a key part of the act unconstitutional and renewed efforts to guarantee the voting rights of all citizens. Members of the conference found it interesting and helpful to hear her reasoning for why she wrote the resolution.

Ms. Fernandes spoke of the history of voting rights in the United States of America and the authority of the government to decide who gets to vote both by limiting access to the ballot box or by discarding certain ballots. In the Voting Rights Act, Congress assumed the authority to protect voting rights against racial discrimination by applying special scrutiny to states with a history of voter suppression. The U.S. Supreme Court declared the law could not be applied only to certain states. As a result, some legislators began drafting a bill to continue to protect voting rights, which was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. Another result was that states and local governments began introducing legislation to suppress certain voting rights, which has prompted litigation across the country. Voter fraud is often cited to justify making it more difficult for certain citizens to vote. Ms. Fernandes also outlined the activities of religious organizations, especially in coalitions, to address election reform.

Members of the conference discussed details of the bill that Congress was considering, its effects on legislation being enacted locally to limit voting rights and the manner in which it would comply with the Supreme Court standards. The synod bishops also spoke of their synods' involvement in dealing with voting limitations in the states in their territories. The bishops appreciated the educational session and were engaged in the discussion. The Bishops' Ready Bench (an advocacy 'team' focused on a specific area of policy), Justice is Not Just Us, continues discussion and advocacy on issues of racial justice, including voting rights for African Americans and Native Americans.

Public policies and practices still privilege some while limiting access and opportunities to others. Today, we are still facing voter disenfranchisement through public policies in the form of preserving state's rights (through) voter identification legislation and the criminal justice system that can temporarily or permanently deny access to the ballot. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton sent a pastoral message on racial equity in March 2015 (<http://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/7732>) to members of this church and in the letter urged us to advocate for local, state and federal legislation and regulations that guarantee to all citizens the right to vote. Included with the letter was a listing of additional resources for members, congregations and synods to continue to engage in the work of racial justice.

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Ms. Judith Roberts, ELCA Program Director of Racial Justice Ministries, continues to help members of the ELCA engage in the ongoing work of racial justice. On March 7-8, she accompanied a group of members of the ELCA in Alabama to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery civil rights march. In the ELCA News Story (<http://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/7728>), Ms. Roberts said, “This moment in our current history is about lifting up the values of living in an electoral democracy where every citizen should have the right to cast a ballot for the elected officials that will represent their communities. This church adopted a social statement policy to ensure just that.”

ELCA advocacy (<http://www.capwiz.com/elca/home/>) is most effective when Lutherans across the country are involved and active. The ELCA has professional policy staff to help facilitate Lutheran advocacy efforts, but members of Congress want to hear from their constituents — the stories, experiences and influence of ELCA members impact their decisions. The churchwide organization’s work will continue with our members, congregations and synods to advocate for the voting rights for all citizens as well as work directly on issues related to equality and access for all.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding voting rights;

To thank the Conference of Bishops for its active engagement on the issue of voting rights; and

To affirm the resolve by the 2013 Churchwide Assembly that the members, congregations, and synods of this church be encouraged to speak out as advocates, engage in local efforts such as voter registration, and support legislation to guarantee the right to vote for all citizens.

Responses to Synodical Resolutions

1. Mission Funding Monitor remittance system of MIF/Monitor Pilot Programs

Church Council Action (CC12.11.32)

...
To request that the Mission Investment Fund explore the development of a remittance process system that would improve the process for transmitting Mission Support and other funds designated for synod and churchwide ministries, strengthen financial controls, enhance financial reporting and access to timely information, and to invite and encourage synods to explore the possibility of participating in such a system; and

To request that the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council monitor the pilot programs established by synods and the development of a remittance process system for synods by the Mission Investment Fund for the purpose of making a report and possible recommendations to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

Response from the Mission Investment Fund (April 2015)

At the request of Church Council at its fall 2012 meeting, the Mission Investment Fund (MIF) began exploring an administrative process for handling payments from congregations to synods. Last spring, MIF informed Church Council that handling only those payments would not be a feasible business model.

However, the Mission Investment Fund believes that a full-service Financial Services Organization (FSO) could be beneficial to the synods. A full-service FSO could handle all accounting-related activities for each of the synods—including cash management, accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, and accounting and reporting. Benefits would include the reduction of overall costs or reallocation of resources to program activities; improved internal financial controls; reduction in the cost of synod audits; consistent individual synod data; and aggregate data for comparison and trend analysis.

As such, MIF has proposed an FSO pilot implementation of six to eight synods to begin in 2016. MIF invited a small group of bishops to discuss a potential pilot FSO during the Conference of Bishops meeting in Chicago in early March, and we have scheduled additional detailed discussions with six synods for the upcoming weeks.

We look forward to these discussions with the synods and hope to sign on the appropriate number to begin the pilot.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response from the Mission Investment Fund regarding a remittance process system;

To affirm the experiment of a full-service Financial Services Organization pilot program with certain synods; and

To thank the Mission Investment Fund for its ongoing work to improve and strengthen this church's financial capacity to serve God's mission.

2. Portico Benefit Services Covering Hearing Aids

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in assembly to instruct Portico Benefits Services to provide full insurance coverage for hearing aids for the rostered professionals and its members.

[The action of the 2014 Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly was to refer the resolution, “Portico Benefit Services Covering Hearing Aids,” to the Delaware-Maryland Synod Council, which forwarded the resolution to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.]

Executive Committee Action: (EC14.10.24)

To receive the resolution from the Delaware-Maryland Synod concerning the insurance coverage of hearing aids; and

To refer the resolution to Portico Benefit Services for a report, or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention, to be presented to the April 2015 Church Council meeting.

Response from Portico Benefit Services (April 2015)

Today’s ELCA-Primary health benefits help rostered leaders, church workers and their family members identify potential hearing concerns early and help pay for hearing aids and related costs.

- Annual preventive hearing screenings are covered 100 percent under the medical benefit administered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross).
- Our hearing discount program, administered by HearPO, provides discounts on diagnostic tests and hearing aids at 2,700 locations across the United States, including:
 - Discounts on 1,000+ models of digital hearing aids from leading manufacturers
 - 40 percent discount on hearing diagnostic testing, including advanced audiology tests
 - 60-day free trial with no restocking fee
 - Free batteries for two years with new hearing aid purchase (maximum 160 cells per hearing aid)
 - One year of free aftercare services
- Wellness dollars can be spent on hearing aids. ELCA-Primary members and spouses can each earn \$500 wellness dollars in 2015 by completing the Mayo Clinic health assessment and follow-up activities.
- Tax-advantaged accounts, including a health flexible spending account (FSA) or health savings account (HSA), enable members to set aside money on a pretax basis to pay for eligible medical expenses such as hearing aids.

While ELCA-Primary health benefits provide the preventive services and savings opportunities described above, hearing aids are not fully covered. In response to the resolution from the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Portico contacted Blue Cross to understand our options and potential costs to add full hearing aid coverage to the ELCA-Primary medical benefit. In summary, we found:

- **Options:** Most plans with hearing aid coverage place a limit on the annual benefit, for example \$500. When Blue Cross covers hearing aids, plan members must purchase their hearing aid from a network provider in order to receive the benefit.
- **Potential cost:** The cost to the ELCA Health Plan to add unlimited hearing aid coverage would depend upon utilization, but is expected to be significant. Since the benefit is not currently covered, data is not available to determine a membership specific cost projection. However, it is reasonable to assume that the cost would be much higher than a typical employer plan; given the average age of our sponsored membership is 53, eight years older than the average American worker.

While we understand that some of our members need to use hearing aids, Portico is currently unable to add full coverage for hearing aids to ELCA-Primary health benefits. As a self-insured community health plan, all members and sponsors share in our collective health care costs.

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Adding full hearing aid coverage would necessitate a higher increase to health contributions in 2016, especially if coverage were added without a benefit maximum. If coverage were added with a benefit maximum, members would still be responsible for some of their costs and could have fewer choices than today, given the Blue Cross requirement to purchase from a network provider. In our ministry role as stewards of the ELCA's shared health plan dollars, Portico believes our community is best served by continuing to offer free preventive screenings via Blue Cross, our hearing discount program via HearPO, and opportunities for members to reduce their out-of-pocket costs by earning wellness dollars and using tax-advantaged accounts.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive with gratitude the response from Portico Benefit Services concerning the insurance coverage of hearing aids;

To decline to initiate or propose amendments to the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program concerning full insurance coverage for hearing aids for rostered professionals and other members; and

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

1 **CC Actions on Think Tank Report**

2 **CC ACTION**

3 **Recommended:**

4 To thank Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton for initiating the Bishops' Think Tank on Mission
5 Funding;

6 To receive with gratitude the Bishops' Think Tank on Mission Funding report and recommendations
7 and thank the Think Tank for their work;

8 To affirm the intention of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton to convene a team to generate
9 recommendations to sharpen our priorities as a church and bring greater clarity about what this church
10 will do and will not do in order to serve God's mission more faithfully and effectively in the years to
11 come; and

12 To affirm the need for and encourage ongoing leadership, discussion and analysis among
13 congregations, synods, institutions and agencies of the church, the churchwide organization and the
14 Church Council on the urgency of the need to explore new methods of mission support for the benefit of
15 the whole church.

16

17 **CC ACTION**

18 **Recommended:**

19 To replace the present reporting form of synodical Mission Support with a format that expresses
20 thanksgiving for all gifts when reporting to the Church Council;

21 To acknowledge that the current 55/45 percentage guideline for Mission Support is not sustainable
22 and is no longer an appropriate guide for establishing Mission Support;

23 To approve the development, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Office of the
24 Presiding Bishop, of a contextually sensitive, substantive and collaborative process which will result in
25 synod-specific percentage goals for each of the 65 synods by no later than the April 2018 meeting of the
26 Church Council;

27 To request that the Budget and Finance Committee monitor the consultation process with a goal of
28 recommending benchmarks and guidelines to be used in establishing the synod-specific goals no later
29 than the April 2018 meeting of the Church Council;

30 To recommend the hiring of the equivalent of a full time Director for Mission Support to construct
31 and oversee this process in collaboration with the Conference of Bishops, the Mission Advancement Unit,
32 and the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

33 To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide more information about staffing needs and
34 budget impact to support that position with the necessary funding and staffing to accomplish its goals to
35 the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council.

36

37

38 **CC ACTION**

39 **Recommended:**

40 To endorse the principle that appropriate multiple streams of income may be used to provide funding
41 for the mission of any expression of this church;

42 To instruct the Mission Advancement Unit, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, to draft a
43 revised bylaw change to expand the definition of synodical mission support to reflect the use of multiple
44 sources of income to fulfill the stated dollar amount of a synod's mission support commitment; and

45 To request the Office of the Secretary consider this bylaw amendment as it reviews possible
46 amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran*
47 *Church in America* for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

48

49

50

51 **CC ACTION**

52 **Recommended:**

53 To instruct the Director for Mission Support, in collaboration with synodical bishops and relevant
54 churchwide units, to take necessary steps to:

- 55 • Assess current and prospective resources to assist congregations and synods to assist them in the
56 development of multiple streams of income;
- 57 • Develop a plan to equip rostered leaders to advocate for a renewed commitment to mission support;
- 58 • Assess current and prospective resources for synod and congregational consultation process and
59 materials; and

60 To request that the Director for Mission Support provide at least an annual progress report to the
61 Budget and Finance Committee.

62

63 **CC Action**

64 **Recommended:**

65 To affirm a three-year experiment, beginning in 2016 and involving five synods (New England
66 Synod, Nebraska Synod, Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod, Lower Susquehanna Synod, Texas-
67 Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod) to form a “learning community” to explore whether retaining the new and
68 renewing ELCA grants for ministries and the total compensation for the Director for Evangelical Mission
69 will produce an increase in mission support and more effective management and oversight for the sake of
70 mission;

71 To request the five synods in the experiment continue to remit the balance of their mission support
72 percentage goal to the churchwide organization during the duration of the experiment;

73 To request the Director for Mission Support to consult with the five synods and to provide updates to
74 the Church Council throughout the duration of the experiment;

75 To request the Office of the Treasurer to provide financial analysis related to the experiment to the
76 November 2015 meeting of the Church Council; and

77 To request the five synods in the experiment to provide additional details regarding the structure of
78 the synod experiments to the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council.

79

80 **CC Action**

81 **Recommended:**

82 To affirm the pilot project being explored by the ELCA Mission Investment Fund to establish a
83 Financial Services Organization.

84

85 **CC Action**

86 **Recommended:**

87 To affirm and acknowledge the efforts of various synods in deepening and strengthening relationships
88 among the expressions of this church;

89 To encourage every synodical bishop and synod council to seek regular opportunities to build
90 relationships and engage in discussions with congregations about the financial implications of how we are
91 church together; and

92 To invite the Conference of Bishops, the Budget and Finance Committee and the Church Council to
93 continued consideration of mission support experiments, especially those that are intentionally geared to
94 supporting synods that are the most financially vulnerable.

95

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

April 10, 2015

Epiphany Room (11th Floor of the Lutheran Center)

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS [5 min]

II. OPENING PRAYER [3 min]

Fernando Mercado

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA [2 min]

BF ACTION

Recommended: To adopt the agenda and permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order deemed most appropriate.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES [5 min]

Reference: [BFC Meeting Minutes Nov 2014](#)

BF ACTION

Recommended: To approve the minutes of the November 8, 2014 meeting.

Reference: [BFC Conference Call Meeting Minutes March 2105](#)

BF ACTION

Recommended: To approve the minutes of the March 25, 2015 conference call.

V. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW [25 min]

VI. CASH AND INVESTMENTS [20 min]**A. ELCA CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY PROGRAM REVIEW**

Reference: [2015 CGA Strategic Asset Allocation Review Memo](#)
[Appendix A – Portico/Rocaton Charitable Gift Annuity Analysis](#)
[Appendix B - State Street Global Advisors Strategic Asset Allocation Review](#)
[CGA Investment Philosophy and Policy Statement Draft](#)

VII. MISSION SUPPORT [120 min]**A. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR FOR MISSION SUPPORT**

Reference: [Mission Support Director Report](#)

B. 2015-2016 SYNOD MISSION SUPPORT PLANS

Reference: [2015-2016 Synod Mission Support Plans](#)

1) REVISIONS TO 2015 SYNOD MISSION SUPPORT PLANS

Since the November 2014 Church Council meeting, we have received revisions for 2015 mission support plans from 4 synods, with one increasing percentage sharing and the remaining decreasing the projected amount to be shared:

BF/CC Action

Recommended: To approve and forward to the Church Council for their action:

To acknowledge the decision of the following synod(s) to maintain the percentage of sharing of 2015 mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries but estimating an adjustment in the projected amount to be shared:

**Northeastern Minnesota, Indiana-Kentucky,
Upstate New York**

BF/CC Action**Recommended:**

To approve and forward to the Church Council for their action:

To acknowledge the decision in the following synod(s) to increase the percentage of sharing of 2015 mission support by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries:

Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast

2) 2016 SYNOD MISSION SUPPORT PLANS

Many synods are still in the process of preparing their 2016 mission support plans for presentation to their synod assemblies this spring and summer. To date, we have received plans from 37 synods: 6 synods are showing increased percentages, 9 decreases and the remaining 22 synods maintaining current levels.

BF/CC ACTION**Recommended:**

To forward the following to the Church Council for their action:

To acknowledge the decision in the following synod(s) to increase the percentage of sharing of 2016 mission support by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries:

**Alaska, Northwest Washington, Oregon,
Western North Dakota, Arkansas-Oklahoma,
Southwestern Texas, Southwestern Pennsylvania**

To acknowledge the decision of the following synod(s) to maintain the percentage of sharing of 2016 mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries:

**Southwest Washington, Oregon, Grand Canyon,
Northeastern Minnesota, Central States,
Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana,
Central/Southern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa,
Northeastern Iowa, East-Central Wisconsin,
Greater Milwaukee, South-Central Wisconsin,
La Crosse Area, Southeast Michigan,**

North/West Lower Michigan, Northwestern Ohio, Southern Ohio, Upstate New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Southeastern

To acknowledge that circumstances in the following synod(s) have led to decisions to seek a decrease from prior levels in the percentage of sharing of 2016 mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries; to encourage the synod(s) to continue to work to grow mission support in the synod; and to request that the synod develop a plan, in consultation with the churchwide organization, to restore or surpass the previous level of mission support sharing:

Eastern Washington-Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, Northwestern Minnesota, Southwestern Minnesota, Southeastern Minnesota, Western Iowa, Northern Great Lakes, Florida-Bahamas

To thank the bishops and synod leaders of every synod as they strive to be faithful to shared commitments within the ELCA, and to direct synod and churchwide staff, including the directors for evangelical mission, to deepen their partnership in efforts to strengthen financial support for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

To request that all synods submit their 2016 mission support plans prior to their 2015 synod assemblies.

C. BISHOPS' THINK TANK ON MISSION FUNDING

Reference:

[Think Tank Report Synopsis and Recommendations](#)

[Think Tank Final Report April 2015](#)

[Appendix 1 - Mission Support Proposal \(Bishop Rinehart\)](#)

[Appendix 2 - Synodical Funding Streams \(Bishop Burkat\)](#)

[Appendix 3 - Potential Financial Services Office \(MIF\)](#)

[Appendix 4 - Five Synod Mission Support \(Bishop Hazelwood\)](#)

[Think Tank Appendix Five – A Modest Proposal](#)

[Think Tank Appendix Six – Supplement Five Synod Experiment](#)

BF/CC Action

Recommended: *To Be Provided*

VIII. 2015 INCOME ESTIMATES AND SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS [15 min]

Reference: [Revised 2015 Budget Proposal Highlights](#)

[Revised 2015 Income Estimates](#)

[Revised Spending Authorization Proposal](#)

BF/CC Action

Recommended: **To forward to the Church Council for their action:**

To approve a revised 2015 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$69,323,020; and

To approve a revised 2015 fiscal year World Hunger spending authorization of \$20,600,000.

IX. 2015 CAPITAL BUDGET [5 min]

Reference: [Revised 2015 Capital Budget Proposal](#)

BF Action

Recommended: **To approve a revised 2015 fiscal year capital budget of \$3.5 million capital spend with a \$168,000 alternate funding allowance.**

X. AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT [3 min]

Reference: [Audit Committee Report](#)

BF/CC Action [En Bloc]

Recommended: **To recommend that the Church Council elect Marjorie Ellis to the ELCA Audit Committee for a two-year renewable term ending November 2016.**

BF/CC Action [En Bloc]

Recommended: To accept and forward the report of the ELCA Audit Committee to the Church Council: To approve the report of the ELCA Audit Committee describing their review of the audited financial statements, management letter, and response of management for the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust's year ending December 31, 2014.

XI. *ALWAYS BEING MADE NEW: THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ELCA [20 min]***XII. MANAGING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RISK [10 min]****XIII. REPORT OF THE CHAIR [15 min]****A. Election: Budget and Finance Committee Chair and Vice Chair****BF Action**

Recommended: To elect _____ as chair of the Budget and Finance Committee to begin September 1, 2015 and conclude with the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

BF Action

Recommended: To elect _____ as vice chair of the Budget and Finance Committee to begin September 1, 2015 and conclude with the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

B. FUTURE MEETING TOPICS**C. MEETING REVIEW****XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

2016 Synod Mission Support Plans

With 2014 Actual and 2015 Plans

REVISED

SYNOD NAME	#	2014		2015		2016	
		SYNOD ACTUAL		SYNOD PLANS		SYNOD PLANS	
ALASKA	1A	153,341	39.50%	170,000	40.00%	168,000	40.50%
N.W. WASH	1B	601,001	46.50%	685,025	47.00%	607,463	47.50%
S.W. WASH	1C	366,072	40.00%	376,000	40.00%	316,410	40.00%
E.WASH/ID	1D	263,566	34.00%	316,050	35.00%	296,700	34.50%
OREGON	1E	384,012	40.00%	368,000	40.00%	400,000	40.00%
MONTANA	1F	429,822	41.00%	415,000	41.50%	420,000	40.00%
SIERRA-PACIFIC	2A	903,887	52.00%	645,000	35.80%		
SW CALIFORNIA	2B	505,180	49.00%	625,000	50.00%		
PACIFICA	2C	708,641	51.00%	715,000	51.00%		
GRAND CANYON	2D	922,441	50.00%	825,000	50.00%	828,500	50.00%
ROCKY MTN	2E	1,142,584	50.00%	1,200,000	50.00%		
W. NO.DAK	3A	485,255	45.00%	437,000	46.00%	458,250	47.00%
E. NO.DAK	3B	415,955	40.50%	421,200	41.00%		
SO. DAK.	3C	772,285	45.50%	779,242	45.50%	789,488	45.00%
NW. MINN.	3D	677,784	49.00%	707,234	48.00%	668,528	47.00%
NE. MINN.	3E	558,781	49.00%	563,500	49.00%	575,750	49.00%
SW. MINN.	3F	977,773	52.50%	1,070,335	52.50%	919,245	50.50%
MINPLS. AREA	3G	1,584,759	50.00%	1,605,000	50.00%		
ST PAUL (M)	3H	930,614	47.50%	997,500	47.50%		
SE. MINN.	3I	932,765	53.00%	980,500	53.00%	720,000	48.00%
NEBRASKA	4A	1,874,995	54.50%	1,907,500	54.50%		
CENTRAL STATES	4B	891,528	50.00%	922,500	50.00%	907,970	50.00%
ARK/OK	4C	209,117	40.80%	216,480	41.00%	217,008	41.10%
N.TEX/N.LOU	4D	574,593	48.00%	599,373	48.00%	603,662	48.00%
S.W.TEXAS	4E	752,867	51.50%	754,000	52.00%	774,375	52.50%
GULF COAST	4F	684,113	50.00%	650,000	50.00%		
METRO CHGO	5A	1,565,365	53.25%	1,685,378	53.50%		
NO. ILL	5B	1,253,641	55.00%	1,261,205	55.00%		
CEN.SO. ILL	5C	812,151	56.00%	826,000	56.00%	812,000	56.00%
SE IOWA	5D	1,366,636	53.50%	1,399,025	53.50%	1,399,025	53.50%
WEST IOWA	5E	303,811	39.10%	358,895	40.10%	328,000	38.00%
NE IOWA	5F	606,194	40.00%	610,000	40.00%	614,000	40.00%
N GRT LKES	5G	421,686	51.00%	430,000	51.50%	425,850	51.00%
NW.SYN (W)	5H	551,860	55.00%	693,900	50.00%		
EC WISC	5I	889,453	55.00%	935,000	55.00%	852,500	55.00%
GRTR MILWKEE	5J	1,120,115	55.00%	1,182,500	55.00%	1,072,500	55.00%
SO.-CENT (W)	5K	845,115	55.00%	869,000	55.00%	852,500	55.00%
LACROSSE (W)	5L	414,761	55.00%	455,000	55.00%	455,000	55.00%

Shaded areas reflect notification of plan changes received since the November 2014 Church Council meeting.

2016 Synod Mission Support Plans
With 2014 Actual and 2015 Plans
REVISED

SYNOD NAME	#	2014		2015		2016	
		SYNOD ACTUAL		SYNOD PLANS		SYNOD PLANS	
SE. MICH	6A	480,941	42.00%	504,000	42.00%	491,400	42.00%
N/W LOWER MICH	6B	685,313	50.00%	658,500	50.00%	690,000	50.00%
IND/KY	6C	892,804	52.00%	884,000	52.00%		
NW OHIO	6D	777,892	51.00%	851,700	51.00%	826,200	51.00%
NE OHIO	6E	729,930	49.00%	750,000	50.00%		
S. OHIO	6F	661,673	40.00%	684,000	40.00%	699,520	40.00%
NEW JERSEY	7A	1,034,008	50.00%	1,050,000	50.00%		
NEW ENGLAND	7B	936,962	54.00%	994,500	51.00%		
METRO NY	7C	584,799	50.00%	625,000	50.00%		
UPSTATE NY	7D	490,907	42.00%	493,850	42.00%	495,950	42.00%
NE PENN	7E	1,045,588	46.00%	1,175,000	47.00%	1,128,000	47.00%
SE PENN	7F	1,242,482	50.00%	1,050,000	50.00%	1,062,500	50.00%
SLOVAK ZION	7G	16,931	30.40%	20,700	30.50%		
NW PENN	8A	425,557	50.00%	396,300	50.00%	400,000	50.00%
SW PENN	8B	773,036	47.50%	785,650	47.50%	793,920	48.00%
ALLEGHENY	8C	358,449	50.00%	358,750	50.00%		
LOW SUSQ	8D	1,159,327	43.53%	1,313,250	45.00%		
UPP SUSQ	8E	436,045	50.00%	450,000	50.00%		
DEL-MRYLND	8F	1,083,068	54.50%	1,155,000	55.00%		
METRO DC	8G	857,818	50.00%	825,000	50.00%		
W. VAW.MYLD	8H	146,416	37.50%	135,000	33.00%		
VIRGINIA	9A	623,814	38.20%	651,000	38.30%		
NO. CAROLINA	9B	998,483	36.59%	1,000,000	36.00%		
SO. CAROLINA	9C	1,040,353	41.75%	993,000	41.38%		
SOUTHEASTERN	9D	1,077,398	50.00%	1,108,650	50.00%	1,110,000	50.00%
FLORIDA-BAHAMAS	9E	951,998	48.00%	1,031,625	48.00%	1,014,831	47.00%
CARIBBEAN	9F	42,000	18.00%	42,000	17.20%		
TOTAL REMITTANCES		\$48,408,511	48.32%	\$49,643,817	46.84%	\$25,195,045	47.19%

Revised 2015 Budget Proposal Highlights

The 2015 Income Estimates have been revised from previously approved levels based on 2014 results and expectations for availability of funds in 2015. Highlights include:

- The ***Vision for Mission*** income estimate has historically been comprised of donor identified Vision for Mission gifts plus general unrestricted gift income. Beginning in fiscal year 2015, general unrestricted income is being reclassified to the ‘other unrestricted’ category. This will assist in gift processing, as well as provide a more accurate reporting of fundraising results for the Vision for Mission appeal. This reclassification has zero net effect on unrestricted income.
- ***Investment income*** is proposed to increase by an additional \$123,000, corresponding to the increased mineral rights income experience of 2014.
- ***Endowment income, unrestricted and restricted***, is proposed to increase by \$80,000 and \$99,230, respectively. Distribution amounts are calculated as the average of the endowment unit values on December 31 of the five preceding years multiplied by the annual distribution rate. The distribution rate for 2015 is 4.25%.
- ***Rental income*** projections for 2015 are being revised downward by \$136,230. The original income estimate anticipated partial-year rental income for the Lutheran Center’s seventh floor. The negotiated leasing period is expected to begin in 2016.
- ***Designated Funds Released*** is decreased by approximately \$500,000, corresponding with the spending authorization revisions for the ELCA Foundation described below. As staff from Mission Advancement, Office of the Treasurer and Office of the Presiding Bishop began working with an external consultant in the transition to self-funding, we anticipated utilizing transitional support from a fund functioning as endowment. Revisions to cost allocations and increased management fee revenue have removed the need for release of these funds.

Revised unit allocations proposed by the Office of the Presiding Bishop for 2015 include the following:

- ***Personnel costs*** for Global Mission were to increase by \$86,484 due to a staff position being moved from Office of the Bishop – Human Resources to Global Mission. In Fall 2014, this adjustment was incorrectly reported as an addition to the Mission Advancement budget instead of Global Mission. The revised 2015 spending authorization document reflects the corrected adjustment.
- ***Depreciation costs*** are projected to increase by \$173,000 in fiscal year 2015. This increase covers increased capital budget and revisions to depreciation for existing assets.
- ***ELCA Foundation*** continues in the direction of being self-funded. A reduction of \$500,000 in current fund expense for the Mission Advancement unit is being proposed, corresponding to expenses that will be covered by management fees. After this adjustment, approximately \$170 thousand of current fund support remains for the ELCA Foundation.
- ***ELCA World Hunger*** closed fiscal year 2014 with an ending fund balance of \$2.9 million. An additional \$600,000 in spending, released from the fund balance, is being proposed for a total revised spending authorization of \$20.6 million. Approximately \$500 thousand of the increase will be allocated for domestic and international efforts related to unaccompanied and migrant

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children. Additional staffing for the fundraising team is also anticipated within Mission Advancement. With the revisions, the cost of fundraising is anticipated to be 8.2 percent. Unit allocations remain in compliance with the spending restriction of 25-30 percent within the territorial jurisdiction of this church and 70-75 percent in other parts of the world. In 2015, 25.8% of expenses will be spent domestically and 74.2% internationally. For the purpose of determining compliance with ELCA World Hunger spending restrictions, 50 percent of fundraising costs are counted towards the domestic percentage and 50 percent are counted towards the international percentage.

Although not part of the Church Council's budget approval process, it is noted that the ELCA Malaria Campaign anticipates raising \$1.2 million in 2015, the final year of this \$15 million campaign.

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
REVISED 2015 Income Estimates
FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY**

	2015		
	Current Budget	Revision	Revised Budget
CURRENT FUNDS			
UNRESTRICTED			
Mission Support	47,250,000		47,250,000
Vision for Mission	1,400,000	(600,000)	800,000
Investment Income	1,300,000	123,000	1,423,000
Bequests & Trusts	1,250,000		1,250,000
Endowment	1,152,795	80,000	1,232,795
Rent	1,747,500	(136,230)	1,611,270
Other	2,050,000	600,000	2,650,000
Total Unrestricted	56,150,295	66,770	56,217,065
Temporarily Restricted			
Global Church Sponsorship	3,200,000		3,200,000
Bequests & Trusts	1,525,000		1,525,000
Endowment	1,725,365	99,230	1,824,595
Unit Designated	425,000		425,000
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000		1,500,000
Grants	-		-
Total Temporarily Restricted	8,375,365	99,230	8,474,595
Total Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Income Funds	64,525,660	166,000	64,691,660
Other Fund Sources			
Designated Funds Released	1,892,730	(493,000)	1,399,730
Restricted Funds Released	3,231,630		3,231,630
Total Current Funds Available	69,650,020	(327,000)	69,323,020
ELCA WORLD HUNGER			
Gifts:			
Through Synods	8,700,000		8,700,000
Through Direct Giving-Individuals	7,575,000		7,575,000
Through Direct Giving-Congregations	2,350,000		2,350,000
Endowment	525,000		525,000
Bequests and Misc.	850,000		850,000
Total ELCA World Hunger	20,000,000		20,000,000
TOTAL INCOME	89,650,020		89,323,020

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

2015 REVISED Spending Authorization Proposal

	Current Fund			World Hunger			Total
	Current Authorization	Proposed Revision	Revised Authorization	Current Authorization	Proposed Revision	Revised Authorization	2015
Congregational and Synodical Mission	\$ 27,474,650	\$ -	\$ 27,474,650	\$ 3,160,690	\$ 130,000	\$ 3,290,690	\$ 30,765,340
Global Mission	14,706,720	86,484	14,793,204	14,042,030	400,000	14,442,030	29,235,234
Mission Advancement	5,768,975	(586,484)	5,182,491	2,797,280	70,000	2,867,280	8,049,771
Office of the Presiding Bishop	5,629,275	0	5,629,275				5,629,275
Office of the Secretary	4,155,375	0	4,155,375				4,155,375
Office of the Treasurer	8,391,690	0	8,391,690				8,391,690
General Treasury	151,200	0	151,200				151,200
Retiree Minimum Health Obligation	1,000,000	0	1,000,000				1,000,000
Depreciation	2,342,135	173,000	2,515,135				2,515,135
Strategic Initiative Fund	30,000	0	30,000				30,000
Total	\$ 69,650,020	\$ (327,000)	\$ 69,323,020	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 20,600,000	\$ 89,923,020



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

MEMORANDUM

To: Budget and Finance Committee

From: Linda O. Norman

Date: March 24, 2015

Subject: April 2015 Meeting Overview Memo

This memorandum provides you with an overview of the meeting. It is intended to be read first, highlights our primary action and discussion items, and is accompanied by a schedule of the committee's fiduciary cycle of work. The related agenda, action items and exhibits are posted to NetCommunity.

BOARD PREPARATION AND MATERIALS

Based on feedback received at the November 2014 meeting, we will continue with the recent changes to our committee materials. Additionally, we will work to address action items that require greater concentration and/or focus at the beginning of the day. Please take note of how the way we have ordered our work facilitates or hinders your preparation and participation in the meeting. We will again evaluate the meeting during the Report of the Chair.

Committee time has been focused primarily on action items and discussion items that have strategic implications for the church. Staff will present topics to the committee using Microsoft PowerPoint whenever practicable, and each presentation will begin with a 'major highlights' slide that summarizes the most important aspects of that matter before the committee.

ACTION ITEMS

Bishops' Think Tank on Mission Funding: As discussed during the March 25 conference call, we will receive the final report and recommendations from the Bishops' Think Tank on Mission Funding. The report is presented for Church Council action.

Synod Mission Support Plans: As of the writing of this memo, four synods have submitted revisions to 2015 mission support plans since the last Church Council meeting. These revisions represent a less than 1% decrease in estimated mission support and reduction of \$107,000 for those synods reporting. To date we have received thirty-seven completed Synod Mission Support sharing intents for 2016. We expect synods will continue to report in conjunction with their Spring synod council meetings and assemblies. We are not recommending a change in the 2015 Mission Support estimate of \$47.25 million.

Revised 2015 Spending Authorizations: Revised spending authorization of \$69.3 million for current fund operations and \$20.6 million for World Hunger are being proposed for the current fiscal year. As compared to the previously approved spending authorizations, this is a \$327,000 decrease in the current fund budget and an increase of \$600,000 in the World Hunger budget. Although not requiring committee approval, please note that a revised goal of \$1.2 million has been established for this final year of the \$15.0 million five-year ELCA Malaria Campaign.

Revised 2015 Capital Budget: A revised capital budget request for \$3.5 million capital spend with a \$168,000 alternate funding allowance is being proposed at this meeting. Increased spending is due to the estimated capital costs associated with leasing of the Lutheran Center's seventh floor. Improvements to the space will begin this year with a lease period beginning March 2016. The proposed \$168,000 alternative funding allowance supports a new copier lease arrangement.

Audit Committee Report: Legal and Constitutional Review Committee will be recommending an update to the Audit Committee continuing resolution that replaces the six member requirement with a range of five to seven committee members. **One renewing committee member will come recommended for approval of two-year term.**

Budget and Finance Chair and Vice Chair Elections: During this meeting, we will elect a new Budget and Finance Chair and Vice Chair. Their service will begin September 1, 2015 **for a two-year term. and will conclude with the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Charitable Gift Annuity Strategic Asset Allocation Review: As an outcome of the Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) program assessment, the committee will receive and have conversation about the analysis of both the California and Non-California Reserve Funds' asset allocations. The analysis is based on consultation with State Street Global Advisors (SSGA) and Portico Benefit Services.

Managing Information Technology Risk: The committee will receive an update and have an opportunity to ask questions about current and future information technology risk mitigation efforts.

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA: At the end of the first full year of the campaign, revenues and commitments totaled \$48.2 million, or 24.4%, towards the \$198 million five-year goal. In addition to receiving an update on the campaign's financial results, the committee will have an opportunity to discuss success measures and direction for the campaign.

Budget and Finance Committee
Fiduciary Cycle of Work Summary

Description	Body	Fall	Spring	Last Reviewed
Budget:				
Approve triennium budget (CWA year only)	BF/CC		X	Spring 2013
Approve revised following year spending authorization	BF/CC	X		Fall 2014
Approve revised current year spending authorization (as needed)	BF/CC	X	X	Spring 2015
Approve capital budget	BF	X		Spring 2015
Review budget/actual results	BF	X	X	Spring 2015
Review capital budget expenditures	BF	X	X	Spring 2015
Church Council Designated Funds:				
Approve new funds (as needed)	BF/CC	X	X	Fall 2014
Review existing funds	BF	X	X	Spring 2015
Review funds functioning as endowment	BF		X	Spring 2015
Audit				
Receive and forward committee report	BF/CC	X	X	Spring 2015
Approve engagement of outside auditors	BF	X		Fall 2014
Approve new committee members (as needed)	BF/CC	X	X	Fall 2015

Description	Body	Fall	Spring	Last Reviewed
Cash and investments				
Approve investment policies (or, as needed)	BF/CC		X	Fall 2014
Approve investment manager guidelines (or, as needed)	BF		X	Fall 2014
Approve cash management policies (or, as needed)	BF/CC		X	Fall 2014
Review cash balances to policy	BF	X	X	Spring 2015
Review investment compliance to policy	BF	X	X	Spring 2015
Mission Support				
Approve following year synod plans	BF/CC		X	Spring 2015
Approve revisions to synod plans (as needed)	BF/CC	X	X	Spring 2015
Receive report of mission support consultations	BF	X	X	Spring 2015
Other				
Review financial reports	BF	X	X	Spring 2015

BF/CC = Approval required by both Budget and Finance Committee and Church Council
 BF = Approval required by Budget and Finance Committee only

Color Key:

Committee action

Committee information

Revised: March 2015

EXHIBIT LIST

RR = Required Reading

READ THIS FIRST

RR - April 2015 Meeting Overview Memo, including Fiduciary Cycle of Work Summary

REQUIRED READING

Action Items

- RR - Agenda
- RR - BFC Minutes November 2014
- RR - BFC Conference Call Meeting Minutes March 2015
- RR - Revised 2015 Budget Proposal Highlights
- RR - Revised 2015 Income Estimates
- RR - Revised 2015 Spending Authorization Proposal
- RR - Revised 2015 Capital Budget Proposal
- RR - Audit Committee Report
- RR - Report from the Director for Mission Support
- RR - 2015 – 2016 Synod Mission Support Plans
- RR - Think Tank Report Synopsis and Recommendations
- RR - Bishops' Think Tank on Mission Support Report and Recommendations
- RR - Think Tank Appendix One – Mission Support Proposal (Bishop Rinehart)
- RR - Think Tank Appendix Two – Synodical Funding Streams (Bishop Burkart)
- RR - Think Tank Appendix Three – Potential Financial Services Office (MIF)
- RR - Think Tank Appendix Four – Five Synod Mission Support (Bishop Hazelwood)
- RR - Think Tank Appendix Five – A Modest Proposal
- RR - Think Tank Appendix Six – Supplement to Five Synod Experiment

Discussion Items

- RR - 2015 Charitable Gift Annuity Strategic Asset Allocation Review Memo
- RR - Appendix A: Portico/Rocaton Charitable Gift Annuity Analysis
- RR - Appendix B: State Street Global Advisors Strategic Asset Allocation Review
- RR - CGA Investment Philosophy and Policy Statement Draft

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Financial Results

- Current Fund Operating Results
 - Summary of Revenue and Expenses
 - Revenue Summary
 - Actual Expense vs. Spending Authorization
- Mission Support
 - Synodical Mission Support Remittances
 - Synodical Mission Support by Month (Graph)
 - Mission Support Received in Preceding 12 months (Graph)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
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Exhibit List
Page 2

ELCA World Hunger
ELCA Malaria Campaign
Campaign for the ELCA – Financial Report
Statements of Financial Position at January 31, 2015

 Consolidating Statement
 Summary of Revenue, Expense, and Net Assets for All Funds
 Churchwide Operations
 Endowment Fund
 Deferred Gift Fund
ELCA Capital Projects Report

Church-Council Designated Funds

 Church Council Designated Funds Summary
 Church Council Designated Funds Functioning as Endowment
 Mission Development Fund Summary

Cash and Investments

 Summary of ELCA Cash and Investments
 Deferred Gifts Program Report
 Deferred Gifts Program Responsibility Matrix
 Endowment Fund Pooled Trust Program Report
 Endowment Fund Pooled Trust Account Summary

Other Items

 ELCA Federal Credit Union (Proposed) Update

Bishops Think Tank on Mission Funding - Final Report, April 2015: **Synopsis and Suggestions for Church Council Action**

This synopsis of the Think Tank's report contains suggestions for implementing actions by the Church Council. You will note that in many cases the recommendation action is simply to affirm the intention of the Think Tank since the authority to make such changes lies with the Presiding Bishop or the administrative team.

Introduction:

Provides basic information and communicates a “sense of urgency” that there needs to be a “radical re-imagining” of all the ways that we deal with our financial resources.

No action suggested.

Challenges:

Description of six challenges that face the church:

1. pastors must understand their role as critical in shaping generosity, stewardship, the spirituality of money issues and the interdependence in the mission of the ELCA;
2. giving practices are changing in our culture, and a corresponding adjustment is needed in our approaches to funding ministry and mission;
3. the ELCA is complex in its organization - each synod is different, and there are many more entities and requests for funding than the three expressions of the church;
4. we must acknowledge radical decrease in traditional unrestricted giving practices, and consider embracing other ways of asking and of giving;
5. although the ELCA has addressed these challenges repeatedly in the last few years, there has not yet been consensus among stakeholders about possible changes;
6. there is a lack of clarity and consensus about the role and priorities of each expression of the ELCA.

Action suggested:

to “affirm Bishop Eaton’s intention to convene a team, the majority of whom will be active, thoughtful and knowledgeable ELCA members....to generate recommendations for sharpening our priorities as a church and bringing greater clarity about what the whole ELCA will do and will not do to serve God’s mission more faithfully and effectively in the years to come.” (This action is also in mentioned in Recommendations 3.b)

Opportunities

1. We need to broaden our traditional understanding of proportionate giving to include new approaches to fund-raising that take seriously the profile of 21st century donors;

2. We need to accept and affirm more fully the concept of designated giving;
3. We applaud new efforts of the ELCA Mission Advancement Unit;
4. We support the renewed efforts of the ELCA Foundation and encourage a growing and central role of planned giving in the overall mission funding strategy.

No action requested

Recommendations

Again urgency is noted:

to rethink - an invitation to deep honesty about present realities
to revise - a request that the Church Council initiate changes now
to experiment - urge the Church Council to approve exploration of new models

Actions requested:

1. ***To replace the present reporting form of “acknowledge with sadness” or “acknowledge with thanksgiving” with a format that expresses thanksgiving for all mission support gifts reported to the Church Council.***
2. ***To approve the development of a three year “substantive and collaborative process” which would result in “synod-specific” percentage goals for each of the 65 synods to be presented to the Church Council for approval in April 2018 as a replacement for the present 55/45 percentage system.***
3. ***To approve hiring a full time Director for Mission Support to construct and oversee this process in collaboration with the Mission Advancement Unit and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and to support that position with the necessary funding and staffing to accomplish its goals. (The funding for the position of Director already exists in the present budget.)***
4. ***To endorse the principle that multiple streams of income may be used to provide funding for the mission of any expression of the church. (See Appendix #2 for examples of possible funding sources.)***
5. ***To revise the current wording of the annual synodical Statement of Intent forms to reflect the possibility of using other sources of income to fulfill the stated dollar amount of a synod’s mission support commitment.***
6. ***To instruct the Director for Mission Support, in collaboration with the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit (CSM) to oversee the development of new resources and provide guidance for congregations and synods to assist them in the development of multiple streams of income. Additional financial resources and human resources will be provided to fulfill these responsibilities.***

- 7. To affirm the experiment being explored by the ELCA Mission Investment Fund to establish a Financial Services Organization (See appendix #3.)**
- 8. To affirm a three-year experiment, beginning in 2016 and involving five synods that wish to form a “learning community” to test whether retaining the ELCA grants for ministries and the salary of the Director for Evangelical Mission will produce more effective management and oversight, and also provide an overall gain in mission support. (See appendices #4 and #6.) The five synods will continue to remit the remainder of their mission support percentage goal to the ELCA, and the experiment will be supervised by the ELCA Director for Mission Support.**
- 9. To request that the Director for Mission Support, in collaboration with the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, develop a plan to equip rostered leaders to “make the case” for a renewed commitment to mission support. (An example of one synod’s efforts in this area is in appendix #5.)**
- 10. To request that the Director for Mission Support, in collaboration with the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, create and distribute synod-congregational consultation materials that will seek to develop congregation-specific goals for mission support of the wider church.**

1 **Bishops Think Tank on Mission Funding**

2 *Final Report to the Church Council, April 2015*

3 **Introduction**

4 The Bishops Think Tank on Mission Funding was appointed by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton in late 2013,
5 to address in new ways the decline in mission support in our church body. Bp. Eaton invited nine bishops (one
6 per Region) to be an imaginative cadre of synod leaders, engaged in reflection on this topic with other ELCA
7 stakeholders . She charged the Think Tank to prepare a report with recommendations for the spring 2015
8 meetings of the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council.

9 The following bishops have served on the Think Tank: Shelley Wickstrom (Alaska), Steve Talmage (Grand
10 Canyon), Larry Wohlrabe (Northwestern Minnesota), Mike Rinehart (Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast), Tom
11 Skrenes (Northern Great Lakes), Marcus Lohrmann (Northwestern Ohio), Jim Hazelwood (New England), Dick
12 Graham (Metropolitan Washington DC), and Julian Gordy (Southeastern). Bishop Gordy has served as
13 convener, and Bishop Wohlrabe has been the main recorder/writer.

14 The group met face-to-face in April 2014, September 2014 and January 2015 and engaged one another via a
15 Google Group in which we discussed ideas online. In addition to Bishop Eaton, the group has welcomed as
16 advisers Pr. Margaret Payne, Director for Mission Support, and Dr. Kenneth Inskeep of Research and
17 Evaluation.

18 The Think Tank submitted an interim report to the Church Council in November 2014. Responses to this report
19 from the Church Council have enriched the conversation of the Think Tank. The churchwide organization's
20 Administrative Team also responded in writing to the interim report and met with the Think Tank in January
21 2015. Insights gleaned from the Administrative Team are incorporated into this final report. We will seek
22 ongoing collaboration with the Administrative Team in conducting the experiments proposed in this report.

23 As we conclude our efforts, the Think Tank is grateful for the opportunity to share its best thinking with the
24 Church Council. We want to underscore several accents that mark this report.

- 31 • First, we must all be clear that mission support is chiefly about *God's mission* of blessing and redeeming
32 the whole creation in Jesus Christ-- not the maintenance of historical church structures, or the
33 continuation of existing patterns of operation or staffing.
- 34 • Second, we remind ourselves and this church that matters of church order and organization are not
35 divinely-decreed but are the products of the church's ongoing, rational reflection on what will serve
36 God's mission and our neighbors most faithfully and fruitfully in *this* time and place.
- 37 • Third, we cannot overstate our sense of urgency in this critical moment of our church's life. This
38 church is long "past due" for a radical re-imagining of all the ways we garner, steward and invest the
39 financial resources that God's people share for the sake of God's mission.

41 **Challenges**

42 Although the broad challenge of declining mission support giving precipitated formation of the Think Tank, its
43 members have been keenly aware of layers of challenges in our path as a church body. The following are six of
44 the challenges with which the Think Tank has grappled:.

- 47 • This church has yet to embrace fully our awareness that use of money is a profoundly spiritual issue,
48 that generosity is a faith practice intrinsic to Christian discipleship, that stewardship encompasses the
49 totality of the Christian life, and that pastors play a critical role in shaping financial generosity and
50 teaching stewardship.
- 51
- 52 • Church and society have changed dramatically since the ELCA was formed in 1988. Among the
53 fundamental changes that are happening all around us are changes in giving practices across North
54 America. Older generations of loyal givers who trusted institutions to “do the right thing” are passing
55 away. Younger generations are shifting from giving to institutions to supporting causes that matter to
56 them. We in the ELCA have been aware of these seismic shifts but have been reluctant to adjust our
57 approaches to mission funding accordingly. Our congregations and members also—to one degree or
58 another--inhabit a narrative regarding church life that no longer squares with present realities. For
59 example, so many assets of this church tied up in church buildings and real estate that are aged, under-
60 utilized and expensive to maintain. Moreover, we still assume that rostered leaders can continue to be
61 deployed in ways that privilege the traditional one-pastor-per-congregation model bequeathed to us by
62 previous generations. Realities like these have profound ramifications for how we fund our participation
63 in God’s mission as “church together.”
- 64
- 65 • This church is much more complex--even messy--than we normally recognize in our self-descriptions as
66 a church body. Although our governing documents speak of three expressions (congregations, synods
67 and the churchwide organization), there are actually many more “expressions” of the ELCA such as
68 households, social ministry organizations, outdoor ministries, campus ministries, and global companion
69 relationships (to name just a few). Exemplifying this complexity, the 65 synods vary greatly in
70 membership, geographic territory, resources for mission, opportunities for outreach and preferred styles
71 for carrying out synod ministries. Not surprisingly, there is a degree of competition for financial
72 resources among these manifold expressions—a fact we would be wise to acknowledge rather than
73 downplay. Our traditional ways of talking about mission funding often are not cognizant of the diversity
74 and dynamism of all the expressions of this church.
- 75 • The people of our church have already restructured ELCA mission support, by reducing shared giving
76 from 17.7% of congregational receipts in 1965 in predecessor church bodies down to less than 5% of
77 congregational receipts in 2013. In their 2013 reports, ELCA congregations collectively showed they
78 were not giving less for ministries beyond themselves, but were giving differently. For example,
79 designated giving to other organizations and also to the ELCA designated funds has been rising.
80 Despite this elemental fact of life, we in the ELCA have tended simply to critique givers’ desire to give
81 toward designated ministries rather than imagine how this designated giving phenomenon might be
82 embraced in our church body.
- 83
- 84 • For some time, ELCA leaders have keenly sensed the need for a fresh conversation about mission
85 funding—but actually making this happen has been difficult. From the beginning of its work the Think
86 Tank has realized it is but the latest in a long line of groups that were given a similar charge (Blue
87 Ribbon Committee, LIFT Task Force, Group of Nine Bishops, Mission Funding Task Force). Previous
88 efforts have been limited and even stymied by factors such as system-wide anxiety about “money
89 issues,” being deeply embedded in the very system we’re trying to change, the difficulties of building

consensus among key stakeholders, and the fragility of trust across this church. The fact that it has been so challenging for this church to wrap its arms around the challenge of mission funding is, in itself, worthy of our deepest reflection.

- It is virtually impossible to consider mission funding in the ELCA apart from an urgently needed discussion of this church's priorities in mission, structures needed to address these priorities, and ways we will do so that are more effective and cost-conscious. Therefore we affirm Bishop Eaton's intention to convene a team, the majority of whom will be active, thoughtful, and knowledgeable ELCA members not currently serving as staff or elected leaders in the churchwide organization or the synods. The sole task of this group will be to generate recommendations for sharpening our priorities as a church and bringing greater clarity about what the whole ELCA will do and will not do to serve God's mission more faithfully and effectively in the years to come. This team will assess in fresh ways how the various expressions of the ELCA *each* serve these priorities and how church structures need to change for the sake of these priorities.

Naming challenges like these has encouraged Think Tankers to embrace our work in a spirit of humility—while at the same time boldly considering ideas for moving our church beyond *technical* change into the arena of *adaptive* change.

Opportunities

As daunting as such challenges are, the Think Tank also believes we're living in a time of fresh possibilities for mission funding. For example, the Think Tank identifies the following opportunities before us.

- “Rethinking stewardship” remains a topic for imaginative conversation among North American Christians. One of the fruits of this movement has been a broadening of our understanding of financial stewardship to embrace, alongside traditional understandings of proportionate giving, 21st century approaches to fund-raising that take seriously the changing profile of 21st century givers. A good example of this is the ELCA’s current venture into “Peer to Peer” (P2P) giving opportunities on behalf of ELCA Hunger and other churchwide ministries.
- Younger generations of givers are often more engaged with causes and ministries that matter to them. They tend not to bifurcate their service and their giving. This church needs to recognize and embrace the fact that, for many givers nowadays, interest in designated giving reflects much more than a selfish desire to “attach strings” to one’s giving.
- The Think Tank is impressed with new directions being pursued by the ELCA Mission Advancement unit to engage congregations and members more fully, to recognize the importance of members who are able to give major gifts, to “steward” more effectively relationships with givers, to improve mission interpretation efforts, and to grow networks across this church for the sake of increasing financial support.
- The Think Tank also is cheered by the renewed efforts of the ELCA Foundation to expand the cadre of regional gift planners, enhance its tools and resources, and foster goal-setting and greater accountability among its staff. The Think Tank believes that planned giving needs to occupy a more visible, central place in the ELCA overall mission funding strategy. Within this strategy the Think Tank encourages

136 exploration of endowments playing a larger role in providing reliable income streams to pay for our
137 infrastructures in the congregations, synods and the churchwide organization.

142 **Recommendations**

144 In light of these challenges and assumptions, the Think Tank believes there is an urgent need for the Church
145 Council to lead this church boldly into a time of ***rethinking, revising and experimenting*** with how we as
146 “church together” fund the mission of our ELCA. *Rethinking* entails inviting this church into a time of deep
147 honesty about facts-on-the-ground, setting aside obsolete approaches and embracing new pathways. *Revising*
148 involves taking steps that the Church Council can initiate right now to improve our mission funding “climate.”
149 *Experimenting* means trying out new models for seeking, receiving and investing financial resources for
150 mission. Since experiments may “press the edges” of our common life, we urge the Church Council to explore
151 how flexible we might be in applying pertinent provisions in our governing documents.

152 **1. It is time to rethink and revise the guidance of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church, that
153 synods share mission support gifts with the churchwide organization on a 55/45% basis.**

156 This funding formula has never been uniformly and comprehensively adopted across this church.
157 Currently only seven of the 65 synods adhere to it. As we ponder the status of the 55/45 formula, we
158 would be wise to revisit the whole question of sharing ELCA/synod mission support dollars on a fixed
159 percentage basis. Whether a new target formula is agreed upon or the percentage question is determined
160 on a synod-by-synod basis, mutual accountability must be built into the process.

161 In this regard the Think Tank recommends that the Church Council

- 164 a. In communications regarding synods’ shared mission funding, cease immediately the use of
165 language such as “acknowledging with sadness” or “acknowledging with thanksgiving” the
166 percentage of unrestricted congregational gifts that a synod remits to the churchwide
167 organization. Replace such expressions with language that expresses thanksgivings,
168 opportunities and challenges that synods and the churchwide organization face as they seek
169 to be “church together.”
- 170 b. Retire the present 55/45% goal for unrestricted giving from synods to the churchwide
171 organization and replace it with a more flexible and synod-specific approach to determining
172 shared funding goals.
- 173 c. To develop this new approach, ask the Director for Mission Support to facilitate over the next
174 three years deeply substantive and collaborative consultations between the churchwide
175 organization and leaders of the 65 synods to arrive at synod-specific goals that will reflect
176 both a fair share of the funding needed for the mission of this church and a reasonable
177 challenge for the synod.
- 178 d. Take steps, in collaboration with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to assure that the
179 Director for Mission Support has sufficient time, human resources and financial resources to
180 carry out these three years of consultations.
- 181 e. Affirm the possibility of a limited number of synods, between 2015 and 2018, to experiment
182 with testing a modified version of the congregational statement of intent that would allow

congregations to choose either (a) to specify how much congregational mission support will go to churchwide ministries and how much will go to synod ministries, or (b) to continue using each synod's formula for sharing with the churchwide organization. [See Appendix #1 \(the Rinehart experiment\)](#). Ask the Director for Mission Support to collaborate with the bishops of the experimenting synods in overseeing these experiments and sharing what is learned throughout this church.

2. It is time to rethink and revise this church's focus on a single stream of income, i.e. unrestricted mission support from congregations.

Simply put, we must all realize that “mission support” is one way, but certainly not the only way, that financial resources for mission are shared across this church. The whole ELCA urgently needs to embrace multiple-stream approaches to mission funding. Steps in this direction are already being taken, e.g. the Campaign for the ELCA, the Vision for Mission annual appeal, our approach to investing income from bequests, synod-specific appeals, and other avenues for direct support for churchwide and synod ministries from individuals and organizations.

In this regard the Think Tank recommends that the Church Council

- a. Formally affirm the principle that, moving forward, this church must rely on multiple streams of income (including unrestricted mission support from congregations) to serve the ELCA's participation in God's mission in the world.
 - b. Ask the Director for Mission Support to initiate revisions to the wording of the annual "statement of intent" forms filed by congregations with synods and synods with the churchwide organization to reflect this multiple-stream approach to mission funding.
 - c. Ask the Director for Mission Support, in collaboration with the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, to generate new resources for and provide guidance to congregations and synods as they transition toward multiple-stream approaches to garnering funds for the mission of this church. [See Appendix #2 \(Burkat presentation on multiple-stream approaches\)](#)
 - d. Provide the Director for Mission Support and the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit with human resources and financial resources to lead this church to embrace these multiple-stream approaches.

3. It is time to rethink and revise this church's current patterns for how mission funds are received and stewarded.

This includes the ways mission support dollars flow in trustworthy and efficient ways from congregations to synods to the churchwide organization. The Think Tank encourages the churchwide organization and synods to reassess the costs of “doing business,” e.g. our continued reliance on face-to-face meetings rather than using modern communications technologies, significant cash outlays for travel, and costly evaluative processes and approaches to administration.

This includes how the ELCA invests mission funds in ways that reflect this church's passionate priorities and highest values.

This also includes how some of such funds are returned to congregations and synods in the form of grants from the churchwide organization. We recognize the diversity in financial capacity and generosity among the 65 synods of this church. We appreciate the fact that some synods need help from other synods to fund ministries that serve those in deepest need. At the same time we believe attention needs to be paid to (a) the administrative costs of moving funds back and forth in the current pattern, and (b) how mission funding might be enhanced in some synods by moving more decision-making about expenditure of these resources closer to the locations where the mission is actually happening. .

In this regard the Think Tank recommends that the Church Council

- a. Affirm the experiment being explored by the ELCA Mission Investment Fund to work with 6-8 pilot synods in establishing a Financial Services Organization (FSO). [See Appendix #3, "A Potential Financial Services Organization for the Synods of the ELCA."](#)
- b. Affirm Bishop Eaton's plan to convene a team to focus and refine this church's priorities in mission and ministry.
- c. Affirm the experiment that the Lower Susquehanna, Metropolitan Washington DC, Nebraska, New England and Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synods wish to conduct to experiment with ways to (a) retain a portion of the financial resources that would otherwise be remitted to the churchwide organization; (b) use these resources to fund directly some of the ministries for which synods currently receive grants from the churchwide organization, e.g. the Director of Evangelical Mission and grants for mission starts and redevelopments; and (c) test whether such "grass roots" direct funding of outreach ministries might both produce money-handling efficiencies and cultivate increased mission support giving among the members and congregations of these synods. [See Appendix #4 \(Hazelwood experiment\).](#) Ask the Director for Mission Support to collaborate with the bishops of the experimenting synods in overseeing these experiments and sharing what is learned throughout this church.

4. **It is time for congregations, synods and the churchwide organization to re-engage with one another to make mission funding integral to being "church together."** Many of the recommendations in this report will be implemented by synods and/or the churchwide organization. We must not lose sight of how significant *congregational* realities also impact mission funding. In this regard we draw attention to two foci: (a) the need to expect and equip parish pastors to be strong advocates—in collaboration with lay leaders—for shared mission funding in ways that our governing documents call pastors to be (*C9.03.c.4); and (b) the need for synods and congregations to engage in deeper, more substantive and collaborative consultations with one another regarding how we fund mission as "church together." Indeed, it is as vital for congregations to have deeper consultations with synods around mission funding issues as it is for synods to have deeper consultations about mission funding with the churchwide organization

In this regard the Think Tank recommends that the Church Council

- a. Ask the Director for Mission Support, in collaboration with the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, to develop a plan to equip candidates for rostered ministries, pastors and bishops to become better equipped for and committed to "making the case"—each in

270 their own spheres of leadership—for increasing funding for the mission and ministries of this
271 church.

- 272 b. Ask the Director for Mission Support, in collaboration with the Congregational and
273 Synodical Mission Unit, to create and distribute a process for synods and congregations to
274 have deeply substantive and collaborative consultations with one another in order to arrive at
275 congregation-specific goals that will reflect both a fair share of the funding needed for the
276 mission of this church and a reasonable challenge for the congregation.

277

278

279 **Appendices**

280 [Appendix 1:](#)

281 [Appendix 2:](#)

282 [Appendix 3:](#)

283 [Appendix 4:](#)

Mission Support Proposal

To position the ELCA to proclaim the Good News in a rapidly changing context

Mike Rinehart - September 15, 2014



Introduction

The Mission Support Think Tank was asked by Bishop Eaton to take a look at mission support. Each region gathered information on its synods' budgets, mission support and other benevolence. After a year of meetings in which we gathered information and discussed alternatives, participants were asked to submit proposals.

In order to focus the work I wrote my own purpose statement, or rather question:

"What funding structure will enable the ELCA to have an explosion of mission activity that maximizes our capacity to proclaim the gospel?"



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Proposal In Brief

1. Uncouple synodical and churchwide mission support.
2. Ask congregations to continue to support churchwide and synodical ministries in equal amounts for three years.
3. Churchwide and synods enter a strategic planning process streamline structures, lower overhead, identify essential ministries and communicate the unique gifts of each.
4. Remove the 55% from the constitution replacing it with nothing.

1. Rationale

In his book *Accelerate: Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World*, John Kotter points out that most organizations start out as networks. This is true of the church, both the early church, and the history of Lutheran churches in the U.S. In time, networks develop into hierarchies, which provide organization and structural stability. The problem is managerial hierarchies eventually overshadow and sometimes destroy the network that gave the organization its birth and its competitive edge.

Networks are agile, creative, innovative, and adaptive. Managerial hierarchies are good at budgets, staffing, measuring, and long-range planning. Hierarchies strive to preserve what is. They divide the work into departments that eventually lead to silos. Networks often work to change what is in order to make room for what might be.

Kotter does not propose killing the hierarchy. Large organizations cannot live without managerial hierarchies. The churchwide organization with hundreds of employees, missionaries and deployed staff, will always need a certain amount of hierarchical infrastructure to operate. It will, therefore, have a different culture than a synod with a dozen employees. Instead, Kotter proposes a dual-operating system, like a brain.

A healthy organization trims and tames the bureaucracy of the hierarchy, then plants informal networks that can move under the radar with speed and agility to take advantage of strategic opportunities. In this way, a large organization can continue to innovate like an entrepreneurial startup.

From my angle of vision, our current organizational structure in the ELCA is strong in maintenance, but weak in innovation. The paperwork our DEMs manage is dizzying, while the results across the church are less than optimal. Hierarchies don't innovate well.

Our organization is top-heavy. The national office has too many staff. It attempts to do too much. Our congregations, synods and denominational structures seem focused more on maintaining their buildings, structures and staff than adapting to a rapidly changing context.

If we want an explosion of mission activity that increases our capacity to proclaim the gospel, we will have to create a flatter organization, unclutter our hierarchy, lower overhead, reward innovation and free up dollars currently fueling the hierarchy to go to work on the ground. We can do this. The Lutheran Confessions say there is no divinely ordained method of church structure. We are free to organize as best serves the gospel in our time and context.

2. Funding the Mission

If your goal was to spark an explosion of mission activity that dramatically increased our ability to proclaim the gospel, would you put the dollars into the congregations, the synods or the churchwide organization?

This is an interesting question worthy of consideration. We don't have the answer yet, because we don't know what yet works. So what we need is a flexible funding structure that will allow the money to flow to efforts that are bearing fruit. Old hierarchical structures bent on self-survival demand funding even when ineffective. Instead of rewarding innovation, we continue to fund obsolete structures that aren't getting the job done.

Additionally, all the research on charitable giving shows that people today, especially the younger generations, want more control over where their money goes. They want to know exactly what their charitable dollars are doing, rather than giving to a large organization and trusting that it will be used for this or that as the organization deems appropriate.

Finally, organizations that are thriving in this new global, internet saturated, networky universe in which we live tend to be less control-oriented and more results-driven. For example, Google allows employees to take as much vacation as they want. Of course, if you don't do your job, you'll be fired, but as long as you're doing your job, getting results, we have no desire to spend the time and energy tracking vacation time. The culture in our churchwide offices seems to be the opposite of this.

Uncoupling churchwide and synodical giving will allow money to flow wherever fruit is being borne. Congregations, synods, churchwide and newly formed networks can all start new worshipping communities in different ways. Some will work, while others will not. Dollars can flow to what works.

It's not clear to me where the dollars would flow in time. Churchwide's work with missionaries, hunger and ecumenical work is outstanding. It's very preachable. In many ways, it's more interesting than the work of the mid-level judicatory (synod) around call process, conflict management, candidacy and so on.

If congregations write two checks, we will become a less vertically-structured church. Each expression will have to simplify to the effective essentials and become very good at communicating what it is doing and why. It will have to show results.

3. How Other Denominations Fund

I gathered information from other denominations by simply emailing a few of my colleagues. I shared our structure and asked about theirs. I asked how much they sent on to denominational headquarters and if they felt their structure was sustainable.

United Church of Christ

Each Conference (the equivalent of our synod) determines what percent they will send onto the national. As Conferences have financial problems, the percent gets cut and the national UCC receives less.

80% of the churches give to the wider church. 20% give nothing. Their Top Ten Giving Churches give 54% of all benevolence. Some as little as \$200.00 per year. Giving is voluntary through "covenantal" conversation.

They have no apportionments but associations (ministeriums/deaneries/clusters) have a Per Capita recommendation for the work they do. It ranges from \$2 to \$6 Per Member. Mission support has decreased every year for the last decade. Their conference has balanced the budget every year only through budget expense reductions.

In the past, they sent 20% to the national UCC. They reduced it this year to 16%. Across the UCC it is between 10% and 50%. Some larger percent giving judicatories have heavy endowments (like \$50 to \$80 million dollars).

In addition, they have four special national offerings:

- Lent: OGHS-One Great Hour of Sharing
- Pentecost: STC-Strengthen the Church
- World Wide Communion Sunday: NIN-Neighbors in Need
- Christmas: The Christmas Fund (For Retired Clergy in Need)

On top of that, local congregations are asked to give to:

- A. Association Per Capita
- B. Local UCC Seminaries
- C. A local UCC Nursing Home
- D. A local Urban Ministry
- E. Their Camp

F. UCC colleges

G. Special UCC Interest Groups like the Coalition for LGBT Concerns.

National UCC leaders have talked about this whole topic of wider church financial funding but no change has taken place. No Conferences show any trend in increased denominational giving. "We are really stuck."

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

The District Presidents of the LCMS districts that overlap my synod tell me mission support has been falling. Districts are free to choose what they give to St. Louis. In their polity, the larger congregations tend to be more moderate, and are not happy with the swing to the right. Some have been cutting or withholding mission support.

One district that overlaps my synod gives 13% to the LCMS national body by resolution. The other district gives 29%. The LCMS average may be around 15%. St. Louis is struggling.

The Presbyterian Church USA

The Presbyterian system is somewhat different than ours. The congregation gives a voluntary amount to the presbytery. This amount ranges from \$0 to \$275K here. The presbytery gives 3% of that to the General Assembly (their national church body).

The congregation, however also has an apportionment that is sent directly to the General Assembly (their national church body). The congregation sends a set amount "per capita" (\$7.02 per member) that goes through the presbytery to the General Assembly. By comparison, if we applied this apportionment to our synod, it would amount to about 20% of synod income being sent to churchwide.) The General Presbyter here says the system has worked, but imperfectly.

The United Methodist Church

The conference here has apportionments.

They send 27% on to the national church body.

Many are calling for change in the system. Leaders like Pastor Mike Slaughter (Ginghamsburg UMC), Adam Hamilton and William Willimon have stated, "Our denominational systems continue to resist change by protecting archaic structures. From our seminaries to boards and agencies, institutional preservation was a strong resistant influence throughout GC. Entrenched organizational bureaucracies resist accountability ..."

The Episcopal Church

The ECUSA has a mandatory assessment of 10%. They currently receive 95% of that. New congregations only have to give 6-7%.

The diocese sends about 10% on to the national church body. This diocese feels good about their current funding structure.

The Catholic Church

My amusing friend in the Catholic Church said they were taxed on multiple levels. There is a tax for every parish that supplies the running of the diocese. This is called the Cathadraticum Tax. It is just for diocese. In this diocese it is a percentage of income 6-8%. This doesn't fund charities or programs. "I see it as an instrument of communion with our bishop. Some would say an annual tribute to our feudal lord. Upkeep of the realm. It pays salaries of diocesan offices.

We are also assessed the bishop's appeal. In our diocese this is called the Diocesan Service Fund. Our parishioners are asked to give on an individual basis, but every parish has a goal of 6-9%. Parishes working with the poor or working with refugees get a break on the DSF.

So, this approaches 20%, and all of it stays in the diocese. "It looks like a double tithe, and it feels like it too. It really does. After that we're left with 80% in our parishes. This is hard."

There is no national church. They do have the USCCB, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. There is a diocesan assessment to fund this. Not much. "No feudal connotations." The budget is over \$200M, but the Roman Catholic Church is over ten times as large as we are. If they were 1/10 the size, they would have a \$20M budget.

The Vatican is self-funding.

There are six national collections taken by diocese. They were down \$8.7M between 2009 and 2011. These collections benefit home missions, the church in Latin America and in Central and Eastern Europe, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Campaign for Human Development and Catholic Communication Campaign. There is also a voluntary collection benefiting the Solidarity Fund for Africa. A new collection is being added for the Archdiocese for Military Services.

Conclusion

Just a quick glimpse of these six other denominations shows that no national church body receives 50%. In our neck of the woods, it looks like this:

- The local UCC conference sends 16% on to the denominational headquarters.
- The average across the LCMS is 15%.
- The local UMC conference here sends 27%.
- The Presbytery sends 3%, but congregations send what would amount to 20% of what our synod receives, so 23%.
- The Episcopal diocese here sends 10% to the national church body.
- While the Catholic church has no national body, the USCCB has a diocesan assessment. I was never able to get that figure, but I suspect it is in the low single digits.

I cannot say that one system is better than another system, since none of these denominations are hitting on all 8 cylinders. The UMC seems to be doing the best, with Methodist apportionments holding steady at around \$130M. over the last decade. Their episcopal structure is significantly different, and from the quotes above, it is clear they aren't entirely happy either.

No organization can thrive today if it is sending half its resources to a central office. If we were to be in keeping with other denominations, synods would send between 15% and 25% to churchwide. If we were in keeping with the Episcopal Church it would be 10%.

The point is not that there is a better system out there. The point is that our systems need to be extremely flexible to adapt to the changing context if we are to bear fruit in the future.

5. Why the Models Won't Work

The first ELCA budget was \$112M. According to a Los Angeles Times report, the ELCA ended its first fiscal period with a \$15M shortfall. Treasurer George Aker reported to the Church Council that the deficit occurred despite spending that was \$7.7 million below the approved budget of \$112 million. "The church is looking at a critical shortage," Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom told council members.

The mission funding problem is not new. It has been with us all along. Now our budget is less than half what it was at the outset of the ELCA. The reality is congregations have defunded ministries of the wider church, falling from 15% to 6% of congregational income. Synods, meanwhile have held relatively steady. Some have declined, but many are at 50% and above. Few, however, are at the constitutionally stated percentage of 55%.

We created a top-heavy, resource-hungry, vertical structure for the church based on a 1980's corporate model. The individual gives to the congregation. The congregation gives to the synod. The synod gives to the churchwide organization. The churchwide organization funds national staff, missionaries, and gives grants back to synods to plant congregations. It's not a sustainable model for the 21st century.

In a document called "Three Models of Mission Funding," Kenn Inskeep helpfully collects a lot of data to show three different models. See the appendix of Jim Hazelwood's proposal for the document in full. Here is a brief synopsis of the three models:

Current: Proportional, however, no congregational standard set. 55% synod standard set by the CNLC but never acted upon by a Churchwide Assembly.

Model 1: In this Assessment approach, an amount based on worship attendance would be specified, per attendee. The current number is \$97 / attendee across the church, but as one might imagine it varies from synod to synod.

Model 2: This Receipt and Expense model would create a formula based on each congregation's income and expenses.

Model 3: The Federated approach would end grants to synods and DEMs. Synods would just fund remaining churchwide ministries at a rate of 35%.

These other models will only rearrange the deck chairs. They don't really do anything that will drive the organization to be more mission-effective. They represent different ways of cutting the pie.

In fact, each model carefully ensures that the funding "split" doesn't change. For example, Model 3 assumes a 35% mission support goal for synods once DEMs and grants are discontinued. Why not 30% or 20%? The underlying assumption is that anything we do must continue churchwide funding at the current level. This construes mission support reform as basically trying to find a clever new way to fund what we are currently doing the way we are currently doing it.

I would contend that what we are currently doing, the way we are currently doing it isn't working well. When what you are doing isn't working, do something else.

The church has a bright future. I'm not as sure about denominations. Organizing the North American Church around Late Medieval European polarities may have made sense in the 16 and 1700's. It doesn't today. It explains how we got here, but not why we should stay that way.

The first thing to do is loosen the corset. Ease up on the rules. We need to realize that congregations are donors, not feudal subjects to be commanded. Treat them like generous charitable givers to ministries beyond their walls. Appeal to head and heart. Help them see how their giving is changing lives. Be transparent. In the end, they will give where they see a difference being made.

The best thing we can do is remove the locks and barriers from our current system, let the fresh air in and allow something new to develop organically. So what I propose is not a model, but an interim structure to allow for more generosity and freedom, so that something new can emerge in time.

6. Implementation Plan

1. Uncouple synodical and churchwide mission support.
2. Ask congregations to continue to support churchwide and synodical ministries in equal amounts for three years.
3. Churchwide and synods enter a strategic planning process streamline structures, lower overhead, identify essential ministries and communicate the unique gifts of each.
4. Remove the 55% from the constitution replacing it with nothing.

If this proposal was pursued, a more detailed implementation plan would need to be hammered out by the team. Here is a sketchy start.

In this plan, congregations would write two “checks,” one to churchwide and one to synod. So that synod and churchwide ministries and staff were not disrupted abruptly, congregations would be asked to keep these amounts the same for three years. Some wouldn’t of course, funding one more than the other, so there would be an incremental shift. On the other hand, synods that currently give less than 50% could see a dip in synodical mission support. Gradually, we would get a better sense of what congregations are willing to fund. When they are funding what they believe in, the big bet is that giving would increase. We have all seen this happen with individuals, who give somewhat to the general budget, but may give a larger sum to something that really tugs at their heart (like Malaria). This will also force synod and churchwide structures to focus on ministries that our people really believe in. This structure of giving will spark adaptive change.

A. The Mission Support Think Tank would be expanded to include members of Churchwide Staff and Council to create an Implementation Team for one year.

Communicating this well will be essential, so the first thing to do will be to reconstitute the team to work on this. The team would be tasked with three things: 1. Communicating the proposal, 2. working on the necessary constitutional changes, and 3. developing a strategic planning team and process.

B. Each synod will be encouraged to engage in a strategic planning process.

This will be a synodical reroooting process, similar to what we have asked of congregations with the encouragement of Stephen Bouman. Churchwide will not guide their processes, but offer recommendations. Synods that aren’t currently implementing a strategic plan developed in the last few years will listen deeply to the congregations through surveys,

listening posts and focus groups, so that they can hone their work to support congregational life. When congregations feel synod structures acutely responsive to needs in the trenches, they will support them. People support what they help create.

Everything must be focused on the vitality of local congregational ministry. Synods and CW do critical work, but all that work is funded by congregations. If we don't have congregations, we don't have synodical or CW expressions. If you want to increase mission support and the work it undergirds in the church and the world, you have to have vital congregations. So if we want strong support of global partners, disaster relief and so on, we have to become obsessive about congregational vitality. If we want superstructure, we need a strong foundation.

C. Churchwide will engage in a strategic planning process.

It's been done before. It's time to do it again. This is not an annual operational plan, but a deep listening to the grass roots of the church for what they need from the churchwide expression of the church, and a looking inward to the assess what must be done and what cannot be done in a more streamlined infrastructure.

We can't keep doing everything, and we can't keep doing it all in the same expensive ways. Flying all over the place. Expensive meetings. Stamps. Mailings. Publications designed for the last century. Fat budgets. Big buildings, with big offices, big mortgages, big utilities, big desks and large staffs that develop programs no one uses.

We all know this. And yet we continue operating as if it was not so. Our synods, seminaries, etc. still function in yesterday's rhythms and sense, because it's how we're set up, what we know.

The strategic planning team would listen out then report back to churchwide staff and council. The report would be shared with the Conference of Bishops and the Churchwide Assembly, along with the plan to go forward. Hopefully by Churchwide Assembly we would be seeing results.

Conclusion

This will require an overhaul of most things. Courage to risk change. A willingness to fail. This will make some folks wedded to the old ways really, really mad, but the church will see vision and movement, and they will be deeply grateful. Everyone out there knows its time to shift paradigms.

We will have an even smaller churchwide staff so there will be a shakeup. Staff ready to retire will have to be offered an out. Key leaders will have to have the courage to let go of those who are less than effective. Some with a sense of entitlement will howl.

It will require a realignment of revenue streams. It will mean doing much less than we're doing now, but with greater excellence. Choosing the 20% of the work that gives us the 80% of the results.

Most of this won't require a vote of the Churchwide Assembly. Constitutional changes will. Legal and the Office of the Secretary will have to smoke out which is which. Kenn Inskeep's report says the Churchwide Assembly has not shown itself willing to deal with this issue. I believe if they have a credible, visionary proposal before them supported by churchwide leaders, council and COB it will fly through.

Bottom line: we have to do something. This is about more than mission support. This is about creating adaptive structures that foster an explosion of mission activity that empowers us to proclaim the gospel.

Our grass roots base is yearning for this. They will rejoice.

We are Lutherans. Reform of ecclesiastical structures should be our forte.

It will be hard, but it might be fun too.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Rinehart

Synodical Funding Streams

Conference of Bishops

March 7, 2015

*Bishop Claire S. Burkart
SEPA Synod, ELCA*

Partnership Support

- ▶ Opportunity to thank congregations for continuing support
- ▶ We can do more together than we can do alone- How? Why? What? Make the case for synod ministry.
- ▶ Acknowledge that congregations are also supporting ministries locally, nationally, globally.
- ▶ Identify ways to educate and inspire new pastors and leaders on value of partnership support.

Partnership Support

Challenges

- ▶ Financial transparency is essential
- ▶ Secure email addresses of council officers and other key leaders in congregations annually to communicate directly to congregations and to encourage partnership on all levels not just financial.

Annual Campaign

- ▶ Forces synod to articulate synod value
- ▶ Identifies individual donors
- ▶ Highlights new ministries and leaders
- ▶ Offers multiple way of communicating synod mission, vision, principle.
- ▶ Adds extra financial resources for undesignated synod ministry.

Annual Campaign

Challenges

- ▶ Financial transparency is essential
- ▶ Need to recruit a person or team who can connect and communicate purpose and theology with programs and people
- ▶ Secure email addresses of council officers and other key leaders in congregations to communicate directly to congregational leaders and to encourage partnership on all levels not just financial.

Capital Campaign

- ▶ Opportunity for synods to listen, learn, fix and celebrate synod ministry.
- ▶ Opportunity to identify major stakeholders and networks
- ▶ Opportunity to engage groups, volunteers, synod ambassadors and donors.
- ▶ Opportunity to write and test campaign case.
- ▶ Some sort of feasibility study is necessary.

Capital Campaign

Challenges

- ▶ Making time to work on this
- ▶ Synod Council approval
- ▶ Cost of Consulting Firm
- ▶ Additional work for staff

Interest from Investments

- ▶ Economy is slowly turning around.
- ▶ Investment income is growing
- ▶ Appoint a synod investment committee
- ▶ Another opportunity for financial transparency

Interest from Investments

Challenges

- ▶ Does your synod have and investment and or endowment fund?
- ▶ What kind of screens are driving the investment decisions?
- ▶ Who sits on the investment team?

Grants

- ▶ CSM Grants for new and renewing ministries
- ▶ Ecumenical or collaborative grants
- ▶ Hunger grants
- ▶ State grants.
- ▶ Calvin Institute for Christian worship (Grand Rapids)
- ▶ Wheat Ridge—for health related ministries
- ▶ Siebert Lutheran Funds (for Wisconsin entities)

Grants

Challenges

- ▶ Someone or some team needs to write for grants and get application in on time
- ▶ Don't apply for a grant to get resources if the project is not a priority because of the staff time required and accountability for implementation

Sale of Property

- ▶ Properties are assets as well as liabilities
- ▶ Sale of a property can significantly boost synod investment and or mission fund
- ▶ Repurpose properties for SMOs, community, and ecumenical centers
- ▶ Partners for Sacred Spaces can help with renovation and repurposing.

Sale of Property

Challenges

- ▶ Hard to sell during recession (mortgages were not easy to obtain by prospective buyers)
- ▶ Cost of maintaining and securing properties
- ▶ Finding someone to some agency to sell the buildings
- ▶ Agreeing on how funds from sale will be distributed and invested

Bequests

- ▶ After years of cultivating donors- some will remember the synod in wills, estates and charitable gift annuities

Bequests

Challenges

- ▶ Need a gift planner or other contact to help sort through options and interpretation of ministries
- ▶ The bishop needs to make time to get to know and thank donors and families.

Other Possible Funding Streams Suggested by COB

- ▶ Increased program registration fees for synod event to make small profit rather than synod budget expense.
- ▶ Thrift stores (Grand Canyon Synod owns 3 of them operated by retired volunteers)
- ▶ Offerings for synod ministry at ordinations and installations (SEPA)
- ▶ Lutheran Planned Giving—SD and NE. (In SD it's the synod, LSS, Bible camps, Good Sam, locally owned nursing homes, Augustana College.)

Other Possible Funding Streams Suggested by COB

- ▶ Congregations tithe bequests to synod/ELCA ministry (Grace of Ada, MN—lift up this and other congregation's policies of contributing 10% of bequests received to synod/ELCA. How might this go viral?)
- ▶ Congregational legacy plans ("estate planning for congregations"). See the NJ Synod resource from Tracie Bartholomew.

Other Possible Funding Streams Suggested by COB

- ▶ Leverage” the Campaign for the ELCA. As ELCA Campaign leaders share names of congregations and donors with bishops who agree to let us know of their gifts, we can thank and make note of generous givers to synod/ELCA. (Brian Maas)
- ▶ Encourage Synod Teams to be self supporting. No longer on the synod budget, synod teams raise money or write for grants to increase the capacity of their ministry. (Julian Gordy,)

To Learn More... Recommended Resources

- ▶ Herman Yoos: *The Spirituality of Fund-Raising* by Henri Nouwen...best book he ever read on this subject.
- ▶ Claire Burkart: Indiana School for Fundraising, 5 day primer course for principles of fundraising for non profits.



Mission Investment Fund

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

CHURCH COUNCIL

April 9-12, 2015

Appendix 3 MIF FSO

Page 1 of 1

A Potential Financial Services Organization for the Synods of the ELCA

Services an FSO can provide for each Synod

- Banking, Treasury Management
- Revenue Collection and Reporting
- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Payroll
- Accounting Services
- Financial Reporting
- Audits
- Budgeting Support

Benefits an FSO can offer

- Cost savings or reallocation of resources
- Improved financial controls and fraud prevention
- Best practice processes and procedures
- Best practice, consistent process for Synod reporting
- Audit efficiency
- Focus on Synod ministry
- Fixed costs for duration of pilot

Getting started

A three-year pilot program—with six to eight Synods participating—will showcase a real experience.

A projected timetable

MARCH/

APRIL: Six to eight Synods agree to participate in the FSO pilot program.

2015: Staff, systems and processes are in place to operate an efficient, effective Financial Services Organization.

2016: The FSO becomes operational.

2018: MIF evaluates the pilot program and presents new pricing of FSO services for the fourth year.

2019: The pilot ends. Synods share their experience. A fourth year of FSO services signals an official, ongoing sustainability.

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Five Synods Mission Support Experiment Proposal

Cover Page

This document includes a summary report and proposal for a one year experiment in Mission Support Funding. The origins of this document grew out of the work of the Mission Support Think Tank, which was established by Bishop Eaton in late 2013. This report represents the work of one sub group working around the focus of mission support and mission development. There are two other groups reviewing proposal for experiments in the area of multiple income streams and another in testing a model using separate commitments.

This report contains two documents:

1. A report prepared by Kenn Innskeep in May 2014 regarding alternative models for Mission Support. This document includes in Model 3 the foundations, which lead to this proposal. It provides a background.
2. The proposal itself, which has been drafted in consultation with the Mission Support Think Tank and Synodical Bishops, with supporting information provided by church wide offices of Research and Evaluation.

Please note that this entire document is in DRAFT mode, and not designed for wider distribution. Time line for this project is as follows:

October 2014 – Distribute this Document to Five Synod Bishops for Review

Nov 6-7, 2014 – Church Council Reviews preliminary one page summary (a separate document)

November 2014 – Five Synod Bishops Meet via GoToMeeting for Discussion of Next Steps

Winter 2015 – Five Synods review with their Leadership (staffs, Synod Councils, etc) the proposal, and consult with Church wide to navigate various aspects of the pilot.

March 2015 – Presentation of Revised version of this Report to Conference of Bishops

April 2015 - Presentation of Final version of this Report to the ELCA Church Council

May/June 2015 – Selected Synods present budgets for action by their local Synod Assemblies

Feb. 1, 2016 – Pilot begins

Three Models of Mission Funding

Kenneth W. Inskeep

Research and Evaluation, Office of the Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

October (revised from May) 2014

Over the past decade, a variety of groups within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) have been tasked with addressing the on-going decline in financial support (mission support) for synods and the churchwide organization, but none of the proposals developed by these groups have received widespread support. The problem seems intractable. The mission capacity of the church including its congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization grew significantly in the 1950s and 1960s, but since then the membership of the ELCA has declined and the ability of the current membership to support the church's work at past levels has not kept pace.¹ Each expression of the church has made its own adjustments and, because of the way the church is organized, there are few alternatives. Only a Churchwide Assembly could significantly alter the funding model and it has shown little interest in doing so. In this context, the church-wide strategy is a reasonable one. The goal is to strengthen the vitality of congregations (LIFT, the churchwide Directors for Evangelical mission) and the commitment of ELCA members to give generously (the Blue Ribbon Task Force, the Macedonia Project, Mission Advancement, The Campaign for the ELCA).

As noted, the basic funding model for the ELCA has remained unchanged since the beginning of the church in 1988.² Congregations are encouraged to give a percent of their undesignated giving to their synod, and then the synod passes on a percent of what they receive to the churchwide organization. The primary funding decision is made by congregations without formal guidance.

Table 1 presents the income for congregations as a percent of their total receipts for selected years.³ Over the years there has been a very slight increase in designated giving to congregations. The only significant change over the past 20 years is in the "other receipts" category, which includes funds typically received from endowments. This means a typical congregation in the ELCA is very dependent upon the undesignated giving of its members.

Table 1: Income for Congregations as a Percent of Total Receipts for Selected Years

	1989	1999	2009	2012
regular giving	72.2%	67.0%	72.7%	72.7%
designated giving	10.0%	13.3%	11.2%	11.8%
earned income	5.1%	5.1%	5.4%	5.7%
grants and other subsidies	1.2%	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%
other receipts	11.5%	13.9%	9.6%	8.8%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

¹ Based on worship attendance, an attendee in 1989 was giving an average of \$733. In 2012, adjusted for inflation, an attendee was giving \$1027.

² It is also essentially the model of the predecessor bodies as well.

³ Congregational report data for 2012 is used throughout this report because 2013 data is not yet available.

Table 2 shows how congregations spend those receipts. Congregations are reporting a significant increase in operating expenses **and** a corresponding decrease in mission support. **Table 2 does not show an increase in non-mission support benevolences.** In other words, the costs to operate a congregation have increased and congregations have offset those costs by reducing mission support. They have **not** increased their giving, as a percent of all expenses, to other charitable groups.

Table 2: Expenditures for Congregations as a Percent of Total Expenditures for Selected Years

	1989	1999	2009	2012
operating expenses	65.3	64.6	70.7	72.8
capital improvements	11.1	13.3	8.9	7.2
payment on debts	7.3	7.9	8.0	8.2
mission support	8.2	5.9	4.5	4.2
other benevolences (non-mission support)	4.6	4.1	4.4	4.4
other expenses	3.4	4.2	3.6	3.2
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Alternative Approaches to the Current Funding Model

The current funding model sets no “standard” for congregations. Some synods may suggest an amount, but typically this is done in terms of a percent of undesignated giving. There is also no standard for synods with regard to the amount passed on to the churchwide organization. The goal of 55 percent was set by the Commission for a New Lutheran Church, but this figure was never acted upon or set by a Churchwide Assembly. In practice, the percent varies markedly from synod to synod.

It is also important to note the level of undesignated giving per member or worship attendee varies significantly from synod to synod.

Given these variances, the current model stressed proportionate giving. Proportionate giving encourages the giver to set a base, usually a percent of income, and to build from this base. This commitment to proportionate giving was clearly expressed by the bishops in their discussion of a proposal made by the Mission Funding Task Force (2011-2012). The Task Force’s proposal argued for moving toward a set dollar amount (still based largely on a synod’s past giving level) as an alternative to a proportionate giving approach.⁴ The proposal for a set dollar figure was based in the belief it is possible to more clearly interpret the specific costs of the mission of the synod and the churchwide organization, and therefore, to raise the money necessary to support it.

Despite the commitment to proportionate giving, there are other possible alternatives. At this point there is little evidence a Churchwide Assembly would support an alternative, but it remains important to study them and understand their implications. Three are developed here.

⁴ See ELCA Church Council Minutes, November 2012, page 31.

Model 1

One alternative to the current model is to set a goal for each synod based on the number of worship attendees. (A formula could also be developed which would set an amount for each congregation in the synod based on its size.) The goal could be adjusted further for the typical household income in the territory of a synod. The strength of this approach is that it takes into account the vastly different circumstances of synods.

Currently about \$97 per worship attendee is given annually to support the work of the synods and the churchwide organization. About \$50 per attendee remains in the synods and \$47 is passed on by the synod to the churchwide organization. The goal of Model 1 is to evenly and fairly distribute these costs across the church. Table 3 shows what this would mean for synods. For example, in 2012, the congregations in the Alaska Synod passed on \$393,493 to the synod. Its fair share, adjusted for the number of worship attendees in the synod and by a typical household income, would be less or \$281,788. Put differently, worship attendees in the Alaska Synod are giving more per attendee than would be expected. On the other hand, the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Synod passed on \$1,129,994 to the synod. Its fair share given the number of worship attendees and typical household incomes would be \$1,810,914. In this case, giving per attendee is less than would be expected.

Table 3: Actual Mission Support Compared to a Hypothetical Assessment Amount Adjust for the Number of Worship Attendees and the Median Household Income in the Territory of a Synod

	actual mission support to the CWO in 2012	adjusted per worship attendee / income	difference		actual mission support to the CWO in 2012	adjusted per worship attendee/ income	difference
Alaska	\$393,493	\$281,788	-\$111,706	Northwest Synod of Wisconsin	\$1,129,994	\$1,810,914	\$680,920
Northwest Washington	\$1,305,721	\$1,567,439	\$261,719	East-Central Synod of Wisconsin	\$1,593,744	\$1,987,552	\$393,808
Southwestern Washington	\$917,236	\$1,156,083	\$238,848	Greater Milwaukee	\$2,123,972	\$2,124,387	\$415
Eastern Washington-Idaho	\$806,164	\$659,608	-\$146,556	South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	\$1,529,651	\$2,270,961	\$741,310
Oregon	\$907,740	\$942,642	\$34,901	La Crosse Area	\$783,034	\$692,207	-\$90,827
Montana	\$989,057	\$767,420	-\$221,637	Southeast Michigan	\$1,196,517	\$1,226,487	\$29,970
Sierra Pacific	\$1,804,101	\$1,963,290	\$159,189	North/West Lower Michigan	\$1,368,025	\$1,010,096	-\$357,929
Southwest California	\$1,092,819	\$1,167,068	\$74,248	Indiana-Kentucky	\$1,756,878	\$1,441,702	-\$315,176
Pacifica	\$1,408,671	\$1,479,253	\$70,582	Northwestern Ohio	\$1,321,936	\$1,539,107	-\$82,829
Grand Canyon	\$1,788,611	\$1,965,660	\$177,050	Northeastern Ohio	\$1,566,485	\$1,384,601	-\$181,884
Rocky Mountain	\$2,363,772	\$2,147,958	-\$215,814	Southern Ohio	\$1,480,668	\$1,915,616	\$434,948
Western North Dakota	\$925,000	\$1,352,784	\$427,784	New Jersey	\$2,152,306	\$1,887,348	-\$264,958
Eastern North Dakota	\$1,001,712	\$2,011,911	\$1,010,199	New England	\$1,963,484	\$1,838,430	-\$125,054
South Dakota	\$1,637,085	\$2,534,418	\$897,333	Metropolitan New York	\$1,199,342	\$1,835,538	\$636,196
Northwestern Minnesota	\$1,405,512	\$1,924,769	\$519,257	Upstate New York	\$1,245,735	\$1,196,082	-\$49,653
Northeastern Minnesota	\$1,166,868	\$1,265,812	\$98,944	Northeastern Pennsylvania	\$2,490,241	\$2,456,279	-\$33,962
Southwestern Minnesota	\$1,978,921	\$2,812,021	\$833,099	Southeastern Pennsylvania	\$2,100,337	\$1,897,358	-\$202,979
Minneapolis Area	\$3,175,891	\$5,785,352	\$2,609,461	Slovak Zion	\$67,234	\$108,710	\$41,476

	actual mission support to the CWO in 2012	adjusted per worship attendee / income	difference		actual mission support to the CWO in 2012	adjusted per worship attendee/ income	difference
Saint Paul Area	\$2,061,432	\$3,628,830	\$1,567,399	Northwestern Pennsylvania	\$713,772	\$386,613	-\$327,159
Southeastern Minnesota	\$1,844,632	\$2,683,013	\$838,381	Southwestern Pennsylvania	\$1,630,033	\$1,276,884	-\$353,149
Nebraska	\$3,432,520	\$2,945,559	-\$486,961	Allegheny	\$753,160	\$629,183	-\$123,977
Central States	\$1,825,279	\$1,544,179	-\$281,101	Lower Susquehanna	\$2,729,046	\$2,526,605	-\$202,441
Arkansas-Oklahoma	\$508,071	\$338,251	-\$169,820	Upper Susquehanna	\$951,795	\$687,377	-\$264,417
Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana	\$1,160,510	\$1,305,042	\$144,531	Delaware-Maryland	\$2,029,162	\$2,111,357	\$82,195
Southwestern Texas	\$1,418,982	\$1,168,913	-\$250,069	Metropolitan Washington, D.C.	\$1,692,709	\$1,674,525	-\$18,184
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast	\$1,309,777	\$1,172,114	-\$137,633	West Virginia-Western Maryland	\$510,547	\$226,436	-\$284,112
Metropolitan Chicago	\$2,969,403	\$2,820,155	-\$149,248	Virginia	\$1,605,797	\$1,276,374	-\$329,423
Northern Illinois	\$2,249,726	\$2,105,126	-\$144,600	North Carolina	\$2,715,704	\$1,947,023	-\$768,680
Central/Southern Illinois	\$1,423,174	\$1,017,693	-\$405,481	South Carolina	\$2,308,439	\$1,370,769	-\$937,671
Southeastern Iowa	\$2,552,287	\$2,876,666	\$324,380	Southeastern	\$2,136,558	\$1,314,092	-\$822,467
Western Iowa	\$881,583	\$1,141,467	\$259,884	Florida-Bahamas	\$2,149,220	\$2,259,017	\$109,796
Northeastern Iowa	\$1,504,774	\$1,576,367	\$71,593	Caribbean	\$232,288	\$84,786	-\$147,502
Northern Great Lakes	\$823,079	\$497,674	-\$325,405	Total	\$105,000,770	\$105,000,769	-\$1

Model 2

A second alternative takes into account the total receipts of congregations and their non-benevolence expenses including operating expenses, capital expenses, payments on debts, and other expenses. The only other source of expense for congregations is benevolence. The issue is how congregations distribute these benevolences and this model sets the amount to be contributed to the synod (to also be shared with churchwide) at a minimum of 45 percent of congregational benevolences. What is expected of a congregation is based on the actual receipts and expenses from the previous year. The strength of this model is that it is based on the previous year's actual receipt and expense figures. Each congregation in the synod would then be expected to contribute at the same rate, 45 percent of all benevolences.

Table 4 presents the 2012 data for congregations on a synod-by-synod basis. For illustration purposes, the aggregate for congregations in each synod is being used. (In practice a formula would be used for each congregation in the ELCA.) For example, congregations in the Alaska Synod received \$6.55 million in 2012. This would include designated and undesignated giving from members, income earned from any other source, grants or other subsidies, and all other receipts. Table 4 also shows the congregation's non-benevolence expenses totaled \$5.84 million. This leaves the congregations in the synod with \$709,410 for benevolence purposes away 45 percent of this amount would be \$319,739. This amount would be split between the synod and the churchwide organization at a 52/48 percent split (synod/churchwide). If the congregations decided to contribute a percent higher than 45 percent, the extra amount would be kept in the synod.

Table 4: Congregational Receipts and Non-Benevolence Expenses by Synod with a Proposed Distribution of Benevolences

	total receipts	non-benevolence expenses	benevolences	synod / churchwide at 45%	churchwide at 48% split	from congregations in 2012
Alaska	\$6,550,043	\$5,840,633	\$709,410	\$319,235	\$153,233	\$392,739
Northwest Washington	\$36,436,387	\$34,085,581	\$2,350,806	\$1,057,863	\$507,774	\$1,274,835
Southwestern Washington	\$27,445,474	\$25,572,583	\$1,872,891	\$842,801	\$404,544	\$900,076
Eastern Washington-Idaho	\$16,696,538	\$15,077,422	\$1,619,116	\$728,602	\$349,729	\$750,397
Oregon	\$29,292,908	\$26,769,260	\$2,523,648	\$1,135,642	\$545,108	\$992,556
Montana	\$20,468,778	\$18,802,730	\$1,666,048	\$749,722	\$359,866	\$1,014,833
Sierra Pacific	\$52,295,130	\$48,141,436	\$4,153,694	\$1,869,162	\$897,198	\$1,710,050
Southwest California	\$39,910,381	\$36,628,831	\$3,281,550	\$1,476,698	\$708,815	\$1,106,833
Pacifica	\$40,323,990	\$36,697,141	\$3,626,849	\$1,632,082	\$783,399	\$1,412,520
Grand Canyon	\$46,898,584	\$43,612,264	\$3,286,320	\$1,478,844	\$709,845	\$1,849,098
Rocky Mountain	\$54,827,957	\$50,229,014	\$4,598,943	\$2,069,524	\$993,372	\$2,366,550
Western North Dakota	\$23,500,528	\$19,010,017	\$4,490,511	\$2,020,730	\$969,950	\$1,000,701
Eastern North Dakota	\$33,094,186	\$30,628,200	\$2,465,986	\$1,109,694	\$532,653	\$1,035,598
South Dakota	\$45,531,664	\$41,356,765	\$4,174,899	\$1,878,705	\$901,778	\$1,575,834
Northwestern Minnesota	\$38,049,031	\$34,300,254	\$3,748,777	\$1,686,950	\$809,736	\$1,375,318
Northeastern Minnesota	\$27,892,957	\$25,475,670	\$2,417,287	\$1,087,779	\$522,134	\$1,146,076
Southwestern Minnesota	\$50,824,819	\$44,225,641	\$6,599,178	\$2,969,630	\$1,425,422	\$2,018,040
Minneapolis Area	\$106,660,188	\$95,454,895	\$11,205,293	\$5,042,382	\$2,420,343	\$2,821,187
Saint Paul Area	\$76,129,276	\$68,603,241	\$7,526,035	\$3,386,716	\$1,625,624	\$2,075,022
Southeastern Minnesota	\$49,852,235	\$43,408,423	\$6,443,812	\$2,899,715	\$1,391,863	\$1,860,810
Nebraska	\$57,387,507	\$48,330,553	\$9,056,954	\$4,075,629	\$1,956,302	\$3,413,972
Central States	\$41,111,990	\$39,000,268	\$2,111,722	\$950,275	\$456,132	\$1,833,436
Arkansas-Oklahoma	\$10,820,419	\$9,254,303	\$1,566,116	\$704,752	\$338,281	\$517,971
Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana	\$24,972,457	\$22,513,976	\$2,458,481	\$1,106,316	\$531,032	\$1,162,699
Southwestern Texas	\$36,361,952	\$32,539,321	\$3,822,631	\$1,720,184	\$825,688	\$1,475,760
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast	\$35,963,319	\$33,535,890	\$2,427,429	\$1,092,343	\$524,325	\$1,313,636
Metropolitan Chicago	\$86,734,849	\$68,374,655	\$6,552,858	\$2,948,786	\$1,415,417	\$3,101,332
Northern Illinois	\$45,068,098	\$40,505,144	\$4,562,954	\$2,053,329	\$985,598	\$2,347,900
Central/Southern Illinois	\$25,806,740	\$22,139,737	\$3,667,003	\$1,650,151	\$792,073	\$1,429,079
Southeastern Iowa	\$57,453,746	\$50,585,452	\$6,868,294	\$3,090,732	\$1,483,552	\$2,611,241
Western Iowa	\$20,131,857	\$18,190,035	\$1,941,822	\$873,820	\$419,434	\$988,361
Northeastern Iowa	\$29,448,560	\$26,397,605	\$3,050,955	\$1,372,930	\$659,006	\$1,487,758
Northern Great Lakes	\$11,887,112	\$9,944,840	\$1,942,272	\$874,022	\$419,531	\$826,382
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin	\$36,283,219	\$32,496,851	\$3,786,368	\$1,703,866	\$817,855	\$1,337,747
East-Central Synod of Wisconsin	\$40,035,563	\$36,311,177	\$3,724,386	\$1,675,974	\$804,467	\$1,675,284
Greater Milwaukee	\$48,525,577	\$41,741,263	\$6,784,314	\$3,052,941	\$1,465,412	\$2,183,227
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	\$45,595,828	\$39,549,197	\$6,046,631	\$2,720,984	\$1,306,072	\$1,510,029

	total receipts	non-benevolence expenses	benevolences	synod / churchwide at 45%	churchwide at 48% split	from congregations in 2012
La Crosse Area	\$15,588,556	\$14,598,536	\$990,020	\$445,509	\$213,844	\$779,227
Southeast Michigan	\$31,002,589	\$29,277,700	\$1,724,889	\$776,200	\$372,576	\$1,206,410
North/West Lower Michigan	\$25,835,210	\$23,441,316	\$2,393,894	\$1,077,252	\$517,081	\$1,400,942
Indiana-Kentucky	\$43,126,489	\$40,972,570	\$2,153,919	\$969,264	\$465,247	\$1,744,281
Northwestern Ohio	\$37,934,791	\$33,393,617	\$4,541,174	\$2,043,528	\$980,894	\$1,678,988
Northeastern Ohio	\$38,335,937	\$34,122,719	\$4,213,218	\$1,895,948	\$910,055	\$1,617,847
Southern Ohio	\$47,013,664	\$42,567,023	\$4,446,641	\$2,000,988	\$960,474	\$1,815,061
New Jersey	\$40,007,480	\$36,944,236	\$3,063,244	\$1,378,460	\$661,661	\$2,182,276
New England	\$46,296,065	\$38,758,290	\$2,063,764	\$928,694	\$445,773	\$1,959,756
Metropolitan New York	\$47,913,830	\$47,027,115	\$886,715	\$399,022	\$191,530	\$1,205,247
Upstate New York	\$27,144,402	\$24,959,417	\$2,184,985	\$983,243	\$471,957	\$1,230,752
Northeastern Pennsylvania	\$56,933,346	\$54,637,143	\$2,296,203	\$1,033,291	\$495,980	\$2,671,917
Southeastern Pennsylvania	\$50,466,537	\$44,881,247	\$5,585,290	\$2,513,381	\$1,206,423	\$2,250,074
Slovak Zion	\$2,116,828	\$1,996,694	\$120,134	\$54,060	\$25,949	\$63,873
Northwestern Pennsylvania	\$10,154,589	\$8,734,180	\$1,420,409	\$639,184	\$306,808	\$855,746
Southwestern Pennsylvania	\$27,065,872	\$24,227,399	\$2,838,473	\$1,277,313	\$613,110	\$1,624,110
Allegheny	\$14,732,567	\$13,531,903	\$1,200,664	\$540,299	\$259,343	\$809,909
Lower Susquehanna	\$57,872,723	\$57,140,852	\$731,871	\$329,342	\$158,084	\$2,891,495
Upper Susquehanna	\$15,283,083	\$14,452,021	\$831,062	\$373,978	\$179,509	\$962,666
Delaware-Maryland	\$46,029,692	\$43,057,348	\$2,972,344	\$1,337,555	\$642,026	\$2,041,176
Metropolitan Washington, D.C.	\$34,496,230	\$31,269,386	\$3,226,844	\$1,452,080	\$696,998	\$1,767,510
West Virginia-Western Maryland	\$7,104,151	\$6,602,816	\$501,335	\$225,601	\$108,288	\$451,522
Virginia	\$30,858,829	\$26,771,431	\$4,087,398	\$1,839,329	\$882,878	\$1,621,237
North Carolina	\$62,234,379	\$55,555,756	\$6,678,623	\$3,005,380	\$1,442,583	\$2,900,096
South Carolina	\$44,677,613	\$39,415,853	\$5,261,760	\$2,367,792	\$1,136,540	\$2,471,670
Southeastern	\$46,587,553	\$41,905,224	\$4,682,329	\$2,107,048	\$1,011,383	\$2,173,622
Florida-Bahamas	\$65,028,582	\$59,852,769	\$5,175,813	\$2,329,116	\$1,117,976	\$2,194,980
Caribbean	\$2,480,840	\$2,262,181	\$218,659	\$98,397	\$47,230	\$203,252
Totals	\$2,450,592,274	\$2,207,687,010	\$225,623,917	\$101,530,763	\$48,734,766	\$102,670,526

Model 3⁵

Model 3 would:

1. end grants to synods made through the ELCA churchwide organization's Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM) unit for new congregational starts and for renewing congregations. It would also end grants for campus ministry and outdoor ministry and it would end churchwide support of the Directors for

⁵ This section presents updated data from an earlier paper on this approach.

Evangelical Mission (DEMs) (and related funding), regional coordination, faith practices, stewardship, community organizing, young adult ministry, and youth ministry;

2. lower, for synods, the expected amount of congregational mission support sent to the churchwide organization to 35 percent of the undesignated giving from congregations to the synod. All synods would be required to contribute 35 percent of undesignated giving from congregations to the support of the churchwide organization. If a synod were unable to do so, then the synod would no longer be viable and be merged with another synod.

Under this model of mission funding there would be no change in the budgets of Global Mission, Mission Advancement, or the Offices of Bishop or Secretary. There would be slight adjustments to the budget of the Office of Treasurer (OT). CSM funding for ethnic specific and multicultural ministries, candidacy, or any other leadership-related activities would remain. Funding for poverty and justice ministries would also remain, along with advocacy ministries and worship ministries (see Table 5).

OT funding would be adjusted down proportionately (fewer accounting and information technology costs, for example) and the compensation pool for raises would be less since there would be fewer churchwide employees. Table 5 presents an example of how funding would look under a Model 3 approach.

**Table 5: Example of Funding for the Churchwide Organization
Under Model 3 with Comparisons to the
Comparisons to 2013 Expenditures**

	2013 expenditures (not including World Hunger)	Model 3	change
CSM	\$25,215,080	\$11,898,740	-\$14,391,00
GM	\$13,673,965	\$13,673,965	\$0
MA	\$5,543,870	\$5,543,870	\$0
OB	\$5,573,425	\$5,573,425	\$0
OS	\$3,977,920	\$3,977,920	\$0
OT	\$8,095,070	\$7,277,769	-\$817,301
Other	\$6,577,685	\$5,810,384	-\$767,301
TOTAL	\$70,731,675	\$53,756,073	-\$15,975,602
Mission Support	\$48,331,855	\$34,706,912	-\$13,624,944

Churchwide mission support income from synods for 2013 was \$48.3 million. For a Model 3 churchwide budget, \$34.7 million would be needed in mission support. If mission support to synods is about \$99 million and synods pass on \$34.7 million to the churchwide organization, the percentage split would be 35 percent to churchwide.

Currently, each synod gives a certain percentage of the mission support it receives from congregations to the churchwide organization. This percentage ranges from 17.2 percent to 56.0 percent, depending on the synod, with a mean percentage of 47.2. In raw dollars, these amounts range from \$20,338 to \$1,870,724, with a mean

amount of \$743,567. After passing along this support to the churchwide organization, the amount of mission support from congregations remaining in the synod ranges from \$46,896 to \$1,713,918, with a mean amount of \$782,546.

Under the current system, the churchwide organization provides grants to each synod to support staff and ministries. In raw dollars, these grants range from \$16,391 to \$573,966, with a mean amount of \$212,167. The percentage of a synod's total operating budget provided by the churchwide organization currently ranges from 8 to 53 percent, with a mean of 22 percent. A higher percentage suggests that the synod is more dependent on the Churchwide organization.

As mentioned previously, under the Model 3 approach, there would be no grants to synods from CSM. All synods would be expected to contribute 35 percent of the undesignated giving they receive from congregations to the churchwide organization. Table 6 shows the impact of the Model 3 approach for each synod.

Currently, when combining the amount remaining in the synod after providing funding to the churchwide organization as well as the grant-funding received from the churchwide organization, total funding for each synod ranges between \$63,287 and \$1,949,418, with a mean of \$994,713.

Under the Model 3 approach, the total synod funding would range between \$43,702 and \$2,231,138, with a mean of \$991,973. Synods which would benefit the most from a Model 3 system are those which currently donate the highest percentage of their receipts to the Churchwide organization, and those which currently have the least reliance on Churchwide for their funding (i.e., draw the lowest percentage of their annual budget from Churchwide).

Thirty-two synods would have less money under the Model 3 approach (range: -\$278,495 to -\$19,585). To counteract this decrease, these synods would need additional funding from their congregations. Without additional contributions from congregations it is likely that the vast majority, if not all, of these synods would be without resources to fund the staff position that is currently funded through CSM. It is also unlikely that these synods could fund new congregations and/or grants to renewing congregations.

Using a Model 3 approach, 17 synods would have funding between the current amount and an additional \$100,000. This would allow these synods to engage in much of the ministry in which they are currently engaged and potentially enable them to engage in additional ministry efforts or hire another staff person.

Twelve synods would see increases between \$100,000 and \$200,000. These synods would be able to fund at least one more staff person and they would have sufficient funding to start a new congregation or provide renewal grants to existing ones.

Four synods would see an increase of \$200,000 or more under the Model 3 approach. One of these synods would have nearly a half-million additional dollars (\$484,950). These synods would certainly be able to expand their ministry efforts, add staff positions, or both.

Table 6: Impact of a Model 3 Approach on Each Synod in the ELCA

	Mission Support from Congregations	% to Church-wide	Amount to Churchwide	Amount remaining in Synod	Grants from Churchwide	Total Current Funding	Funding for Synod at 65%	Difference
Alaska	\$393,493	39.5%	\$155,430	\$238,063	\$265,814	\$503,877	\$255,771	-\$248,107
Northwest Washington	\$1,305,721	46.0%	\$600,632	\$705,089	\$405,263	\$1,110,352	\$848,719	-\$261,634
Southwestern Washington	\$917,236	40.0%	\$366,894	\$550,341	\$241,289	\$791,630	\$596,203	-\$195,427
Eastern Washington-Idaho	\$806,164	33.0%	\$266,034	\$540,130	\$164,880	\$705,010	\$524,007	-\$181,003
Oregon	\$907,740	40.0%	\$363,096	\$544,644	\$323,882	\$868,526	\$590,031	-\$278,495
Montana	\$989,057	40.5%	\$400,568	\$588,489	\$169,237	\$757,726	\$642,887	-\$114,839
Sierra Pacific	\$1,804,101	52.5%	\$947,153	\$856,948	\$381,185	\$1,238,133	\$1,172,665	-\$65,467
Southwest California	\$1,092,819	50.0%	\$546,410	\$546,410	\$344,695	\$891,105	\$710,333	-\$180,772
Pacifica	\$1,408,671	51.0%	\$718,422	\$690,249	\$392,251	\$1,082,500	\$915,636	-\$166,864
Grand Canyon	\$1,788,611	50.0%	\$894,305	\$894,305	\$202,467	\$1,096,772	\$1,162,597	\$65,825
Rocky Mountain	\$2,363,772	50.0%	\$1,181,886	\$1,181,886	\$250,418	\$1,432,304	\$1,536,452	\$104,148
Western North Dakota	\$925,000	44.0%	\$407,000	\$518,000	\$155,872	\$673,872	\$601,250	-\$72,622
Eastern North Dakota	\$1,001,712	40.0%	\$400,685	\$601,027	\$167,275	\$768,302	\$651,113	-\$117,189
South Dakota	\$1,637,085	45.0%	\$736,688	\$900,397	\$293,783	\$1,194,180	\$1,064,105	-\$130,075
Northwestern Minnesota	\$1,377,953	51.0%	\$702,756	\$675,197	\$174,275	\$849,472	\$895,669	\$46,197
Northeastern Minnesota	\$1,166,868	49.0%	\$571,765	\$595,103	\$97,696	\$692,799	\$758,464	\$65,666
Southwestern Minnesota	\$1,978,921	52.5%	\$1,038,934	\$939,988	\$166,643	\$1,106,631	\$1,286,299	\$179,668
Minneapolis Area	\$3,175,891	50.0%	\$1,587,946	\$1,587,946	\$361,472	\$1,949,418	\$2,064,329	\$114,912
Saint Paul Area	\$2,061,432	50.0%	\$1,030,716	\$1,030,716	\$248,616	\$1,279,332	\$1,339,930	\$60,599
Southeastern Minnesota	\$1,844,632	52.5%	\$968,432	\$876,200	\$122,860	\$999,060	\$1,199,011	\$199,951
Nebraska	\$3,432,520	54.5%	\$1,870,724	\$1,561,797	\$184,391	\$1,746,188	\$2,231,138	\$484,950
Central States	\$1,780,013	50.0%	\$890,006	\$890,006	\$256,053	\$1,146,059	\$1,157,008	\$10,949
Arkansas-Oklahoma	\$508,071	40.7%	\$206,785	\$301,286	\$174,365	\$475,651	\$330,246	-\$145,405
Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana	\$1,160,510	48.0%	\$557,045	\$603,465	\$265,241	\$868,706	\$754,332	-\$114,375
Southwestern Texas	\$1,418,982	51.0%	\$723,681	\$695,301	\$299,169	\$994,470	\$922,338	-\$72,132
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast	\$1,309,777	50.0%	\$654,888	\$654,888	\$165,671	\$820,559	\$851,355	\$30,796
Metropolitan Chicago	\$2,969,403	53.0%	\$1,573,784	\$1,395,620	\$291,750	\$1,687,370	\$1,930,112	\$242,742
Northern Illinois	\$2,249,726	55.0%	\$1,237,349	\$1,012,377	\$217,768	\$1,230,145	\$1,462,322	\$232,177
Central/Southern Illinois	\$1,423,174	56.0%	\$796,977	\$626,197	\$108,750	\$734,947	\$925,063	\$190,117
Southeastern Iowa	\$2,552,287	53.5%	\$1,365,473	\$1,186,813	\$151,001	\$1,337,814	\$1,658,986	\$321,172
Western Iowa	\$881,583	38.1%	\$335,883	\$545,700	\$152,465	\$698,165	\$573,029	-\$125,136
Northeastern Iowa	\$1,504,774	40.0%	\$601,910	\$902,864	\$108,465	\$1,011,329	\$978,103	-\$33,226
Northern Great Lakes	\$823,079	50.5%	\$415,655	\$407,424	\$73,246	\$480,670	\$535,001	\$54,331
NW Synod of Wisconsin	\$1,129,994	55.0%	\$621,497	\$508,497	\$133,709	\$642,206	\$734,496	\$92,290
East-Central Wisconsin	\$1,593,744	55.0%	\$876,559	\$717,185	\$122,628	\$839,813	\$1,035,933	\$196,121
Greater Milwaukee	\$2,123,972	55.0%	\$1,168,185	\$955,787	\$278,241	\$1,234,028	\$1,380,582	\$146,553
South-Central Wisconsin	\$1,529,651	55.0%	\$841,308	\$688,343	\$189,955	\$878,298	\$994,273	\$115,976
La Crosse Area	\$783,034	55.0%	\$430,669	\$352,365	\$63,235	\$415,600	\$508,972	\$93,372
Southeast Michigan	\$1,196,517	42.0%	\$502,537	\$693,980	\$311,247	\$1,005,227	\$777,736	-\$227,491
North/West Lower Michigan	\$1,368,025	50.0%	\$684,012	\$684,012	\$137,613	\$821,625	\$889,216	\$67,591
Indiana-Kentucky	\$1,756,878	52.0%	\$913,577	\$843,302	\$294,292	\$1,137,594	\$1,141,971	\$4,377
Northwestern Ohio	\$1,621,936	51.0%	\$827,187	\$794,749	\$178,315	\$973,064	\$1,054,259	\$81,195
Northeastern Ohio	\$1,566,485	49.0%	\$767,578	\$798,907	\$306,060	\$1,104,967	\$1,018,215	-\$86,752
Southern Ohio	\$1,480,668	40.0%	\$592,267	\$888,401	\$234,657	\$1,123,058	\$962,434	-\$160,623
New Jersey	\$2,152,306	50.0%	\$1,076,153	\$1,076,153	\$260,965	\$1,337,118	\$1,398,999	\$61,881
New England	\$1,963,484	54.4%	\$1,068,135	\$895,349	\$349,553	\$1,244,902	\$1,276,264	\$31,363
Metropolitan New York	\$1,199,342	49.5%	\$593,674	\$605,668	\$299,825	\$905,493	\$779,572	-\$125,920
Upstate New York	\$1,211,946	42.0%	\$509,381	\$702,565	\$145,212	\$847,777	\$787,765	-\$60,012
Northeastern Pennsylvania	\$2,490,241	46.0%	\$1,145,511	\$1,344,730	\$127,705	\$1,472,435	\$1,618,657	\$146,222
Southeastern Pennsylvania	\$1,010,143	53.0%	\$535,376	\$474,767	\$238,696	\$713,463	\$656,593	-\$56,870
Slovak Zion	\$67,234	30.2%	\$20,338	\$46,896	\$16,391	\$63,287	\$43,702	-\$19,585
Northwestern Pennsylvania	\$713,772	50.0%	\$356,886	\$356,886	\$53,709	\$410,595	\$463,952	\$53,357
Southwestern Pennsylvania	\$1,630,033	47.5%	\$774,266	\$855,767	\$154,763	\$1,010,530	\$1,059,522	\$48,991
Allegheny	\$753,160	50.0%	\$376,580	\$376,580	\$61,557	\$438,137	\$489,554	\$51,417
Lower Susquehanna	\$2,729,046	46.5%	\$1,269,006	\$1,460,039	\$146,143	\$1,606,182	\$1,773,880	\$167,697
Upper Susquehanna	\$951,795	50.0%	\$475,897	\$475,897	\$39,206	\$515,103	\$618,666	\$103,563
Delaware-Maryland	\$2,029,162	54.5%	\$1,105,893	\$923,269	\$259,197	\$1,182,466	\$1,318,955	\$136,490

	Mission Support from Congregations	% to Churchwide	Amount to Churchwide	Amount remaining in Synod	Grants from Churchwide	Total Current Funding	Funding for Synod at 65%	Difference
Metropolitan Washington, D.C.	\$1,692,709	50.0%	\$846,355	\$846,355	\$279,807	\$1,126,162	\$1,100,261	-\$25,901
West Virginia-Western Maryland	\$346,219	37.5%	\$129,832	\$216,387	\$81,592	\$297,979	\$225,042	-\$72,937
Virginia	\$1,605,797	39.0%	\$626,261	\$979,536	\$138,730	\$1,118,266	\$1,043,768	-\$74,498
North Carolina	\$2,712,754	36.8%	\$998,836	\$1,713,918	\$216,969	\$1,930,887	\$1,763,290	-\$167,597
South Carolina	\$2,308,439	41.8%	\$963,773	\$1,344,666	\$206,374	\$1,551,040	\$1,500,486	-\$50,554
Southeastern	\$2,136,558	50.0%	\$1,068,279	\$1,068,279	\$573,966	\$1,642,245	\$1,388,763	-\$253,482
Florida-Bahamas	\$2,149,220	47.0%	\$1,010,134	\$1,139,087	\$406,551	\$1,545,638	\$1,396,993	-\$148,645
Caribbean	\$232,288	17.2%	\$40,000	\$192,288	\$105,813	\$298,101	\$150,987	-\$147,114

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA THINK TANK ON MISSION SUPPORT

Think Tank Mission Support Proposal

Prepared for: Bishops Think Tank on Mission Support

Prepared by: Jim Hazelwood, Bishop New England Synod

September 2014 Amended October 2014

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Objective

The main objective of this proposal is to implement a one-year test of an alternative approach to the funding of church wide and synod mission support for the purpose of increasing the funding and effectiveness of evangelical outreach.

Goals

This one-year pilot seeks to test two hypotheses:

1. That the allocation of mission support dollars for new starts and renewals would be more effective if it was under the oversight of synods.
2. That moving the funding of new mission starts and renewals to the synod's responsibility, would have an overall net gain in mission support from both congregations and individuals.

Proposal in brief

In the 2016 fiscal year, several synods would adopt a modified version of Model 3 as presented in the report of May 2014. This model asks select synods to reduce their Mission Support to the churchwide expression in the amount equivalent to the portion currently allocated for DEM's, grants new starts and renewals, etc. These selected synods would participate in an evaluation process to test the two hypotheses listed above.

FULL PROPOSAL

FINDINGS

1. Mission Support from congregations to synods and from synods to churchwide has experienced a 25-year history of decline.
2. To address this decline, multiple task forces and study groups have been enlisted to make proposals. No significant change has been made in the funding of the ELCA.
3. The ELCA's Evangelism and Outreach strategy has not met with measurable success, and thus calls for testing alternative approaches:

There is no evidence we are aware of which shows other denominations or religious groups to be consistently more successful than the ELCA in starting new ministries. At the same time, the failure rate is substantial and of concern. The rate demands a new and wider discussion about the future direction of evangelism and outreach in this church. This church cannot rely on new ministries as its primary evangelism strategy. This is true despite the fact there is ample opportunity for new ministry development and, as noted earlier in this review, ELCA Lutherans have a theological point of view with considerable potential in the wider culture. (Exhibit G Nov 2013 Report to Church Council Page 19)

4. As the 2011 LIFT report indicated, there is a need to address both the missional needs of this church as well as the mission support needs of this church, we note among it's recommendations:
The churchwide organization, synods and congregations prioritize their spending to emphasize congregational outreach, leadership development, global mission and new communication strategies, while discerning how to constructively withdraw from other tasks. (LIFT REPORT Section V, Page 29, #5)

CONCLUSIONS

There is a consistent pattern in the ELCA when addressing the declining funding of mission. The pattern has been to identify problems, request research, conduct study groups that propose changes, receive reports with appreciation, make subtle changes mostly in terms of language, but not act. This pattern is well established, and most likely will continue. Offering a bold new direction in the areas of congregational development and mission support will most likely be met with resistance. This is especially true, if the new direction requires a system-wide change, such as action by the church council or the churchwide assembly. There are many reasons for this resistance to change on a system-wide basis. As an alternative, a small scale pilot project designed to test new approaches may reveal learnings that the wider system would be more willing to explore.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The May 2014 report titled “Three Models of Mission Funding”, describes the history of mission support in the ELCA and the challenges faced by various groups in addressing the long-term trend of decline. After an analysis of the factors contributing to the decline, the report indicates there is little appetite for a system-wide alternative approach to funding the work of this church. Three alternative models are proposed for conversation. This proposal seeks to build on model 3, and conduct a pilot test of the impact of this model in several synods.

Model 3 approaches mission funding in the following manner:

1. It would end grants to synods made by CSM for new and renewing congregations. It would also end grants for campus ministry, outdoor ministry and the funding of DEMs, regional coordination, faith practices, stewardship, community organizing, and young adult and youth ministry.

Because this approach would dramatically impact the way this church operates, this proposal recommends we test the approach before proceeding further with a system-wide change. The pilot project would enlist several synods for a period of one year. During this year the participating synods would adjust their operations according to the two points made above, i.e. reduce their mission support in the amount equal to the grants they receive from CSM, and no longer receive the supports described above, take on responsibility for funding and leadership of the areas described in # 1 above.

This proposal has several variations on Model Three in the May 2014 report. It does not change the percentage of mission support to 35% as indicated in that proposed model. Rather, it simply reduces the Mission Support in the amount equivalent to the grants received. Those amounts vary from synod to synod. This proposal does not include the shift of grants for Campus ministry or regional coordination. The reason for this change is to focus the pilot on testing the two hypotheses. Regional funding adjustments could confuse matters because they a) may require conversations with regions in adjusting funding patterns b) do not directly impact the focus of this pilot. Therefore, campus ministry and regional coordination grants are not included in this proposal, and would remain a church wide funding operation.

What kind of synods should participate in the pilot project?

The synods participating should be prepared to take full responsibility for the funding, leadership, design and implementation of the pilot according to the following schedule:

- Prepare a modified synod budget for FY 2016 for presentation to their Spring 2015 Synod Assembly.
- Participating Synods will be able to develop plans and be ready to implement on Feb 1, 2016.

- They should develop measurable tests to determine effectiveness
- Pilot synods should provide quarterly reports of successes, failures, and learnings to the Mission Support Think Tank.
- These synods should make this the sole focus of their energies for the time period of 2015 and 2016. If a synod has other emphases planned, they should not participate, as this project will require a large amount of staff and volunteer implementation

Synods volunteering to participate

The following synods have expressed an interest participating in this experiment. They are Lower Susquehanna, Metropolitan Washington DC, New England, Nebraska and Texas Gulf Coast Synod.

How were these synods selected? During the October 2014, Conference of Bishops, the Mission Support Think Tank reported on its work to date. Subsequent to this report being presented, all bishops were invited to attend an information meeting to learn more about a variety of experiments. This invitation was made by verbal announcement on Saturday afternoon, as well as by email on the Bishop's LISTSERV. Nine bishops participated in the Monday morning conversation around three broadly defined experiments. The above listed synods expressed an interest in participating.

How much funding is each synod taking responsibility? (The figures below are based on end of year 2013 - actual figures would be adjusted prior to implementation of the experiment for FY 2016)

	<u>DEM Salary</u>	<u>DEM Grant</u>	<u>New Grants</u>	<u>Renewal Grants</u>	<u>Total</u>
New England	\$122,353	\$15,000	\$149,200	\$63,000	\$349,553
Nebraska	\$107,628	\$15,000	\$ 45,763	\$31,000	\$199,391
Texas-Louisiana	\$115,171	\$15,000	\$ 10,000	\$40,500	\$180,671
Lower Susquehanna	\$114,143	\$15,000	\$ 10,000	\$22,000	\$161,143
Metro Washington DC	\$121,807	\$15,000	\$124,000	\$34,000	\$294,807

What responsibilities will these synods assume?

The following are key areas for each synod, additional responsibilities may be added to particular synods:

Salary & Benefit Package for the DEM

Grant Funding for New and Renewing Congregations

In addition, each synod will develop a plan, in consultation with one another, Churchwide staff and their own synod leadership to implement changes and form criteria for measuring the effectiveness as we test the two hypotheses. These may include plans for seeking local financial support for the New or Renewing ministries, designs for increasing the missional effectiveness of such ministries, benchmarks for evaluating the impact of the pilot.

CLOSING

This proposal acknowledges the deep challenges experienced across the ELCA in terms of Mission Support as well as the need to both develop new ministries and renew others. Due to the ongoing struggles in this transitional time of all forms of structured Christianity in North America, it is unlikely that any efforts to continue a 'more of the same approach' will yield any positive results. Experimenting with new ways forward does not provide easy or quick answers, but this proposal submits that a thoughtful pilot program for one year is worthy of consideration. There are legitimate questions, which need to be explored. Most likely all of these questions will not be answered or fully explored without testing the hypotheses. We will not be able to plan for all the contingencies, problems and setbacks. Nor will we be able to anticipate all possible benefits/consequences, without moving into a pilot experiment.

This pilot would afford us the opportunity to:

- experiment with an alternative approach to mission funding
- discuss unanticipated benefits/consequences of an alternative approach to funding
- test the hypothesis that mission development can be effectively led and managed at the synod level
- learn whether additional financial support can be raised for mission development when leadership and management are localized to synods.

Next Steps: Once a preliminary approval to this pilot project is granted, the selected synods would draft more detailed plans for the process of implementation.

A Modest Proposal for the Mission Support Think Tank

Background

In the research and conversations of the Mission Support Think Tank to date, these things have been clear.

- 1) The conversation about mission support occurs within the larger context of how we understand ourselves to be church together. The mission support arrangements made when this church was formed grew out of and are integral to the way we have understood this ELCA to be three interdependent expressions of one church. Therefore, any conversation about mission support must be carried out within a larger conversation about the identity of the ELCA. This is why we have been talking about experiments rather than suggesting immediate and large-scale changes to the mission support process.
- 2) The synods of this church are vastly different in resources. For example, the information provided to the Think Tank by Kenn Inskeep shows that "Synod A" has the same number of congregations as "Synod B," and both synods receive almost the same amount of mission support from congregations. But "Synod A" has three times the number of members that "Synod B" has. This means that members of "Synod B" contribute more than three times the amount of mission support per capita. Synods vary greatly in size and have vastly different geographic areas resulting in significantly different expenses for travel and communication. Some synods currently have serious doubts about their future fiscal viability. Synods receive widely different income from Churchwide grants. These are only some of many examples of the great variety of circumstances experienced by our synods,
- 3) This church exists within a wider culture that stresses individualism and, in the church, congregationalism. The mutual accountability and interdependence that characterize the governing documents and spirit of the ELCA are attributes that require constant attention and nurture in this climate.
- 4) While some synods and especially the churchwide organization have done a superb job of providing resources that "tell the mission support story," what has been missing is the face-to-face conversation and connection that builds relationship and identity. The "God's work. Our hands." work days have been effective and popular in part because they reinforce corporate identity in tangible ways.

One Synod's Recent Experience

For several years, the Southeastern Synod Council has been engaged in conversation about reconnecting with congregations and members. We have been assisted in this conversation by several members of the churchwide organization, including Executive for Administration Wyvetta Bullock, former Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, former Director of Mission Support Craig Settlage and others.

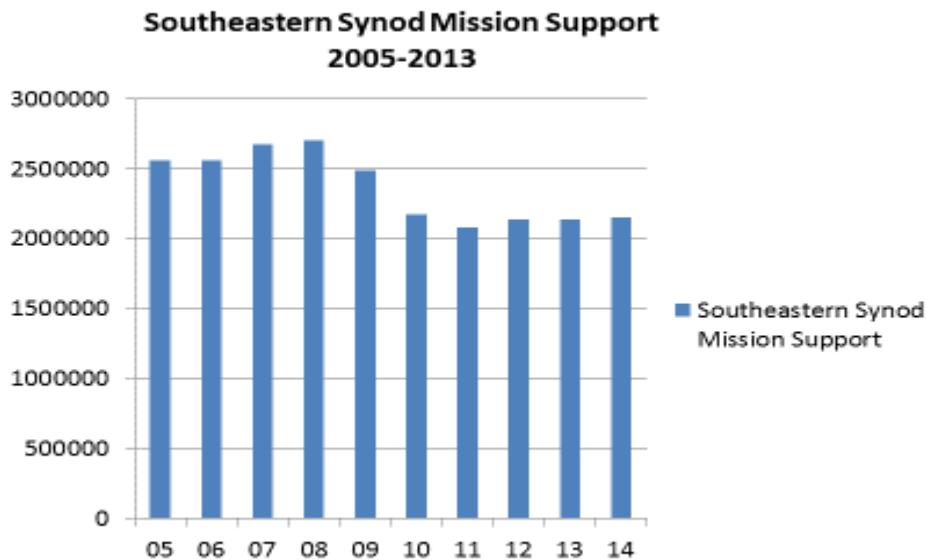
During the time of these conversations, like other synods we experienced the economic downturn of late 2008 followed by the loss of some congregations and many members after the 2009 Churchwide Assembly actions on ordination. These two realities, along with a general nation-wide decline in church participation resulted in staff layoffs and three rounds of salary reductions for the remaining staff members. The lay-offs have significantly increased the already difficult work-load of our remaining staff.

The conversations within the Synod Council have proved to be one way of keeping the leadership of the synod focused on continuing mission in the face of these difficulties. Now, as fruit of these conversations, our Synod Council has launched “We Are Church Together” conversations across the synod. [See the attached Powerpoint for details].

Members of the council will ask congregations to invite them to come for a conversation about mission with the congregation. The first and most important part of the visit is to listen to what this church is doing in that place, since congregations are part of this ELCA, we hope to help members understand that what they are doing in mission, the whole church is doing in that place. There will also be some teaching about the ministries of the wider church. A “toolkit” containing the ELCA churchwide video from the most recent Synod Assembly, a short video about synod ministries and other resources is provided for the visitor to aid in the conversation. Some training was provided at two Synod Council meetings.

The emphasis of the visits is to nurture the relationship between the congregation and the synod and churchwide expressions and to build identity. The Council has been clear that this is not an “ask” for mission support, but a reconnecting of the expressions of this church. We believe, however, that in the medium and long range, mission support will improve as a result of these visits.

Already, and, I think, in part as a result of these conversations, following a sharp decline after 2008, mission support in this synod has not declined overall in the past four years, although with the exception of 2007 and 2008 and perhaps one other year, it has declined slowly but steadily since 1989.



Part two of our experiment is a synod appeal – a once-a-year direct ask of the people and congregations of the synod to support the mission of the wider church. This was done at the end of 2014, and, while total receipts are not yet known, the appeal will have resulted in at least \$75,000 in mission support outside the normal process in spite of its last-minute, “emergency” nature. This year’s appeal was done at the end of the year with very little planning and as insurance against a decline in mission support.

While contributors were given an opportunity to designate their gifts to particular synod ministries such as candidacy and campus ministry, more than 85% of the gifts were for undesignated mission support which we share equally with ELCA Churchwide. The large percent given to undesignated mission support was a bit of a surprise since we had believed that the appeal would be successful largely in part because it allowed designated giving, which seems to be more appealing to people today.

At its January meeting the Synod Council approved an appeal in 2015 to roughly coincide with "God's work. Our hands." Sunday. In that appeal we would highlight two or three ministries of our synod and invite contributions to these or to mission support. We believe that this appeal will provide more income than the most recent appeal due to the planning and promotional time allowed. Following the 2015 appeal, the Synod Council will decide if this is to become an annual part of the synod's funding stream.

A Modest Proposal

Given the experience (albeit limited) of the Southeastern Synod, it would seem that engaging in a thoughtful and carefully planned process similar to the one we have undertaken yields mission support results. Other synods might consider such a focus on mission support. Our efforts have focused on three components:

- 1) Synod Council members intentionally reaching out to congregations to celebrate what this church is doing through them in their communities, to listen to challenges and joys of the congregation and to help congregations understand the ministry they do through the work of their synod and the churchwide organization. Perhaps most important, these conversations may be ways in which we can, in listening to each other, hear what the Spirit is calling us to do now for the sake of the gospel.
- 2) An annual appeal inviting members and congregations to celebrate our life together in this church through mission support and designated giving. What those designated giving opportunities are may come through the listening process in 1). Other synods have had appeals of this nature for years and would likely have some wisdom to offer others involved in the experiment.
- 3) Concentration on planned giving assisted by personnel from the ELCA Foundation. While we have had the benefit of limited time from an ELCA Foundation staff person in the past, there has been very little work in the areas of deferred and planned giving in the Southeastern Synod. We believe that this could further help our mission support efforts and or efforts at helping grow thoughtful stewards in our synod.

This proposal is not a solution to the long term decline in mission support, a decline that goes back to at least 1965. But it is a way of addressing stewardship and identity as ELCA Lutherans while we have the larger conversation about mission and identity we need to have in this church, and, in fact it may be an important part of that larger conversation. Our experience to date in this synod gives us hope.

Conversations have been positive. People are happy to be members of this church. They are engaged in its mission and – most important - have ideas about what we ought to be doing together for the sake of the gospel. Our hope here is that as we have these conversations, the mission to which we are being called in these days will become clear to us. If that happens the support we need to do the work we are given to do will follow.

Supplement to the “Five Synod Experiment in Mission Support”

This document contains the following:

- A draft of possible benchmarks for determining the effectiveness of this experiment. In my personal view, the benchmarks are classically over complicated with verbiage. It should simply be: Are we raising more money for mission? Are we doing mission more effectively.
- A one page summary highlighting ways in which Mission Support could be positively impacted in this proposal.
- The most recent version of the “Five Synod Experiment” document

As the church council of the ELCA prayerfully considers this experiment, I would like to make the following points:

1. This is NOT a proposal to do mission support in a new way. Rather this is an experiment to test some ideas on a relatively small scale and determine if there are new ways of engaging in mission that might yield additional funding.
2. In the words of a recent proverb, *“More thinking about the problem doesn't solve the problem... You have to have adventure.”* It is my conviction that this experiment will yield positive results, and in fact increase funding for the mission of Jesus Christ. I would not have worked on this project for almost 12 months, if I did not believe that to be the case. While some would say, we won't know unless we try. I would say, I know it will work cause I'm going to work my duff off to make it work. My wife says, I'm a rare breed cause I thrive on adventure.
3. In short, the five synods are asking the ELCA church council to send us out on an adventure, and come back and report on what we have learned. We are a scouting party for the church of the 21st Century.

Bishop James Hazelwood

On behalf of Bishop James Dunlop, Bishop Richard Graham, Bishop Brian Maas, Bishop Michael Rinehart

April 1, 2015

Benchmarks for the “Five Synod Experiment” on Mission Support

Since the proposal seeks to test two Hypotheses, there should be two separate benchmarks to measure.

Test Hypotheses # 1. That the allocation of mission support dollars for new starts and renewals would be more easily and effectively managed and administered through local oversight of synods.

- Are the new starts/renewals more effective ministry as measured by number of persons impacted by the ministry?
- What aspects of faith formation have been positively or negatively impacted by this experiment?
- What aspects of the management of mission support dollars for new starts and renewals have produced efficiencies? What aspects have been problematic?
- Are their efficiencies in this method that can be applied to any future models of mission development or funding of those missions?

Test Hypotheses # 2. That moving the funding of new mission starts and renewals to the synod’s responsibility, would have an overall net gain in mission support from both congregations and individuals.

- Are congregations increasing their mission support as reported on form A of the parochial report?
- Are congregations increasing their financial support of other ELCA and/or synod missions as a result of this experiment?
- Are individual members of congregations increasing their financial support of the ELCA, synod or other ministries as a result of this experiment?

Suggested tools for administration in the experiments (others will be developed)

- 1) Surveys - To measure the impact, ease of reporting and responsiveness of this experiment, a survey approach could be employed to evaluate efficiencies between current models and new models.
- 2) A pre-experiment/post-experiment evaluation that includes comparisons both within the experimenting synod as well as a comparison with synods not participating in the program.
- 3) In addition, qualitative evaluations should be considered as well as quantitative. How have relationship changed within a synod, among congregations and new starts. Additionally, are there marks of the church which could be evaluated such as biblical literacy, spiritual disciplines, knowledge of the full nature of the ELCA among congregants.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA THINK TANK ON MISSION SUPPORT

How will this Proposal Improve Mission Support?

Prepared by: James Hazelwood, Bishop New England Synod

Proposal Summary

The main objective of this experiment is to implement a three-year test of an alternative approach to the funding of churchwide and synodical mission. The experiment seeks to test two hypotheses around evangelical outreach, with the primary goal to test if an overall gain in mission support can be achieved.

Plans for Implementation and Growing Mission Support

The following are specific examples we seek to implement

1. Through a synod wide tour of every conference in New England, Bishop Hazelwood is meeting with rostered leaders, church council leaders and synod assembly voting members to present a renewed vision of being church together through a revival of mission partnership, which will include challenges to congregations to increase mission support.
2. The synod council has endorsed a plan that will engage congregations in deeper conversations around what it means to be church together in mission partnership. This plan includes visits with congregations by trained lay leaders, synod council members and others. The focus is on creating a culture of generosity.
3. The New England Synod recently adopted a budget that maintains our percentage of mission support sharing for fiscal year 2016. This was only possible when members of the synod council agreed to personally make pledges of individual mission support. These pledges made it possible to maintain the percentage share with churchwide. If these individual gifts had not been secured, the only option would have been lay off staff, and reduce funding to the churchwide expression. This is already evidence of the potential positive impact of the experiment. Our intent is to invite a wide audience to participate, thus positively impacting mission support.
4. Bishop Hazelwood has begun a ministry of stewardship education in our synod, centered around the work of Charles Lane's Ask, Thank Tell. This ministry includes customized workshops for New England Synod Congregations. Seventeen congregations signed up on the first day it was announced, and one congregation that participated in an early version reported a 22% increase in giving. Every congregation that participates in the workshop is asked to sign a covenant in which the commit to increase mission support.

These are a few examples of how we wish to engage this proposed experiment as a tool for discovering new ways of strengthening the evangelical outreach and financial mission support of the whole of the ELCA.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA THINK TANK ON MISSION SUPPORT
New England Synod Version 2.0 January 6, 2015

Think Tank Mission Support Proposal

Prepared for: Bishops Mission Support Think Tank (MSTT) and participating synods

Prepared by: James Hazelwood, Bishop New England Synod

Background

In November 2013, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton asked nine synodical bishops to form a think tank on the subject of mission support. In her invitation she said, "the current method of mission funding is not as effective as it could be. I think it is our (bishops) turn to take a crack at this." I was one of the nine bishops representing a broad spectrum of the life of the ELCA. Our initial meetings were mostly information gathering sessions which yielded two specific points of information: First, mission support from congregations has been in a 25 years decline since the formation of the ELCA, as well as in the predecessor bodies. (Congregational shared giving was 17.7% in 1988, and is less than 5% in 2013) This has occurred during a time when giving to congregations has actually increased, as the costs of operating a local parish have increased during that same 25 year period. Second, The resulting decrease in mission funding to synods and churchwide has reduced the effectiveness of the wider mission of this church. In New England, this has meant the elimination or reduction of staff positions, ministry funding and program support in such areas as evangelism and outreach, youth ministry, campus ministry and congregational support services. Third, there have been numerous attempts on the part of the ELCA to address this decline in mission support, but each group has not been successful due to various factors that include: widespread anxiety about money in our church and society, considering changes to a system we are all part of, the challenge of building consensus among key stakeholders, a history among Lutherans to be overly cautious in our articulation of principles of stewardship and generosity. Fourth, the realization that instituting wholesale system wide change would not be embraced by this church at this time.

"Rather than producing a grand, overarching plan or program, the Think Tank believes now is the time to venture out with some imaginative experiments spearheaded by synods that are ready, willing and able to take risks on behalf of the whole church for the sake of the mission of the gospel." (MSTT Report to the ELCA Conference of Bishops and Church Council October 2013)

What follows is one such proposal that is being pursued by five synods, including New England, who have agreed to form a learning community as we enter into these experiments.

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Objective

The main objective of this proposal is to implement a three-year test of an alternative approach to the funding of church wide and synod mission support for the purpose of increasing the funding and effectiveness of evangelical outreach.

Goals

This one to three year pilot seeks to test two hypotheses:

1. That the allocation of mission support dollars for new starts and renewals would be more easily and effectively managed and administered through local oversight of synods.
2. That moving the funding of new mission starts and renewals to the synod's responsibility, would have an overall net gain in mission support from both congregations and individuals.

Proposal in brief

In the 2016 fiscal year, several synods, including the New England Synod, would enter into an experiment for the purposes of learning alternative approaches to both mission support funding and mission development of new starts. This experiment asks select synods to reduce their Mission Support to the churchwide expression in the amount equivalent to the portion currently allocated for DEM's, grants new starts and renewals, etc. These selected synods would participate in an evaluation process to test the two hypotheses listed above.

FULL PROPOSAL

FINDINGS

1. Mission Support from congregations to synods and from synods to churchwide has experienced a 25-year history of decline.
2. To address this decline, over the years multiple task forces and study groups have been enlisted to make proposals. No significant change has been made in the funding of the ELCA. In 2013, Bishop Eaton established a "Think Tank" to explore ways to address mission support.
3. The ELCA's Evangelism and Outreach strategy is in need of review, and thus calls for testing alternative approaches as sited in a Nov. 2013 Report to the ELCA Church Council:

There is no evidence we are aware of which shows other denominations or religious groups to be consistently more successful than the ELCA in starting new ministries. At the same time, the failure rate is substantial and of concern. The rate demands a new and wider discussion about the future direction of evangelism and outreach in this church. This church cannot rely on new ministries as its primary evangelism strategy. This is true despite the fact there is ample opportunity for new ministry development and, as noted

earlier in this review, ELCA Lutherans have a theological point of view with considerable potential in the wider culture. (Exhibit G Nov 2013 Report to Church Council Page 19)

4. As the 2011 LIFT report indicated, there is a need to address both the missional needs of this church as well as the mission support needs of this church, we note among its recommendations:
The churchwide organization, synods and congregations prioritize their spending to emphasize congregational outreach, leadership development, global mission and new communication strategies, while discerning how to constructively withdraw from other tasks. (LIFT REPORT Section V, Page 29, #5)

CONCLUSIONS

There is a consistent pattern in the ELCA when addressing the declining funding of mission. The pattern has been to identify problems, request research, conduct study groups that propose changes, receive reports with appreciation, make subtle changes mostly in terms of language, but not act. This pattern is well established, and most likely will continue. Offering a bold new direction in the areas of congregational development and mission support will most likely be met with resistance. This is especially true, if the new direction requires a system-wide change, such as action by the church council or the churchwide assembly. There are many reasons for this resistance to change on a system-wide basis. As an alternative, a small scale pilot project designed to test new approaches may reveal learnings that the wider system would be more willing to explore.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In May 2014 the Mission Support Think Tank (MSTT) received a paper titled “Three Models of Mission Funding”, which described the history of mission support in the ELCA and the challenges faced by various groups in addressing the long-term trend of decline. This proposal seeks to build on one of those models, and conduct a pilot test of the impact of this model in several synods.

The proposal before you now invites several synods to experiment with a new model of mission support funding by having those synods retain the funds designated for the DEM compensation package, the funding for new and renewal projects within the synod. This pilot project would enlist several synods for a period of one to three years. In effect, pilot synods would reduce their funding to the churchwide expression in the amount equal to what they receive in grant funding.

What synods should participate in the pilot project?

The synods volunteering to participate should be prepared to take full responsibility for the funding, leadership, design and implementation of the pilot according to the following:

- Prepare a modified synod budget for FY 2016 for presentation to their Spring 2015 Synod Assembly.
- Participating Synods will be able to develop plans and be ready to implement on Feb 1, 2016.
- They should develop measurable tests to determine effectiveness
- Pilot synods should provide quarterly reports of successes, failures, and learnings to the Mission Support Think Tank.
- These synods should make this the sole focus of their energies for the time period of 2015 and 2016. If a synod has other emphases planned, they should not participate, as this project will require focus and attention for implementation

Synods volunteering to participate

The following synods have expressed an interest in participating in this experiment. They are Lower Susquehanna, Metropolitan Washington DC, New England, Nebraska and Texas Gulf Coast Synod.

How much funding is each synod taking responsibility? (The figures below are based on end of year 2013 - actual figures would be adjusted prior to implementation of the experiment for FY 2016) These figures represent the 2013 total of funding new start grants, renewal grants and compensation package & expenses for the Director of Evangelical Mission)

	<u>Total</u>
New England	\$349,553
Nebraska	\$199,391
Texas-Louisiana	\$180,671
Lower Susquehanna	\$161,143
Metro Washington DC	\$294,807

What responsibilities will these synods assume?

The following are key areas for each synod, additional responsibilities may be added to particular synods:
Salary & Benefit Package for the DEM as well as Grant Funding for New and Renewing Congregations

In addition, each synod will develop a plan, in consultation with one another, Churchwide staff and their own synod leadership to implement changes and form criteria for measuring the effectiveness as we test the two hypotheses. These may include plans for seeking local financial support for the New or Renewing ministries, designs for increasing the missional effectiveness of such ministries, benchmarks for evaluating the impact of the pilot.

What would not change under this experiment?

The participating synods would continue to be engaged as full partners in mission and ministry with the Churchwide expression of the ELCA. Because this proposal does not reduce actual giving to the ELCA, there is no reduction in financial support to the ELCA. Therefore, the participating synods would continue to be eligible to apply for new start and renewal grants, engage in the consultative partnership of the CSM department, participate in churchwide expression mission tables, and be eligible for the training services for developers. These and numerous other ways in which the partnership between congregations, synods and churchwide would continue. In addition, current developers would continue to be full partners with their colleagues across the ELCA, especially those developers who have ethnic-specific or context specific ministries.

CLOSING SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This proposal acknowledges the deep challenges experienced across the ELCA in terms of Mission Support as well as the need to both develop new ministries and renew others. Due to the ongoing struggles in this transitional time of all forms of structured Christianity in North America, it is unlikely that any efforts to continuing a 'more of the same approach' will yield any positive results. Experimenting with new ways forward does not provide easy or quick answers, but this proposal submits that a thoughtful pilot program for one to three years is worthy of consideration. There are legitimate questions, which need to be explored. Most likely all of these questions will not be answered or fully explored without testing the hypotheses. We will not be able to plan for all the contingencies, problems and setbacks. Nor will we be able to anticipate all possible benefits/consequences, without moving into a pilot experiment.

This pilot would afford us the opportunity to:

- experiment with a localized approach to mission funding and mission development
- learn whether additional financial support can be raised for mission development when leadership and management are localized to synods.
- discuss unanticipated benefits/consequences of an alternative approach to funding

Next Steps: Implementation Plans for the New England Synod

Spring 2015 - The selected pilot synods would vote on their 2016 budgets. Included in their budget would be a line under the expenditure column for ELCA Church wide support. That line would indicate the amount of funds the synod would retain in order to activate the pilot project. The amount would include the DEM's compensation package, the grants scheduled for receipt during the year and an administrative operations amount. Example (Note this is an example based on 2013 figures, dollar amounts will be adjusted to reflect 2016 estimates):

ELCA church wide support 51%	\$980,000
Synod Pilot Experiment	(349,000)
Total amount to ELCA	\$651,000

The actual amount of the "Synod Pilot Experiment" would be negotiated based on a formula that included the previously scheduled grants for new and renewal ministry. The formula would include the DEM's package as currently awarded with any 2016 increases planned in the CSM budget. In addition, because synod's will be absorbing some of the administrative tasks in this experiment an amount for those costs would also be included. That amount would also be negotiated, but an estimate of \$7,000 can be used at this time. Example (Note this is an example based on 2013 figures, dollar amounts will be adjusted to reflect 2016 estimates):

DEM package, travel, benefits, etc	\$137,353
New & Renewal Grants	\$212,200
Administrative Operations	\$ 7,000
Total	\$356,553

Summer & Fall 2015 - Planning begins in the following areas. The intent is to use the summer and fall of 2015 to prepare for the change over to the new model beginning at Fiscal year start up February 1, 2016

Mission Support Funding Hypothesis

This hypothesis seeks to test the idea that moving the funding of new mission starts and renewals to the synod's responsibility, would have an overall net gain in mission support from both congregations and individuals. In order to appropriately test the hypothesis, several adjustments and new initiatives need to be put into place.

Evaluative criteria and measurable outcomes - In partnership with the Office of Research and Evaluation, the participating synods will develop a set of criteria for measurement. What are specific proposals that will be implemented in order to test this one? What are specific measurable outcomes that could be analyzed to determine the effectiveness?

In New England, preliminary planning for this area may include the development or further development of these specific tools.

Mission Partners - Planning and development of a new version of the Mission Partners, where congregations adopt a mission partner in the form of one of the new or renewing starts. Example: Faith Lutheran Church becomes a mission partner with a new Latino congregation. They agree to a series of mutual accountability, draft a covenant that includes prayers, occasional pulpit exchange, shared services. Faith agrees to provide financial support to the ministry through either a designated dollar amount in its budget or a series of individual supporters from the congregation or both. Another example: A conference or a group of congregations and individuals choose to support a new start ministry by providing similar support as described above.

Bishop's Crazy Stewardship Consults - Bishop Hazelwood has developed a one night primer on the best practices of cultivating generosity and thanksgiving in congregations. This presentation to church council's is based on the book Ask, Thank, Tell by Charles Lane. The 103 minute session drafts a customized year round plan for cultivating generosity in a congregation. As of the writing of this report, 17 congregations have expressed interest in this consultation. This resource could be expanded over the period of this pilot.

Macedonia Team - This team is currently training lay and clergy leaders to articulate a focus on biblical generosity. They are also engaged in generating resources to help all of us gain a broader understanding of generosity and thanksgiving. Among the resources the team is producing include worksheets for calculating a congregations giving potential, videos that include reflections of generosity as well as speakers who are able to lead Consecration Sunday events.

NES Mission Development Fund - This fund was established in the early 2000's as a vehicle to support the financial investment in new congregational starts and mission. The bulk of the funds have been raised through the sale of church properties as well as individual contributions. The fund balance currently stands at 1.6 million dollars, and produces approximately \$160,000 per year for the funding of new missions. In light of several factors, including the longer time required to move a new start to self-sustaining status, the desire on the part of this synod to continue the long history of being an immigrant church and start churches in contexts where new immigrants are growing, the increased operational costs of new ministries, and the fact that we are currently using some of the principle to fund new missions - we need to grow this fund to 3.2 million, so that it can annually produce funding to support our plans for new starts.

New Church Mission Development Hypothesis

The second hypothesis to be tested reads as follows: That the allocation of mission support dollars for new starts and renewals would be more effective if it was under the oversight of synods.

Evaluative criteria and measurable outcomes Efficiency, ownership, timeliness, knowledge of on the ground ministries, etc. are all better done in the domain of synod. There will be a need to set up the strategies, goals, and measurements to test this hypothesis. Can we streamline the red tape and prove that synods are more efficient? Can we provide funding in a timely manner while excitement and momentum are strong, – can the shortened time be measured? If area congregations become engaged in local mission strategies, can increased involvement and additional dollars be measured as compared with the current system/process? What strategies and tools that are particularly unique to the New England context need to be employed.

Mission Tables - Mission Tables serve as the primary steering team for the new starts and renewal projects of the synod. These tables will review their expectations during the summer and fall, and evaluate what additional components of the tables responsibility. In cases where additional responsibilities are defined, the tables will consider added persons to provide such support. Mission Tables should reflect the goals of broad lay participation, as well as an inclusive dimension of persons of color.

Ecumenical Learning Communities - Church planting and renewals are being practiced on multiple levels in all denominational structures. While engaging with our current full communion partners (Episcopal, Methodist & UCC), what learnings might we gain from other traditions? Especially those with a stronger track record in the area of turnarounds and church planting? There may be opportunities for us to engage in various forms of evangelical outreach, while retaining our Lutheran substance.

Intentional Multicultural contextualization - We have already begun to move in the direction of starting new ministries in multicultural communities, particularly in the Latino community. Our Latino Task Force has begun intentional work in this area, and this is already resulting in new church starts, as well as a Spanish language School of Lay Ministry. What additional learnings need to take place in this area. There are different gifts in the non euro-centric community, different approaches to worship, different leadership styles from our historic northern european expression of Lutheranism. An intentional focus on this area of mission development has already begun, and requires further development.

Forward Leadership Community - The Forward Leadership Community began as a 2013 experiment in assisting congregations in the renewal of their ministries. The program continues in 2014 & 15, with additional learnings and adjustments from the first year. This emphasis on renewing congregations is a tool for assisting congregations in the development of effective outreach.

Administrative Functions

In order to implement this proposal, the New England Synod will have to plan for several administrative changes. These would include:

Financial Distribution System - The New England Synod currently distributes funds from the Mission Development Fund for renewals and new starts via the internal accounting system at the New England Synod office. The ELCA church wide sends supporting dollars to the local fiscal agent operating the new mission starts. (Each new start has a fiscal agent which manages funds and compensation while the new start is forming its legal structure) Under this proposal, additional funds normally sent to the ELCA and then sent from the ELCA to the fiscal agents in New England, would now be distributed direct from the Operating Fund of the Synod. Staff resources would need to be dedicated to this change in the form of time and attention to establishing a system for distribution. In some cases, particularly where an international developer is forming a new ministry among the new immigrant community, compliance with federal laws may dictate the advantages of compensation remaining with churchwide.

Synod Council Roles and Responsibilities - Additional responsibility would be placed on the synod council for oversight of this proposal. Due to this increased responsibility, it is recommended that the synod council use this as a time to enhance the role of the Synod Mission Table. The further development of the mission table would include: a) an increased evaluative role for the Mission Table b) an increased role in the planning of new starts c) a movement toward responsibility and oversight d) an emphasis on a regional approach to the mission table. While many of these factors have been in place, this proposal calls for an intentional time of further development of these factors, especially letter d. The Synod council would remain in its governing capacity, it would shift its management activities to the mission table.

Bishop and staff - This proposal will increase the supervisory role of the synod bishop. DEM supervision which has been shared with church wide will become the sole responsibility of the synod bishop. The Call to the DEM is currently issued from Chicago, however under this proposal the call would now be issued from the New England Synod.

ELCA Federal Credit Union (Proposed)

Submitted by: Eva M. Roby, President and CEO, Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA

Date: March 2015

Update

We are pleased to share with you the progress toward formation of the ELCA Federal Credit Union. The National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) has been provided with all of the requested documentation and responses to its inquiries and suggestions. Approval of the charter is expected soon.

The Board of Directors of the ELCA FCU has met several times for orientation to Board responsibilities, to review operational policies, and to begin planning for the opening of the credit union.

A Vice President / Chief Operating Officer has been hired to manage the day-to-day operations of the credit union. He has over 20 years of experience in all aspects of credit union management and will be instrumental in the implementation and start-up phase of the ELCA FCU, as well as providing key expertise in loan and deposit decision-making, conservatively growing capital, and complying with regulations.

We expect a Fall 2015 opening and will let you know when we have received final approval of the charter via the Church Council List Serve.

Board Development Committee Agenda

Saturday, April 11, 2015

7:00 – 8:15 a.m. CDT

Epiphany Room

Breakfast is provided

- Feedback from Class of 2015
 - How should we structure discussion time on Sunday, April 12?
- Review of implementation of ideas from Church Council retreat
 - Current suggestions implementing:
 - Bishop Eaton's overview letter
 - Committee chair overview letter or conference call
 - Previous suggestions already implemented:
 - extension of time for council meeting and committee meetings
 - start with worship and a plenary session
 - upload of individual reports rather than grouping into exhibits – some reports also had an executive summary or memo to highlight the main points in the document
 - use of index cards
 - engagement in small groups
- November Church Council meeting
 - Proposed primer: (only have time for one)
 - Bible Study leader: (suggestions?)
- Additional members to BDC

14.41.F13. Board Development Committee

A Board Development Committee—composed of six to eight members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Executive Committee, and of which at least two shall be from each elected class of the Church Council—shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Church Council for two-year, renewable terms to assist the presiding bishop and the Church Council in developing and implementing efforts to help members of the Church Council to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the council's role and fiduciary responsibility as the board of directors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America....

Pamela Pritt (2017) said she would be happy to serve. (*need action to forward name to Executive Committee for election*)

BDC Action

Recommended: *To recommend approval by the Executive Committee of the following action:*

To appoint (to be determined) to the Board Development Committee of the Church Council for a two-year term beginning September 1, 2015.

- Election of BDC co-chair

BDC Action

Recommended:

To elect (*to be determined*) as co-chair to the Board Development Committee of the Church Council beginning September 1, 2015.

- Other business?

Revised April 2, 2015

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

April 9, 2015

Agenda

Page 1 of 3

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL**

**April 9, 2015
1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.
Epiphany Conference Room**

Members of the Executive Committee:

Officers: Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop
Carlos Peña, Vice President
Linda Norman, Treasurer
Chris Boerger, Secretary

Church Council: Paul Archer
Jessica Crist, Chair of the Conference of Bishops (*excused*)
Marjorie Ellis
Louise Hemstead (*excused*)
Maren Hulden
Susan McArver
Raymond Miller
William “Bill” Horne

Resource People:

Office of the Presiding Bishop: Wyvetta Bullock, Assistant to the Bishop, Executive for Administration
Kenneth Inskeep, Executive, Research and Evaluation
Rhondean Johnson, Executive, Human Resources
Marcus Kunz, Assistant to the Bishop, Theological Discernment
Kathryn Lohre, Assistant to the Bishop, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations
Donald McCoid, Director, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations
Walter May, Assistant to the Bishop, Conference of Bishops
Jodi Slattery, Assistant to the Bishop, Governance

Office of the Secretary: Sue Rothmeyer, Assistant to the Secretary
Phillip Harris, General Counsel
Frank Imhoff, Manager for Official Documentation

Conference of Bishops: Marcus Lohrmann, bishop, Northwestern Ohio Synod

I. Call to Order

II. Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda items have been distributed to the members of the Executive Committee of the Church Council by distribution.

EC ACTION**Recommended:**

To adopt the agenda and permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order deemed most appropriate.

III. Updates from Officers and Conference of Bishops

- A. Presiding Bishop
- B. Treasurer
- C. Secretary
- D. [Conference of Bishops \(written report only\)](#)

IV. Items for Action**A. Nominations, Appointments, and Elections**

1. The Executive Committee of the Church Council functions as the Nominating Committee for the Church Council. Nomination information related to the elections scheduled for the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council have been distributed in the [En Bloc Items](#) document of the Church Council materials. Vitae of the nominees are located in the [Biographies](#) document.

EC ACTION**Recommended:**

To recommend that the Church Council receive the written report of the Nominating Committee on the results of vacancies on churchwide boards and committees; and

To transmit the nominations to the Church Council as provided in the [En Bloc Items](#) document.

2. The following recommendation is being proposed to provide more continuity over time and in order for the functions of the Executive Committee to be carried out between the churchwide assemblies.

EC ACTION**Recommended:** *To recommend that the Church Council approve the following action*

To declare that the newly elected chairs of the Budget and Finance Committee, the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, the Planning and Evaluation Committee, and the Program and Services Committee shall be members of the Executive Committee of the Church Council for a two-year term beginning on September 1, 2015.

B. Offering for April 2015 Meeting of the Church Council

At its November 2005 meeting, the ELCA Church Council discussed offerings taken during worship services held during Church Council meetings. Subsequent to that meeting, the ELCA Administrative Team recommended that the Executive Committee discuss a two-part process for identification of offering recipients prior to each Church Council meeting: 1) a recommendation by the Mission Advancement unit of the offering recipient(s) for each Church Council meeting; and 2) approval of the offering recipient(s) by the Executive Committee prior to each Church Council meeting.

Previous recipients included ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA Vision for Mission, ELCA Disaster Response, and ELCA Fund for Leaders in honor of former Presiding Bishop Hanson. The Mission Advancement unit has recommended that the offering

taken at the April 2015 Church Council meeting be designated to the congregations priority *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* congregations priority.

EC ACTION

Recommended:

To approve that the offering taken at the April 2015 meeting of the Church Council be designated to the congregations priority in the *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

C. Declaration on the Way

The Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue has been in ongoing discussions since 1965. Each “round,” or set of discussions, covers a specific topic important for the life and vitality of both communions. Recent rounds have had focused discussions on “The Church as Koinonia of Salvation”, “The Hope for Eternal Life”, and Ministries of Teaching: Sources, Shapes and Essential Contents (for discerning the truth coming to us in God’s Word and communicating this truth in normative teaching for today). In order to harvest the fruits of our dialogue, a Declaration on the Way (to unity) will highlight essential areas of agreement as a foundation for unity.

The Rev. Don McCoid, Director for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, has been part of a team determined by the Bishops Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. Progress reports have been shared with the Conference of Bishops of the ELCA. At the Conference of Bishops meeting in March 2015, the conference voted to encourage continued work on the ecumenical document. The Rev. McCoid will be present to share more about the ongoing work of the team.

EC ACTION

Recommended: *To recommend that the Church Council approve the following action*

To affirm the continued work on the ecumenical document, “Declaration (In Via) on The Way.”

V. Items for Information and Discussion

A. Theological Education Advisory Council

While the Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC) will also be meeting on Thursday, April 9, some participants will come to the Executive Committee meeting to provide an update on the newest developments.

Mr. Bill Horne and Ms. Maren Hulden are participants in TEAC. A [progress report](#) from TEAC can be found in Executive Committee materials.

EC DISCUSSION

VI. Executive Session – See Executive Committee Executive Session agenda

VII. Adjournment

Theological Education Advisory Council Progress Report

What TEAC Learned from Responses to its fall 2014 Report

As reported to the Church Council last November, the Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC) was able to consult last October with seminary, synodical and churchwide leaders concerning draft recommendations TEAC developed in response to the three imperatives that had emerged from its early consultations and “First Listening Survey”:

1. **The ELCA needs a theological education network that is *more far-reaching***
2. **The ELCA needs a theological education network that is *more connected and flexible***
3. **The ELCA needs a theological education network that is *more sustainable***

In the conversations TEAC had with seminary presidents, board chairs, deans, and the synod bishops serving on seminary boards, there was strong and broad support for a number of the themes and recommendations in TEAC’s interim report, especially concerning:

- Stepping up the church’s work in fostering vocational discernment (especially, though not exclusively, with young adults).
- Expanding our work in theological education for all the baptized through the collaborative efforts of the theological education network.
- Moving toward a new culture of continuing education for rostered leaders in which lifelong learning is the norm.
- Lifting up the teaching office in pastoral ministry.
- Cooperative online delivery of theological education (perhaps including a common platform).
- Putting our faculty resources together to do what no seminary can do by itself (the most common example raised was education for Hispanic ministry).
- Reviewing how clusters are functioning and exploring ways to collaborate both within and beyond clusters.

In those same consultations, a number of concerns and helpful suggestions were also offered that TEAC is taking into consideration as it refines the final report and recommendations it will submit to the Church Council in November 2015.

TEAC members met immediately following their October 2, 2014 meeting with seminary presidents, board chairs and the synod bishops serving on seminary boards to consider what they had heard and to plan next steps. In preparation for TEAC’s next meeting in mid-January, they decided to accelerate the asset-mapping work already underway with attention to how the work of the various partners relates to desired system-wide outcomes (especially concerning expanding continuing education for rostered leaders and lifelong learning for all the baptized). They also agreed on the need to “deprogramize” its recommendations, keeping the focus on desired outcomes. Concerning whether a “big enough idea” has yet emerged, TEAC members noted that a number of consultation participants had raised up the possibility of moving toward “one seminary in many locations” or “one seminary network with many access points” and agreed that this needs to be discussed in more depth.

TEAC then tested these ideas in November 2014 with the Church Council, which in informal discussion responded favorably (especially to “one seminary/seminary network” and to expanding continuing education and life-long learning). Subsequent conversations that occurred at a major gathering of rostered leaders and at consultations hosted by the Western Mission Network and the Covenant Cluster Network also pointed to broad support for expanded theological education offerings provided by a more connected and flexible theological education network.

TEAC's More Recent Activity

Following TEAC's October 2014 meeting, a TEAC member with relevant experience (Randy Foster) raised the question of whether we might engage some expert help in assessing various possible models for organizing ELCA theological education. After testing this idea with some leaders in wider theological education circles, we approached Baker-Tilley (the firm that already performs the annual comparative audit of ELCA seminaries--and that on its consulting side has experience with working in the non-profit sector on projects exploring the benefits of significant new collaborations). Baker-Tilley presented a proposal to TEAC at its January 2015 meeting, and after good conversation and deliberation, TEAC unanimously approved proceeding with the proposed assessment. This project aims "to provide the ELCA with the information required to determine how to create a more far-reaching, responsive, flexible and cost effective model(s) for deliberating theological education that enables the ELCA better to meet the mission challenges of this time."

This project is now underway. The seminaries have shared with Baker Tilly their institutional data and it is being utilized to build a detailed picture of the current state of our seminary network for use as a starting point in evaluating the potential benefits of new collaborations. The Baker Tilley team has now begun visits to each campus for interviews with key leaders on the school's distinctive gifts, programs and goals. Baker Tilley will then work with TEAC and the seminaries to identify alternative models and then project their likely costs and benefits. TEAC is hopeful that both the process and the final product of this assessment (which will be completed by mid-summer) will be helpful both for its own work and for that of the seminaries.

The second major focus of TEAC's January 2015 meeting was the refinement of plans for a research project that gathers information on theological education assets and resources that already exist both within the ELCA and beyond it through our ecumenical and global relationships. Research and Evaluation has created an online survey (which can be accessed at

https://surveys.elca.org/scripts/rws5.pl?FORM=asset_map). Research and Evaluation has sent invitations to complete the survey to ELCA teaching theologians, Directors for Evangelical Mission, and leaders of synod lay schools and life-long learning partners and they will use the information gathered to build both a "map" of the providers (and their existing and desired partnerships) and a directory of the programs they offer (including information on the kinds of leaders they primarily serve, the sorts of courses/learning experiences they offer, costs, etc.). This asset-mapping project and the Baker Tilley project will be done "in conversation" with each other so that the learning in one can resource the other.

One additional and very fruitful activity of TEAC in the last few months was a convening of the seminary board chairs in February 2015. This meeting was organized at the request of several of the seminary board chairs after they were part of last October's meeting of seminary leaders with TEAC because they had found that first-ever gathering so helpful and energizing. In this all-day meeting (for which they were joined by four TEAC members), the board chairs shared the mission and vision of their schools, how they see those visions/missions fitting together, what they see as the distinctive gifts their schools bring to the table, and their shared commitment to be open to new possibilities that enable the ELCA to best serve God's mission in this time.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
April 9-12, 2015
TEAC Progress Report
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TEAC's Continuing Work in Preparation for its Final Report in November 2015

During the next several months, TEAC will closely track and assess the progress and implications of both the Baker Tilly project and the asset-mapping survey. It will also continue to seek broad input and consult with leadership groups. Its primary work will be to continue drafting and testing elements of the report and recommendations it will send to the November 2015 meeting of the ELCA Church Council. TEAC currently has three more face to face meetings scheduled (April 9, July 10, and October 22-23) and will also be scheduling conference call meetings along the way (and perhaps an additional face-to-face meeting).

**Legal and Constitutional Review Committee
Agenda
April 10, 2015**

- I. Trinity Seminary Constitution changes
- II. Three Continuing Resolutions for action at this meeting

14.41.A10. replace with 14.41.A15. Budget and Finance Committee

Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The treasurer of this church shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer. The committee shall prepare and present a comprehensive budget to the Church Council for its consideration and presentation to the Churchwide Assembly. The committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Treasurer.

14.41.B05. replace with 14.41.B15 Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

A Legal and Constitutional Review Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The secretary of this church shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Secretary. This committee shall provide ongoing review of legal and constitutional matters. It shall review all proposed amendments to constitutions, bylaws and continuing resolutions.

14.41.E02. replace with 14.41.E15 Audit Committee

An Audit committee-composed of 5 to 7 members appointed by the Budget and Finance Committee and approved by the Church Council for two year, renewable terms-shall assist the Budget and Finance Committee and the Church Council in fulfilling oversight of the churchwide organization's accounting and financial reporting, internal control systems, and audit functions, consistent with its responsibilities as specified in the charter recommended by the Audit Committee, reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee, and approved by the Church Council. A minimum of two members of the Audit Committee shall be members of the Budget and Finance Committee. The chair of the Audit Committee shall be a member of the Budget and Finance Committee and shall be appointed by the chair of the Budget and Finance Committee. In consultation with the executive for administration, the Audit Committee approves the appointment and dismissal of the director for internal auditing.

- III. Church Council Election Grid
- IV. Constitutional Issues – List will be posted on Net Community
- V. Word and Service progress – post lunch session with Program and Services
- VI. Legal Update
- VII. Election of Committee Chair

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

CHURCH COUNCIL

April 9-12, 2015

Synod Pairing Church Council Elections

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		Synod Pairings	2016	2019	2022	2025	2028	2031	2034	2037	2040
1A	1	Alaska				x			x		
1B		Northwest Washington		C				x			
1C	2	E Washington & Idaho				x			x		
1F		Montana		LF				x			
1D	3	SW Washington					x			x	
1E		Oregon			LF				x		
2A	4	Sierra Pacific				x			x		
2B		SW California		LF				x			
2C	5	Pacifica				x			x		
2D		Grand Canyon		C				x			
2E	6	Rocky Mountain			LF				x		
3C		South Dakota					x			x	
3A	7	Western North Dakota			C				x		
3B		Eastern North Dakota					x			x	
3E	8	Northeastern Minnesota		LM				x			
3D		Northwestern Minnesota				x			x		
3F	9	Southwestern Minnesota			LF				x		
3I		Southeastern Minnesota					x			x	
3G	10	Minneapolis Area			LM				x		
3H		St. Paul Area	LF				x			x	
4A	11	Nebraska				x			x		
4B		Central States		LM				x			
4C	12	Arkansas Okalahoma				x			x		
		Northern Texas Northern Louisiana		C				x			
4D											
4E	13	Southwestern Texas		LM				x			
		Texas Louisiana Gulf Coast				x			x		
5H	14	Northwest Wisconsin			LM				x		
5G		Northern Great Lakes	LM				x			x	
5I	15	East Central Wisconsin		LF				x			
5K		South Central Wisconsin				x			x		
5L	16	La Crosse Area			LM				x		
5F		Northeastern Iowa	C				x			x	

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5E	17	Western Iowa			LM			x		
5D		Southeastern Iowa	LM			x			x	
5B	18	Northern Illinois		C			x			
5C		Central Southern Illinois			x			x		
5A	19	Metropolitain Chicago			C			x		
5J		Grater Milwaukee	LF			x			x	
		North/West Lower Michigan		C			x			
6A		Southeast Michigan			x			x		
6D	21	Northwestern Ohio			LM			x		
6C		Indiana Kentucky				x			x	
6E	22	Northeastern Ohio		LM			x			
6F		Southern Ohio			x			x		
7A		New Jersey		C			x			
7B	23	New England				x			x	
7G		Slovak Zion	LF							
7C	24	Metropolitan New York			x			x		
7D		Upstate New York	C				x			
		Northeastern Pennsylvania	LM			x			x	
7E	25	Southeastern Pennsylvania			C			x		
7F		Northwestern Pennsylvania				x			x	
8A	26	Allegheny	C			x			x	
8C		Southwestern Pennsylvania		LM			x			
8B	27	West Virginia Western Maryland				x			x	
8H		Upper Susquehanna	LM				x			
8D		Lower Susquehanna			x				x	
8F	29	Delaware Maryland	LF			x				x
8G		Metropolitan Washington, D.C.		LM				x		
9A	30	Virginia			x				x	
9B		North Carolina	LM			x				
9C	31	South Carolina		C				x		
9D		Southeastern	LM			x			x	
9E	32	Florida Bahamas		LF			x			
9F		Caribbean	C			x			x	

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

OF

TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Approved by the Board of Directors
November 2008

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

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INTRODUCTION

Trinity Lutheran Seminary was the first seminary owned and operated jointly by the Lutheran Church in America and The American Lutheran Church. Trinity Lutheran Seminary is institutional evidence of the deep unity of faith, doctrine, and life which has bound the LCA, ALC, and AELC together into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and which binds all Lutherans together. It is meant to be a living expression of the unity of the Lutheran family and of the one mission in Christ's church.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1. NAME AND ORGANIZATION

- 1.1 The name of this institution shall be "Trinity Lutheran Seminary."
- 1.2 Trinity Lutheran Seminary, sometimes hereinafter called the seminary or the corporation, is the legal and historic successor of the "Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary" organized in 1830, a seminary of The American Lutheran Church, and "Hamma School of Theology" of Wittenberg University, organized in 1845, a seminary of the Lutheran Church in America.
- 1.3 This seminary is organized under the Agreement of Consolidation effective September 1, 1978.

ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this seminary is to train committed and competent men and women for the ministry of Jesus Christ in the Lutheran Church and other Christian communions so they are able to relate the Gospel to those whose lives they touch with clarity, power and sensitivity. Such ministry includes ordained ministry, non-ordained professional ministry and the equipping of lay persons for Christian service, as well as continuing education for professional ministry. The seminary is also a resource for congregations in their understanding of Christian faith and their faithful fulfillment of their missions under Christ.

ARTICLE 3. RELATIONSHIPS AND MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Trinity Lutheran Seminary is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). No provision of the Constitution or By-Laws shall be inconsistent with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and policies established by the ELCA Church Council. The Trinity Lutheran Seminary Constitution, Bylaws and all amendments must be approved by the ELCA Church Council, upon recommendation of the ~~ELCA Vocation and Education unit~~ appropriate churchwide unit. Trinity Lutheran Seminary shall be governed by its elected Board of Directors.
- 3.2 The members of the Board of Directors of the seminary shall be the members of the corporation.

ARTICLE 4. DOCTRINAL BASIS

- 4.1 The faith and life of this seminary shall be in harmony with the confessional commitments of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

ARTICLE 5. GOVERNANCE

- 5.1 This seminary shall be governed by a Board of Directors consisting of ~~the following persons~~ **15** persons as follows:

~~At least one fifth of the membership of the Trinity Lutheran Seminary Board of Directors shall be nominated, in consultation with Trinity Lutheran Seminary, by the Vocation and Education unit and elected by the ELCA Church Council.~~

~~Bishops of the Synods of Region VI shall serve as members of the Board of Directors, with three having vote at any one meeting. Those having vote shall be determined from among their numbers.~~

~~Six clergy, one elected/appointed by each Synod of Region VI;~~

~~Twelve laypersons – one lay male and one lay female elected/appointed by each Synod of Region VI.~~

Six (6) of the members, one from each Synod, shall be appointed by each Synod of Region VI in consultation with the seminary's board chair and president or other such person appointed by the seminary board.

Two (2) of the members shall be ELCA Bishops from among the Synods of Region VI. The Bishops shall select among themselves.

Seven (7) of the members shall be nominated, in consultation with the seminary's board chair and president, or other such person appointed by the seminary board, by the appropriate churchwide unit and elected by the ELCA Church Council.

At least one-third and no more than 40 percent of the board, including the Bishops, shall be clergy;

At least 60 percent and no more than two-thirds of the board's members shall be lay persons.

Each gender shall have a representation of a minimum of six (6) person on the board.

At least three (3) persons on the board shall be persons of color or whose primary language is other than English, at least one of whose primary language is Spanish.

~~The President of the Seminary shall serve ex officio, with voice but no vote, as shall the three synodical bishops not elected to voting positions. At least 10 percent of the members of the Board shall be persons of color or persons whose primary language is other than English. Representatives from synods shall be so arranged as to provide an equitable rotation of numbers and qualifications among the synods.~~

Persons enrolled as students or who are employed by Trinity Lutheran Seminary are not eligible to serve as voting members.

- 5.2 The term of each elected director shall be ~~four~~ **three** years, renewable once. Appointment or election to a ~~major portion~~ **more than 2 years** of an unexpired term shall be construed as one full term. Initial terms shall be arranged in such manner as to provide for the election of a portion of the board every year.

- 5.2.1 The Academic Dean, a faculty representative, a student representative, the chief ~~business~~ **financial** officer, vice president for advancement, an ~~Alumni Council~~ representative, the bishops of the synods of Regions VI and a representative of the ~~Vocation and Education~~ appropriate churchwide unit of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America shall be advisory members of the Board of Directors with voice but without vote.

- 5.2.2 A director shall serve until a successor is elected. If a member of the Board of Directors shall resign, be removed as hereinafter provided, die, be adjudged mentally incompetent, or be absent from two consecutive meetings without excuse, the office shall be declared vacant. Any director may resign by giving written notice to the chairperson or the secretary of the Board of Directors and to the electing entity. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, unless otherwise specified therein, and the acceptance of a resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. Any director may be removed, either with or without cause, at any time by that entity of the church that elected the person being removed. Vacancies on the Board of Directors shall be filled by that entity of the church which elected the person being replaced.
- 5.3 The Board of Directors shall hold at least two regular meetings each year, one of which shall be the annual meeting. The annual meeting shall be the first meeting following the beginning of the fiscal year. Notice of regular meetings shall be given at least two weeks prior to the meeting date. The agenda shall be distributed at least ten days prior to the meeting. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the chair and shall be called by the chairman upon written request of any nine members. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall be observed in the conduct of the business. All meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such place or places within or without the State of Ohio as may, from time to time, be fixed by the Board of Directors or, if not so fixed, then as shall be specified in the respective notices or Waiver of Notice thereof. Any action which by virtue of any provision of the laws of Ohio, the Articles, this Constitution, or the By-Laws, may be taken at a meeting of the directors, may be taken without a meeting if authorized by a writing signed by all of the directors.
- 5.4 A majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of those present may adjourn a meeting from time to time until a quorum is had. Notice of any adjourned meeting need not be given.
- 5.5 The Board of Directors shall elect a chairperson, a vice-chairperson/recording secretary, and a treasurer financial secretary annually following the guidelines specified in the By-laws. In addition, the Board of Directors may elect one assistant recording secretary and one assistant financial secretary, one or more assistant treasurers and one or more assistant secretaries. No person may be a vice chairperson/recording secretary or financial secretary or an assistant to any of these positions while he or she is chairperson. Any person may hold two or more offices and perform the duties thereof, except that no person may be a vice chairperson, secretary or assistant secretary while he or she is chairperson, and no person may at the same time be treasurer and an assistant treasurer or secretary and assistant secretary. If one Any person is elected to the offices of secretary and treasurer vice chairperson/recording secretary and any person elected to the position of financial secretary , such person shall be known as the secretary/treasurer and shall have all of the duties and authority assigned to and all of the references made to both the recording secretary and treasurer financial secretary in this Constitution and in the By-Laws shall apply to the secretary/treasurer. Only the chair and the vice-chair need be members of the Board of Directors.
 - 5.5.1 The chairperson, vice chairperson, four members The three (3) officers, namely the chairperson, the vice-chairperson/recording secretary and the financial secretary, elected by the Board of Directors, and President (ex officio) shall serve as the Executive Committee. The board may, upon its discretion appoint up to two additional persons from among its members to serve on the Executive Committee The President as an ex officio member of the Executive Committee, shall serve with voice, but without vote. The meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by either the chairperson or the President. The Executive Committee shall have the power to act on behalf of the Board of Directors between meetings. All actions of the Executive Committee are subject to review

by the Board of Directors.

- 5.5.2 Such committees of the Board of Directors as are needed may be authorized at any meeting of the Board of Directors. Committees shall be task specific and function-driven and thus there shall be no term limits for serving on a committee. The chairperson, in consultation with the President, shall appoint the chairpersons of the committees from among the members of the Board of Directors. Each committee chairperson shall appoint persons to serve on that committee. Said members of the committees do not have to be members of the Board of Directors. All work done by the committee must obtain final approval of the Board of Directors. The chairperson in consultation with the President shall appoint the chairperson and members of the committees.
- 5.6 Duties and powers of the Board of Directors shall include:
- 5.6.1 To be committed to the advancement of the mission of Trinity Lutheran Seminary: To form leaders for Christ's church at work in the world.
 - 5.6.2 To be committed to the vision of Trinity Lutheran Seminary.
 - 5.6.3 To be advocates and deployed workers for the recruitment of students and the seminary's development efforts.
 - 5.6.4 To oversee and direct the management of all real and personal property of whatsoever nature of the seminary; to authorize officers or agents of the seminary to receive gifts, devises or bequests on behalf of the seminary; and to authorize the registration and holding of property of the seminary in the name of the seminary, in bearer form, or in the name of a nominee of the seminary.
 - 5.6.5 To authorize the purchase, acquisition, sale, assignment, transfer, conveyance, exchange, lease, mortgage, pledge, abandonment or other disposition of real and personal property of whatsoever nature.
 - 5.6.6 To set salaries of administrative officers, faculty, and staff positions.
 - 5.6.7 To adopt policy statements for the internal operation of the seminary after consultation with the faculty, students, and administrative officers, such policies to have the same authority as the By-laws.
 - 5.6.8 To elect the President, academic dean and faculty members according to the process described in the By-laws, and to discipline, suspend, or discharge them in accordance with provisions of adopted policy statements.

5.6.7 ~~To recruit students throughout the whole of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.~~

5.6.9 To approve and authorize such degrees as are properly granted by the seminary upon recommendation of the faculty.

5.6.10 To approve the educational policies and programs as recommended by the faculty in consultation with students and representatives of the ~~ELCA Vocation and Education Unit~~ appropriate churchwide unit of the ELCA.

5.6.11 To provide for the financial resources and fiscal contracts required to operate the seminary, to oversee the financial affairs of the seminary, and to establish policy guidelines for the endowment and for all investments, and, with the approval of the ~~ELCA Vocation and Education unit~~ appropriate churchwide unit of the ELCA, major fund raising efforts.

5.6.12 To adopt and as necessary amend the annual budget.

5.6.13 To receive and review reports from the administration.

5.6.14 To determine and review periodically the ~~purpose and~~ mission and vision of the seminary and to insure that there is a sound institutional planning process, including the adoption and review on a continuing basis of long range goals and short range objectives.

5.6.15 To develop policies that assist the seminary to achieve its ~~purpose and~~ mission and vision.

5.6.16 To report regularly to the constituency of the seminary.

ARTICLE 6. ADMINISTRATION

6.1 The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the seminary. The President shall be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, nominated and elected in the manner prescribed in the By-laws. The President shall have faculty rank and status.

6.2 The Academic Dean shall be elected in the manner prescribed in the By-laws and shall have faculty rank and status.

6.3 The President shall appoint a library director and other administrative personnel with academic responsibilities in consultation with the faculty and with the approval of the Board of Directors. The library director may have faculty rank and status upon recommendation of the President.

6.4 The President shall appoint all personnel without academic responsibilities in consultation with the Board of Directors and determine appropriate titles and job descriptions.

ARTICLE 7. FACULTY

7.1 Faculty members shall be elected according to the process described in the By-Laws.

7.2 Upon the recommendation of the President, the Board of Directors may appoint a faculty member over retirement age on an annual basis as the needs of the seminary may require.

ARTICLE 8. STUDENTS

8.1 This seminary shall be open to such students as meet the established qualifications for entrance and agree to the policies of the seminary.

- 8.2 Students may be suspended or dismissed by the faculty according to the policies adopted by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 9. INDEMNIFICATION

- 9.1 The seminary shall indemnify or agree to indemnify any person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party, to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative action, suit, or proceeding, other than action by or in the right of the seminary, by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a director, officer, employee, or agent of or a volunteer of the seminary, or is or was serving at the request of the seminary as a director, officer, employee, or agent of or a volunteer of another domestic or foreign nonprofit corporation or corporation for profit, or a partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, against expenses, including attorney's fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with such action, suit or proceeding, if he or she acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the seminary, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, if he or she had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, or conviction, or upon a plea of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent, shall not create, of itself, a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the seminary, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, a presumption that the person had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.
- 9.2 The seminary shall indemnify or agree to indemnify any person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party, to any threatened, pending, or completed action or suit by or in the right of the seminary to procure a judgment in its favor, by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a director, officer, employee, or agent of or a volunteer of the seminary, or is or was serving at the request of the seminary as a trustee, director, officer, employee, or agent of or a volunteer of another domestic or foreign nonprofit corporation or corporation for profit, or a partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, against expenses, including attorney's fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the defense or settlement of such action or suit, if he or she acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the seminary, except that no indemnification shall be made in respect of any of the following:
- 9.2.1 Any claim, issue, or matter as to which such person is adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct the performance of his or her duty to the seminary unless, and only to the extent that, the court of common pleas or the court in which the action or suit was brought determines, upon application, that, despite the adjudication of liability but in view of all the circumstances of the case, such person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such expenses as the court of common pleas or such other court considers proper.
- 9.2.2 Any action or suit in which liability is asserted against a director and that liability is asserted only pursuant to Section 1702.55 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- 9.3 To the extent that a director, officer, employee, agent, or volunteer has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit or proceeding referred to in paragraph 9.1 or 9.2 of this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in such an action, suit, or proceeding, he or she shall be indemnified against expenses, including attorney's fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with that action, suit or proceeding.
- 9.4 Unless ordered by a court and subject to paragraph 9.3 of this Section, any indemnification under paragraph 9.1 or 9.2 of this Article shall be made by the seminary only as authorized in the specific case, upon a determination that indemnification of the director, officer, employee, agent or volunteer is proper in the circumstances because he or she has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in paragraph 9.1 or 9.2 of this Article. Such determination shall be made in any

of the following manners:

- 9.4.1 By a majority vote of a quorum consisting of directors of the seminary who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding referred to in paragraph 9.1 or 9.2 of this Article;
 - 9.4.2 Whether or not a quorum as described in paragraph 9.4.1 of this Article is obtainable, and if a majority of a quorum of disinterested directors so directs, in a written opinion by independent legal counsel other than an attorney, or a firm having associated with it an attorney, who has been retained by or who has performed services for the seminary or any person to be indemnified within the past five years;
 - 9.4.3 By the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - 9.4.4 By the court of common pleas or the court in which the action, suit or proceeding referred to in paragraph 9.1 or 9.2 of this Article was brought.
- 9.5 If an action or suit by or in the right of the seminary is involved, any determination made by the disinterested directors under paragraph 9.4.1 of this Article or by independent legal counsel under paragraph 9.4.2 of this Article shall be communicated promptly to the person who threatened or brought the action or suit under paragraph 9.2 of this Article, and, within ten days after receipt of such notification, such person shall have the right to petition the court of common pleas or the court in which such action or suit was brought to review the reasonableness of such determination.
- 9.6 Unless, at the time of a director's or volunteer's act or omission that is the subject of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in paragraph 9.1 or 9.2 of this Article, the Articles or By-Laws of the seminary state, by specific reference to this paragraph, that its provisions do not apply to the seminary, or unless the only liability asserted against a director in an action, suit, or proceeding referred to in paragraph 9.1 or 9.2 of this Article is pursuant to Section 1702.55 of the Ohio Revised Code, or unless paragraph 9.7 of this Article applies, the expenses incurred by the director or volunteer in defending the action, suit, or proceeding, including attorney's fees, shall be paid by the seminary. Upon the request of the director or volunteer and in accordance with paragraph 9.8 of this Article, those expenses shall be paid as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit or proceeding.
- 9.7 Notwithstanding paragraph 9.6 of this Article, the expenses incurred by a director or volunteer in defending an action, suit or proceeding referred to in paragraph 9.1 or 9.2 of this Article, including attorney's fees, shall not be paid by the seminary upon the final disposition of the action, suit or proceeding, or, if paid in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit or proceeding, shall be repaid to the seminary by the director or volunteer, if it is proved, by clear and convincing evidence, in a court with jurisdiction that the act or omission of the director or volunteer was one undertaken with a deliberate intent to cause injury to the seminary or was one undertaken with a reckless disregard for the best interests of the seminary.
- 9.8 Expenses, including attorney's fees, incurred by a director, officer, employee, agent, or volunteer in defending any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in paragraph 9.1 or 9.2 of this Article may be paid by the seminary as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit or proceeding, as authorized by the directors in the specific case, upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the director, officer, employee, agent or volunteer to repay the amount if it ultimately is determined that he is not entitled to be indemnified by the seminary.
- 9.9 The indemnification authorized by this Article is not exclusive of, and shall be in addition to, any other rights granted to those seeking indemnification, pursuant to the Articles, the By-Laws, any agreement, a vote of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or disinterested directors, or otherwise, both as to action in their official capacities and as to action in another capacity while holding their offices or positions, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a director,

officer, employee, agent or volunteer and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of such a person.

ARTICLE 10. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

10.1 Unless otherwise provided in the Articles or the By-Laws:

10.1.1 No contract, action, or transaction is void or voidable with respect to the seminary because the contract, action, or transaction is between or affects the seminary and one or more of its directors or officers, or is between or affects the seminary and any other person in which one or more of the seminary's directors or officers are directors, trustees, or officers, or in which one or more of the seminary's directors or offices have a financial or personal interest, or because one or more interested directors or officers participate in or vote at the meeting of the directors or a committee of the directors that authorizes the contract, action, or transaction, if any of the following applies:

10.1.1.1 The material facts as to his, her or their relationship or interest and as to the contract, action, or transaction are disclosed or are known to the directors or the committee, and the directors or committee, in good faith reasonably justified by the material facts, authorizes the contract, action, or transaction by the affirmative vote of a majority of the disinterested directors, even though the disinterested directors constitute less than a quorum of the directors or the committee;

10.1.1.2 The material facts as to his, her or their relationship or interest and as to the contract, action, or transaction are disclosed or are known to the members entitled to vote on the contract, action, or transaction, and the contract, action, or transaction is specifically approved at a meeting of the members held for the purpose of voting on the contract, action, or transaction, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members of the seminary who are not interested in the contract, action, or transaction.

10.1.1.3 The contract, action, or transaction is fair as to the seminary as of the time it is authorized or approved by the directors, a committee of the directors, or the members.

10.1.2 Common or interested directors may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the directors, or of a committee of the directors, that authorizes such a contract, action, or transaction.

10.1.3 The trustees, by the affirmative vote of a majority of those in office, and irrespective of any financial or personal interest of any of the trustees, shall have authority to establish reasonable compensation, which may include pension, disability, and death benefits, for services to the corporation by directors and officers, or to delegate that authority to establish reasonable compensation to one or more officers or directors.

10.2 Divisions 10.1.1 and 10.1.2 of this Article do not limit or otherwise affect the liability of directors under Section 1702.55 of the Ohio Revised Code.

- 10.3 For purposes of paragraph 10.1 of this Article, a director is not an interested director solely because the subject of a contract, action, or transaction may involve or effect a change in control of the seminary or his continuation in office as a director of the seminary.
- 10.4 For purposes of this Article, "action" means a resolution that is adopted by the directors or a committee of the directors.

ARTICLE 11. DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

- 11.1 Trinity Lutheran Seminary offers equal opportunity in hiring and student admissions to persons regardless of their race, age, gender, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, social class, and, with the exception of the applicable doctrinal standards of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, religion.

ARTICLE 12. DISSOLUTION

- 12.1 Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the corporation in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law in accordance with a formula agreed upon by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the synods or their successors assigned by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to support the corporation at the time of the dissolution, and if they are unable to agree or are not in existence at the time of the dissolution, as the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successors shall determine.

ARTICLE 13. BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS

- 13.1 ~~Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by a two thirds vote of the members of the Board of Directors present and voting at any meeting, provided, however, that notice of the proposed change shall have been mailed to each member of the Board of Directors, together with a copy of the proposed change, within the same time and in the same manner as notices of meetings are required to be given.~~
The seminary shall be governed consistent with policies established by the ELCA Church Council upon recommendation of the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization. Proposed amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board of Directors present and voting at any meeting, provided however, that notice of the proposed change shall have been mailed to each member of the Board of Directors, together with a copy of the proposed change, within the same time and in the same manner as notices of meetings are required to be given.
- 13.2 The Board of Directors may adopt ~~proposed~~ By-laws not in conflict with this Constitution by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board of Directors present and voting at any meeting. Such By-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board of Directors present and voting at any meeting.
- 13.3 ~~This Constitution, and any subsequent By laws and amendments, are subject to approval by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.~~
~~Such proposed amendments shall not be effective unless and until they are approved by the ELCA Church Council.~~

BY-LAWS

SECTION 1. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- 4.1 ~~The Synods of Region VI as designated by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to Trinity Lutheran Seminary shall elect six (6) members of the Board of Directors, as follows (effective June 30, 1996):~~

~~Synod VI.A Southeast Michigan 3
Synod VI.B North/West Lower Michigan 3
Synod VI.C Indiana Kentucky 3
Synod VI.D Northwestern Ohio 3
Synod VI.E Northeastern Ohio 3
Synod VI.F Southern Ohio 3~~

~~Bishops of the Synods of Region VI shall serve as members of the Board of Directors, with three having vote at any meeting. Those having vote shall be determined from among their numbers.~~

~~In addition, at least one fifth of the membership of the Trinity Lutheran Seminary Board of Directors shall be nominated, in consultation with Trinity Lutheran Seminary, by the Vocation and Education unit and elected by the ELCA Church Council.~~

1.1 Newly elected members of the board shall begin their terms of service at the first regular meeting of the board after July 1 following their election.

1.2 Officers of the Board of Directors:

1.2.1 The officers shall each serve for a period of one year or until their successors are duly elected, and, except for the ~~Treasurer~~ **financial secretary**, shall be eligible for election to not more than four consecutive full terms.

1.2.2 The chairperson shall appoint a nominating committee prior to each election of officers, which shall present not more than two nominations for each officer to be elected. Additional nominations from the floor shall be in order.

1.2.3 The chairperson shall fulfill the responsibilities prescribed in the Constitution and the following other duties:

1.2.3.1 Preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee.

1.2.3.2 Prepare the agenda for all meetings of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee in consultation with the President.

1.2.3.3 Whatever may be prescribed by the Board of Directors from time to time.

1.2.4 The ~~secretary~~-vice-chairperson/recording secretary shall also perform the duties of the chairperson in the event of the chairperson's inability to act, and when so acting shall have all the powers and duties conferred upon the chairperson. The vice-chairperson/recording secretary shall perform other duties as may from time to time be assigned by the chairperson, the Executive Committee, or the Board of Directors. The ~~secretary~~-vice-chairperson/recording secretary shall keep the minutes of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee and perform the following other duties:

- 1.2.4.1 Receive and file for record reports of the committees.
 - 1.2.4.2 See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the Constitution and these By-laws.
 - 1.2.4.3 See that the seal of the corporation is affixed to all official documents, the execution of which on behalf of the seminary is duly authorized in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and these By-laws.
 - 1.2.4.4 Keep a register of the post office addresses of each member of the Board of Directors.
 - 1.2.4.5 Whatever may be assigned by the chairperson or the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee from time to time.
- 1.2.5 The treasurer financial secretary shall have charge and custody and be responsible for the safekeeping of funds and securities of the seminary and perform the following other duties:
 - 1.3.6.1 Give bond for faithful discharge of responsibilities in such sum and substance and with such surety as the Board of Directors shall determine; receive and give receipt for monies due and payable to the seminary from any source whatever.
 - 1.3.6.2 Deposit monies in the name of the seminary in such banks and other depositories as shall be selected by the Board of Directors.
 - 1.3.6.3 Present to the Board of Directors at the end of each fiscal year and when otherwise requested, a full statement of the financial condition of the seminary.
 - 1.3.6.4 Whatever may be prescribed by the chairperson and the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee from time to time.
- 1.2.6 ~~The assistant secretary(s) and assistant treasurer(s) shall perform all duties as assigned by the secretary and treasurer, respectively, by the President or by the Board of Directors.~~
~~The Board of Directors has the discretion to elect an assistant recording secretary and an assistant financial secretary.~~
- 1.3 The policies for internal operation of the seminary shall be adopted and revised by a majority vote of the Board of Directors and may include such items as the following:
 - 1.3.1 Position descriptions for the President, Academic Dean, and administrative personnel.
 - 1.3.2 Academic freedom.
 - 1.3.3 Professional ethics.
 - 1.3.4 Evaluation of administrative and faculty personnel.
 - 1.3.5 Appointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure.
 - 1.3.6 Termination of service.
 - 1.3.7 Leaves, sabbaticals and other.
 - 1.3.8 Financial affairs and investment policies of the seminary.

- 1.3.9 Discipline, subject to the policies and procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - 1.3.10 Financial exigency.
 - 1.3.11 Admission and dismissal of students.
 - 1.3.12 Human subjects research.
 - 1.3.13 Faculty handbook.
 - 1.3.14 Such other items as from time to time are necessary.
- 1.4 The Board of Directors shall be the final arbiter of all appeals brought by students or faculty, except those regarding academic matters, including suspension or dismissal of students for cause, which are the prerogative of the faculty. Such appeals shall be heard only after:
- 1.4.1 In the case of misconduct, the procedures of the “Policy and Procedures Regarding Misconduct” (Faculty Handbook) have been followed.
 - 1.4.2 In other cases, relevant procedures of the Faculty Handbook, or other procedures specified by the Board of Directors, have been followed.

SECTION 2. COMMITTEES

~~Persons on Committees shall be appointed for terms of two years.~~

- 2.1 The Executive Committee shall be constituted in accordance with Article 5.5.1 of the Constitution.
- 2.1.1 Its duties and powers shall include:
 - 2.1.1.1 To receive reports from all standing and special committees.
 - 2.1.1.2 To consult with and assist the President.
 - 2.1.1.3 To be concerned with long-range planning.
 - 2.1.1.4 To be concerned with relationships to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its financial support.
 - 2.1.2 It shall not rescind or contravene earlier actions of the Board of Directors.

[Note: The following duties have been absorbed by the Executive Committee with the changes noted.]

- 2.1.3 To engage in short- and long-range study of Board personnel needs with regard to the abilities and experience needed for optimum fulfillment of the Board's various responsibilities, including the membership of its working committees.
- 2.1.4 To develop a process for and to nominate qualified candidates for Board membership to the respective electing bodies of the church.
- 2.1.5 ~~To interest prospective Board members in Trinity's mission and in the activities of the Board of Directors.~~
- 2.1.5 To develop and implement a program of orientation for new Board members.

- 2.6.5 To develop a Board Enrichment Program through planned involvement with faculty, students, and staff.
- 2.1.6 To develop an on-going Program of Education for Board members in such areas as trends in theological education, trends in theology, and issues in church and society which affect theological education.
- 2.1.7 To propose periodic Board retreats or other special events to enhance Board morale and effectiveness.
- 2.1.8 To develop a plan for monitoring of seminary strengths and weaknesses and for evaluation of Board meetings and the performances of Board members.
- 2.1.9 To review and recommend to the Board of Directors policies that insure that conflict of interest situations are disclosed, reported, evaluated and reviewed.
- 2.2 The Academic Affairs Committee on Academics shall exercise the following duties and powers:
- 2.2.1 To keep the Board of Directors informed as to trends in theological education.
- 2.2.2 To keep the Board of Directors informed as to the seminary's academic policies and make recommendations to the Board of Directors.
- 2.2.3 To review Board of Directors' policy on tenure and advancement in academic rank, as well as sabbatical and other leaves for faculty members.
- 2.2.4 To participate with faculty members in curricular studies and changes.
- 2.2.5 To perform such other duties as may be assigned to it from time to time by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee.
- 2.2.6 To recommend to the Board of Directors appropriate policies intended to afford equal education opportunities to all students or prospective students who meet admissions guidelines.
- 2.3 The Committee on Community Life, Mission, and Ministry Leadership Formation in Community shall exercise the following duties and powers:
- 2.3.1 To keep the Board of Directors informed of student and seminary life and make recommendations to the Board.
- 2.3.2 To participate with student body officers and other representatives in on-going review of community life, mission, and ministry.
- 2.3.3 To develop an on-going program that enriches the relationship of the Board of Directors and the seminary community.
- 2.3.4 To recommend to the Board of Directors appropriate policies that enhance or support the community life of the seminary.
- 2.3.5 To perform such other duties as may be assigned to it from time to time by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee.
- 2.4 The Finance and Properties Committee on Operations shall exercise the following duties and powers:

2.4.1 Re: Finance

- 2.4.1.1 To recommend fiscal policies to the Board of Directors.
- 2.4.1.2 To receive reports from the treasurer financial secretary and assist the treasurer financial secretary in the management of the finances of the seminary.
- 2.4.1.3 To annually appoint an Investment Subcommittee which shall have authority to make investments of Seminary funds on behalf of the Board of Directors under guidelines approved by the Board of Directors. The Subcommittee shall have authority to retain and select manager(s), advisor(s), and custodian(s) for the funds. The Subcommittee shall be responsible to review the investment portfolio performance and policy quarterly and to report at least semi-annually to the Board of Directors through the Finance and Properties Operations Committee. The Subcommittee shall consist of the President, the chief business officer of the Seminary, the Chair of the Finance and Properties Operations Committee, one other member of the Board of Directors, and at least two persons not members of the Board of Directors with investment expertise. The President shall select a faculty person to act as faculty liaison to the Subcommittee.
- 2.4.1.4 To review for the Board of Directors, prior to presentation to the Board of Directors, the annual budget prepared by the administration.
- 2.4.1.5 To annually appoint an Audit Subcommittee to assist the board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities for the accounting and auditing practices and internal control procedures of the Seminary and the audit of its financial statements which shall report its recommendations and findings annually to the Board of Directors through the Finance and Properties Operations Committee. In addition, the subcommittee shall review and approve the Conflict of Interest Policy of the seminary and its risk management procedures and policies. In carrying out its responsibilities, the subcommittee shall adopt a charter which shall be approved by the Board of Directors and shall review the charter annually for adequacy and recommend any necessary changes to the Board of Directors. The subcommittee shall consist of at least two members of the Board of Directors and a person not a member of the board with financial expertise. All committee members shall be approved by the Board of Directors and free of any relationship that in the opinion of the board would interfere with the exercise of independent judgment as a subcommittee member or give the appearance of lack of independence. The President shall select a person to act as staff liaison to the subcommittee.
- 2.4.1.6 To recommend salaries for faculty and administrative officers.
- 2.4.1.7 To provide an annual review of insurance coverage for Trinity Lutheran Seminary.
- 2.4.1.8 To perform such other duties as may be assigned to it from time to time by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee.

2.4.2 Re: Properties

- 2.4.2.1 To study the physical needs of the campus of the seminary.
- 2.4.2.2 To recommend to the Board of Directors such repairs, improvements, or replacements of or additions to property and equipment as it deems necessary or advisable, and between meetings of the Board of Directors to initiate such changes

as can be made within budgetary limits, subject to later approval by the Board of Directors.

2.4.2.3 To perform such other duties as may be assigned to it from time to time by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee.

2.5 The Committee on **Seminary Development** shall exercise the following duties and powers:

- 2.5.1 To review and recommend to the Board of Directors policies, goals, and programs for fund-raising, alumni, public relations activities, and student recruitment.
- 2.5.2 To coordinate and evaluate the progress of fund-raising, constituency relations, public relations and recruitment programs in order to help assure their success.
- 2.5.3 To participate in approved fund-raising and public relations programs of the seminary and to provide opportunities for other directors to be directly involved with the development and public relations programs of the seminary.

2.6 The Board Affairs Committee shall exercise the following duties and powers:

[Note: The duties of the Board Affairs Committee have been absorbed and noted to section 2.1.3]

SECTION 3. ADMINISTRATION

3.1 The President's administrative authority and duties shall include but not be limited to the following:

- 3.1.1 To supervise and maintain the seminary and its program.
- 3.1.2 To implement the policies approved by the Board of Directors.
- 3.1.3 To develop an annual budget, and approve expenditure of funds in accordance with, and up to the limit of the adopted budget.
- 3.1.4 To administer the educational program including responsibility for oversight and supervision of faculty in determining the educational policies of the seminary.
- 3.1.5 To serve as chairperson of the faculty.
- 3.1.6 To represent the seminary at meetings of the **Vocation and Education Appropriate Church Wide** Unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 3.1.7 To fulfill the position description for the office as adopted by the Board of Directors.

3.2 The Academic Dean shall report to the President. The duties of the Academic Dean shall include but not be limited to the following:

- 3.2.1 To arrange, in cooperation with the faculty, courses of study and class schedules.
- 3.2.2 To supervise academic relationships within the faculty and between the faculty and students.
- 3.2.3 To enforce the academic rules and policies adopted by the faculty and Board of Directors.
- 3.2.4 To exercise general supervision over the academic program.

- 3.2.5 To provide leadership in the development of the academic program.
 - 3.2.6 To fulfill the position description as adopted by the Board of Directors.
- 3.3 The Archivist shall be a member of the faculty appointed by the Board of Directors on recommendation of the President. The duties of the Archivist include the following:
- 3.3.1 To receive, classify, and preserve non-current official records of the seminary. Access to such records shall be restricted to authorized seminary staff and to qualified researchers in accordance with policies established by the Board of Directors.
 - 3.3.2 To solicit and receive manuscripts and other materials relating to the seminary, its faculty, its students, or its alumni. He/she shall preserve such material in the archives, limiting access to such collections in accord with any agreement established between the donor and the seminary.

SECTION 4. FACULTY

- 4.1 The faculty of the seminary shall consist of the President, the Academic Dean, those persons recognized as members of the faculty in these By-laws and the Faculty Handbook, and other administrative officers as the Board of Directors may designate.
- 4.2 The academic rank and status of faculty members shall be determined by the Board of Directors upon recommendation of the President after the President's consultation with the faculty.
- 4.3 The faculty shall determine the time, place and manner of holding its meetings, elect a secretary, and keep proper records. A majority shall constitute a quorum.
- 4.4 In addition to its teaching responsibilities, the duties and powers of the faculty shall include:
 - 4.4.1 To be responsible for the spiritual and pastoral formation of students.
 - 4.4.2 To participate with the synods in the process for endorsement and approval of candidates for ministry as specified in the candidacy and mobility policies and procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - 4.4.3 To establish academic policies.
 - 4.4.4 To determine the curriculum.
 - 4.4.5 To determine and maintain academic standards and grading policies.
 - 4.4.6 To admit students according to adopted policy.
 - 4.4.7 To recommend candidates for degrees.
 - 4.4.8 To suspend or dismiss students for cause.
 - 4.4.9 To establish the academic calendar.
 - 4.4.10 To serve in graduate and continuing education programs and on committees of the seminary and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - 4.4.11 To prepare a faculty handbook for approval by the Board of Directors which shall set forth faculty responsibilities and shall be adopted as provided in Section 1.4 of the By-laws. The

Faculty Handbook, as approved by the Board of Directors, shall have the status of By-laws to the Constitution of Trinity Lutheran Seminary. It may be amended according to the procedure of Article 13.1 of the Constitution.

SECTION 5. ELECTIONS AND TERMINATION

- 5.1 Searches for President, academic dean, and faculty members involving tenure or eligibility for tenure shall be conducted by the Board in consultation with the Bishop presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Vocation and Education appropriate churchwide unit. Members of the search committee shall be the President, except in the case of a search for President, the academic dean, three faculty members, two students, and four board members. The board chairperson shall appoint the faculty, student, and board representatives in consultation with these groups.
- 5.2 The Board of Directors shall elect the President in consultation with the Bishop presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and board of the Vocation and Education appropriate churchwide unit.
- 5.3 The election of the Academic Dean and faculty members shall be by the Board of Directors of the seminary. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting shall be required for election.
 - 5.3.1 The term of the President shall be six years, the term of the Academic Dean four years, and the term of the Archivist four years, all renewable by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. The President, the Academic Dean, or the Archivist may be terminated by a three-fourths vote of the electors specified in Section 5.2 and according to procedures adopted by the Board of Directors under the provisions of Section 1.4 of these By-laws. Faculty not elected to a tenured position will be elected for an initial three year, tenure-eligible term call. Reappointment to additional three year term calls or promotion to tenure will be in accordance with the provisions of the Faculty Handbook.
- 5.4 The termination of faculty members for cause shall be according to the procedures adopted by the Board of Directors under the authority of Section 1.4 of these By-laws and Appendix D of the Faculty Handbook. Termination of unrostered faculty members for disciplinary reasons shall be according to the procedures adopted by the Board of Directors under the authority of Section 1.4 of these By-laws.

SECTION 6. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 6.1 The fiscal year of the seminary shall begin on July 1 and end on the following June 30.
- 6.2 Checks may be signed by any officer or official authorized to do so by the Board of Directors. All drafts, notes, and other evidences of indebtedness of the seminary shall be signed by two officers, one of whom shall be the treasurer.

APPENDICES TO BY-LAWS

APPENDIX A

RESOLUTIONS TO ESTABLISH TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY FOUNDATION

October 14-17, 1992

The following resolution with respect to the Trinity Lutheran Seminary Foundation is hereby adopted:

RESOLVED, that the Trinity Lutheran Seminary Foundation (the "Foundation") be, and it hereby is, established as a committee of the Board of Directors;

That the Foundation is organized and shall be operated exclusively for the purpose of developing the capital resources of Trinity Lutheran Seminary (the "Seminary") by conducting and supporting activities exclusively for the benefit or to carry out the purposes of the Seminary, including but not limited to the following:

- (a) to seek and obtain funds in any form to be administered for the benefit of or to carry out the purposes of the Seminary;
- (b) to make distributions in accordance with the terms, if any, of gifts, bequests or devises that are not inconsistent with the purposes of the Seminary;
- (c) to make distributions and grants in accordance with determinations made by the Board of Directors of the Seminary pursuant to the authority set forth in its Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By-Laws; and
- (d) to conduct or support programs or projects reflecting the mission of the Seminary in the advancement of its educational, charitable, religious and scientific goals.

That solely for the above purposes, the Foundation is empowered:

- (a) to receive, on behalf of the Seminary, gifts, contributions, devises, and bequests in any form, subject, however, to guidelines established by the Board of Directors; and
- (b) to give appropriate recognition to such gifts through the Seminary.

That if not elected as regular members of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation, the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Seminary, its President, Vice President for Advancement, and Treasurer shall serve as ex officio members of the Board of Trustees upon their election to and the incumbency of their respective offices and the immediate past Chair of the Board of Directors of the Seminary shall also serve an ex officio voting member of the Board of Trustees during the one (1) year following the expiration of such a term as Chair; and

That the By-Laws of the Foundation be in the form attached hereto as Exhibit "A."

RESOLVED FURTHER, that three trustees of the Foundation shall be appointed as ex-officio voting members of the Committee on Seminary Advancement; and

That the duties of the Committee on Seminary Advancement be expanded to include the review and recommendation of development activities to the Foundation and working directly with the President to facilitate not only the execution of such development activities as are approved by the Foundation, but also the involvement of the Foundation in the institutional advancement of the Seminary.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the property, real and personal, including shares of stock, bonds, notes, and other evidences of indebtedness and securities issued by and interests in any corporation, partnership, or other entity or person, received and acquired by the Foundation, shall be placed in the fund of the Seminary designated as the endowment fund of the Foundation.

That the Seminary or its designee shall act as Trustee of any trust incidental to the purposes of the Foundation and the Seminary and shall receive, hold, administer, invest and expend funds and property subject to such trust; and

That the Seminary shall do all acts necessary or expedient for the management of and obtaining benefits from the property received by the Foundation consistent with the purposes of the Foundation and the Seminary.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the membership of the Foundation be composed of persons who need not be members of the Seminary Board of Directors.

APPENDIX A
Exhibit A

TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY FOUNDATION BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

RIGHTS OF TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Section 1.01 - Election and Removal of Trustees

In accordance with the provisions of these by-laws, the Trinity Lutheran Seminary (the "Seminary") shall have the sole right to elect the trustees of the Trinity Lutheran Seminary Foundation (the "Foundation") and to remove, with or without cause, any trustee of the Foundation prior to expiration of the trustees' term.

Section 1.02 - Selection of Officers

The Seminary shall have the right to approve the selection of officers of the Foundation and to direct the Trustee with or without cause to remove any officer from office.

Section 1.03 – Budget

The annual operating budget of the Foundation shall be subject to approval by the Seminary prior to its implementation by the Foundation.

Section 1.04 - Expenses and Donation

Any expenditure of, or donation made by, the Foundation in excess of limits from time to time set by the Seminary shall be subject to approval by the Seminary.

Section 1.05 - Financial and Operating Reports

On at least a quarterly basis, the Foundation shall submit detailed financial and operating reports to the Seminary.

Section 1.06 - Long-Range Planning and Management Objectives

The adoption of any long range plan or the adoption of specific management objectives for the Foundation shall be subject to approval by the Seminary.

Section 1.07 – Property

The property of the Foundation shall be the property of the Seminary and its sale or other disposition shall be subject to the approval of the Seminary. Property consisting of restricted funds shall be distributed in accordance with the terms, if any, of gifts, bequests, or devises that are not inconsistent with the purposes of the Seminary. Property consisting of unrestricted funds shall be distributed by the Board of Directors of the Seminary upon the recommendation of the President of the Seminary and the Foundation.

Section 1.08 – Dissolution

The Seminary may, at any time, and, with or without cause, dissolve the Foundation.

ARTICLE II

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 2.01 - General Powers

- (a) The powers of the Foundation shall be exercised, its business and affairs conducted, and its property managed under the direction of the Board of Trustees except as otherwise provided by the laws of the State of Ohio, the Seminary, or by these By-Laws.
- (b) Whenever in these By-Laws, or in any By-Laws adopted by the Foundation, the term "Trustee(s)" or "Board of Trustees" shall be used, such terms shall mean "member(s)" of the Foundation which has been established as committee of the Board of Directors of the Seminary.

Section 2.02 – Regulations

The Board of Trustees may adopt regulations to govern its own proceedings so long as the regulations are consistent with the laws of the State of Ohio, the Articles of Incorporation of the Seminary, its Constitution, and By-Laws, and these By-Laws.

Section 2.03 - Number and Qualification

- (a) The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than four (4) nor more than twenty (20) trustees who need not be members of the Board of Directors of the Seminary.
- (b) Without amendment to these By-Laws, the number of trustees may be fixed or changed by resolution of the Board of Directors of the Seminary.
- (c) No reduction in the number of trustees shall have the effect of removing any trustee prior to expiration of his or her term of office.

Section 2.04 – Nominations

At least thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary at which trustees are elected the Board of Trustees and the President of the Seminary shall submit to the Seminary a list of persons sufficient to bring the total number of continuing trustees and nominated trustees to a total not less than four (4) nor more than twenty (20) for election to the Board of Trustees.

Section 2.05 – Term

- (a) The trustees shall be elected for four (4) year terms. However, if the trustee has served two (2) consecutive, full four (4) year terms, such trustee may not be reelected as Trustee until at least the second annual meeting following the end of the second consecutive, full four year term of office. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any trustee may serve one (1) additional extraordinary term if two thirds (2/3) of the Board of Directors of the Seminary so approve.

- (b) Each category of trustees shall be divided into four (4) classes, with each class consisting of an equal number of trustees to the extent possible. One class should be elected each year. Each trustee of each class shall hold office until a successor is elected as directed.

Section 2.06 – Meetings

- (a) An annual meeting of the Board of Trustees for the election of officers, the consideration of reports and such other business as may be brought before the meeting, shall be held on the month of the fiscal year of the Seminary, or such other date as may be specified by the Board of Trustees.
- (b) Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees may be held at such periodic intervals between annual meetings and at such time as the Board of Trustees may specify.
- (c) Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the Seminary, the Chair, the President of the Seminary, or any four (4) trustees.

Section 2.07 - Place of Meeting and Electronic Meetings

- (a) Meetings of the Board of Trustees may be held at any place within or without the State of Ohio. If no designation is made, the place of meeting shall be the principal office of the Corporation in the State of Ohio.
- (b) Any meeting of the Board of Trustees may be held through any electronic communication pursuant to which each Trustee is able to hear each other Trustee participating in the meeting, or in any other manner permitted under the laws of the State of Ohio. Such participation shall constitute attendance at such meeting.

Section 2.08 - Notice of Meeting

- (a) Written notice of the time and place of each meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be given each Trustee either by personal delivery or by mail, telegram, cable or facsimile transmission at least two (2) days before each meeting.
- (b) Any Trustee may waive notice of the time and place of any meeting of the Board of Trustees, either before or after the holding of the meeting. Attendance at a meeting by a Trustee shall constitute waiver of notice.

Section 2.09 - Quorum and Manner of Action

- (a) A majority of the authorized number of Trustees shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business at any meeting of the Board of Trustees, except that a majority of the Trustees then in office constitutes a quorum for removing any Trustee or filling a vacancy in the number of Trustees.
- (b) In the absence of a quorum at any meeting of the Board of Trustees, a majority of those present may adjourn the meeting from time to time until quorum shall be present. Notice of any adjourned meeting need not be given.
- (c) The act of a majority of the Trustees present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall authorize any action by the Board of Trustees, unless a greater number is required by these By-Laws.

Section 2.10 - Action by Board of Trustees Without Meeting

- (a) Any action which may be authorized or taken at a meeting of the Board of Trustees may be taken without a meeting with the affirmative vote or approval of the Trustees in a writing or writings signed by all of the Trustees.
- (b) Any such writing shall be filed with or entered upon the records of the Foundation.

Section 2.11 – Resignation

- (a) Any Trustee of the Foundation may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair or the Secretary.
- (b) A resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, and unless otherwise specified therein, shall become effective upon delivery. The acceptance of any resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective unless so specified in the resignation.

Section 2.12 - Removal

- (a) Any Trustee may be removed, with cause, at any time by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Trustees then in office. Unless excused for cause, the failure of a Trustee to attend fifty percent (50%) of the regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Trustees each year shall constitute just cause for removal of such Trustee.
- (b) Any Trustee may be removed, with or without cause, at any time by the Seminary.

Section 2.13 – Vacancy

- (a) The remaining Trustees, though less than a majority of the authorized number of Trustees, may, by a vote of a majority of their number, temporarily fill any vacancy for the offices of Trustee for the unexpired term.
- (b) The member shall have a right to fill any vacancy for the office of Trustee, whether or not the vacancy has been temporarily filled by the remaining Trustees, by written notice to the Board of Trustees of its action. Any Trustee so elected by the Seminary shall hold office until a successor is elected as Trustee.

Section 2.14 - Ex Officio Member

- (a) The Board of Trustees may appoint one or more persons as ex officio members of the Board of Trustees, which ex officio member or members shall be entitled to notice, to be present in person, to present matters for consideration and take part in consideration of any business by the Board of Trustees at any meeting of the Board of Trustees, but which ex officio member or members shall not be counted for purposes of a quorum nor for the purposes of voting or otherwise in any way for purposes of authorizing any act or transaction of business by the Board of Trustees. The term of such appointment shall be for such time as the Board of Trustees shall designate.
- (b) The foregoing notwithstanding, if not elected as regular members of the Board of Trustees, the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Seminary, its President, Vice President for Advancement, and Treasurer, shall serve as ex officio voting members of the Board of Trustees upon their election to and during the incumbency of their respective offices. Immediate past Chair of the Board of Directors of the Seminary shall also serve as an ex officio voting member of the Board of Trustees during the one (1) year following the expiration of such a term as Chair.

ARTICLE III

COMMITTEES

Section 3.01 - Executive Committee

- (a) The Board of Trustees shall establish an Executive Committee, which shall consist of the Chair, any Vice Chair, the President and Treasurer of the Seminary, and the Secretary, which shall have the power to transact all regular business of the Foundation during the interim between meetings of the Board of Trustees and which shall have and exercise the authority of the Board of Trustees in the management of the Foundation subject to any restrictions established by the Board of Trustees, the Seminary, or these By-Laws.
- (b) The designation of the Executive Committee and the delegation thereto of such authority shall not operate to relieve the Board of Trustees or any individual Trustee of any responsibility imposed by law.
- (c) The Executive Committee shall be subject to the control and direction of the Board of Trustees.

Section 3.02 - Other Committees

- (a) The Board of Trustees may, by resolution, designate one or more other committees, each of which shall consist of not less than three (3) Trustees, which committees shall have and exercise the authority of the Board of Trustees to the extent provided in said resolution.
- (b) The designation of such committees and the delegation thereto of such authority shall not operate to relieve the Board of Trustees, or any individual Trustee of any responsibility imposed by law.
- (c) Each committee shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees, shall act only in the intervals between meetings of the Board of Trustees, and shall be subject to the control and direction of the Board of Trustees.

Section 3.03 - Alternate and Ex Officio Members

- (a) The Board of Trustees may appoint one or more Trustees as alternate members of any committee, which alternate member or members may take the place of any absent member or members at any meeting of such committee.
- (b) The Board of Trustees may appoint one or more persons (including persons who are not Trustees) as ex officio members of any committee, which ex officio member or members shall be entitled to be present in person, to present matters for consideration and to take part in consideration of any business by the committee at any meeting of the committee, but which ex officio member or members shall not be counted for purposes of a quorum or for purposes of voting or otherwise in any way for purposes of authorizing any act or transaction of business by such committee.

Section 3.04 - Authority and Manner of Acting

- (a) Unless otherwise provided in these By-Laws or unless otherwise ordered by the Board of Trustees, any such committee shall act by a majority of its members (excluding ex officio members) at a meeting at such place or through electronic communication as permitted under the laws of the State of Ohio or by a writing or writings signed by all of its members (excluding ex officio members).
- (b) Any act or authorization of an act or transaction of business by any such committee within the

authority delegated to it shall be as effective for all purposes as the act or authorization of the Board of Trustees unless otherwise provided in these By-Laws.

ARTICLE IV

OFFICERS

Section 4.01 – Officers

- (a) The officers of this Foundation shall be a Chair, one or more Vice Chairs, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and such other officers or assistant officers as may be necessary.
- (b) The Chair, any Vice Chair, and the Secretary shall be selected from among the directors, but any other officer does not have to be a Trustee. The Treasurer of the Seminary shall be ex officio Treasurer of the Foundation. Any other officer does not have to be a Trustee.

Section 4.02 - Term of Office

- (a) The Chair, any Vice Chair, and Secretary shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees and shall hold office for one (1) year until a successor is elected. The Treasurer of the Seminary shall serve as Treasurer of the Foundation upon his or her election to and during the incumbency of his or her office as Treasurer of the Seminary. So long as a person is a Trustee, there is no limitation on the number of offices or terms of office a Trustee may serve; provided, however, that other than as stated in section 4.09, no Trustee may hold more than one (1) of these offices at one time.
- (b) The other officers of the Foundation shall be appointed from time to time by the Board of Trustees as it shall determine, and new offices may be created and filled at any meeting of the Trustees. Each officer shall hold office until a successor shall have been appointed or the office is eliminated. More than one of these offices may be held by the same person at one time.

Section 4.03 – Resignation

- (a) Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair or the Secretary.
- (b) A resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, and unless otherwise specified therein, shall become effective upon delivery. The acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective unless so specified in the resignation.

Section 4.04 – Removal

Any officer may be removed, with cause, at any time by the affirmative vote of the majority of the Board of Trustees or, with or without cause, at any time by the Seminary.

Section 4.05 – Vacancy

Any vacancy for any reason may be filled by the Seminary or, in the absence of action thereby, the Board of Trustees.

Section 4.06 – Chair

- (a) The Chair shall call and preside at all meetings. The Chair shall act as Chair of the Executive Committee.
- (b) The Chair shall have such other authorities and duties as are delegated by these By-Laws or as may be delegated from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

Section 4.07 - Vice Chair

- (a) The Vice Chair shall, in the absence of the Chair, perform the duties of the Chair and while so acting, the Vice Chair shall have all powers and authority of, and shall be subject to the restrictions upon, the Chair.
- (b) The Vice Chair shall have such other authorities and duties as are delegated by the Chair or as may be delegated from time to time by the Board of Trustees.
- (c) If there are additional Vice Chairs, the Board of Trustees shall determine their rank.

Section 4.08 – Treasurer

- (a) The Treasurer shall have supervision of all funds of the Foundation.
- (b) The Treasurer shall have such other authorities and duties as are delegated by the Chair or as may be delegated from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

Section 4.09 – Secretary

- (a) The Secretary shall take or cause to be taken minutes of all meetings of the Board of Trustees and shall be custodian of all records and reports of the Board of Trustees.
- (b) The Secretary shall have such other authorities and duties as are delegated by the Chair or as may be delegated from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE V

INDEMNIFICATION

Section 5.01 - Indemnification

- (a) To the fullest extent not prohibited by applicable law, its Constitution or By-Laws, the Seminary shall indemnify each person who, by reason of being or having been a Trustee or officer of the Foundation, is named or otherwise becomes or is threatened to be made a party to any action, suit, investigation or proceeding (or claim to other matter therein), and the Seminary by its Board of Directors may indemnify any other person as deemed proper by the Board of Directors, against any and all costs and expenses (including attorney fees, judgments, fines, penalties, amounts paid in settlement, and other disbursements) actually and reasonably incurred by or imposed upon such person in connection with any action, suit, investigation or proceeding (or claim or other matter therein), whether civil, criminal, administrative or otherwise in nature, with respect to which such person is named or otherwise becomes or is threatened to be made a party by reason of being or at any time having been a Trustee, officer, employee or other agent of or in a similar capacity with the Foundation, or by reason of being or at any time having been, at the direction or request of the Foundation, a director, trustee, officer, administrator, manager, employee, member, advisor or other agent of or fiduciary for any other corporation, partnership, trust, venture or other entity or enterprise.

- (b) Each request or case of or on behalf of any person who is or may be entitled to indemnification for reason other than by being or having been a Trustee or officer of the Foundation shall be reviewed by the Board of Directors of the Seminary, and indemnification of such person shall be authorized by the Board of Directors only if it is determined by the Board of Directors that indemnification is proper in the specific case, and, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in these By-Laws, no person shall be indemnified to the extent, if any, it is determined by the Board of Directors or by written opinion of legal counsel designated by the Board of Directors for such purpose that indemnification is contrary to applicable law.

ARTICLE VI

AMENDMENT

Section 6.01 – Amendment

- (a) These By-Laws may be amended from time to time by the Seminary.
- (b) These By-Laws may also be amended from time to time by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Board of Trustees and without the approval of the Seminary, provided that any such amendment is approved by the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Seminary and would not materially impair the rights of the Seminary. Any amendment so adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation is subject to ratification by the Seminary.

APPENDIX B

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESIDENT OF TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY

1. POSITION DESCRIPTION

The President of Trinity Lutheran Seminary shall be the chief executive officer of the institution who is responsible for directing the spiritual life and for managing the academic, business, and financial operations in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws and under the direction of the Board of Directors. The President shall be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and shall be nominated and elected for six-year terms in the manner prescribed in the By-laws. The President shall have faculty status and serve as chairperson of the faculty. The President shall be expected to have the requisite skills to lead the seminary in implementing its strategic plan, especially in the areas of finance, enrollment and administration.

2. QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Christian Faith and Life

The President of Trinity Lutheran Seminary shall:

2.1.1 Be of mature Christian faith and life;

2.1.2 Be characterized by personal integrity as well as acceptance of and respect for the integrity of all those to whom the President must relate;

2.1.3 Assure the commitment of the entire seminary community to understanding and fulfilling the purposes and goals of the seminary as prescribed in the Constitution.

2.2 Church Leadership

The President of the seminary shall evidence:

2.2.1 An understanding and appreciation of the Lutheran biblical, confessional and ecclesiastical heritage;

2.2.2 A knowledge of the scope and direction of the church's ministries, particularly that of the parish;

2.2.3 A theological competence which includes prophetic leadership in the application of theology to contemporary life.

2.3 Personal Leadership

The President of the seminary shall:

2.3.1 Inspire the confidence and support of the constituency of the seminary;

2.3.2 Facilitate good relations among faculty, staff and students; stimulate personal and professional growth; and be sensitive to their needs;

2.3.3 Direct the attention of the seminary community to its local, regional, national, and world responsibilities;

- 2.3.4 Assist the faculty to give aggressive and evangelical drive to personal and community pastoral ministry;
- 2.3.5 Articulate a vision of what the seminary aspires to be in terms of its contribution to the Lutheran Church and the ecumenical scene.

2.4 Administrative Leadership

The President of the seminary shall:

- 2.4.1 Provide leadership for, supervise and maintain the seminary and its programs;
- 2.4.2 Recommend educational and administrative policies to the Board and implement the policies established by the Board of Directors;
- 2.4.3 Serve as chairperson of the faculty;
- 2.4.4 Prepare an annual budget for submission to the Board and approve expenditures of funds in accordance with the budget adopted by the Board of Directors;
- 2.4.5 Control the general operation and management of the seminary and all its units to assure its financial soundness;
- 2.4.6 Provide leadership for facilitating and planning the future development of the seminary--its programs, facilities and resources;
- 2.4.7 Assure that the seminary meets the academic standards of its accrediting agencies;
- 2.4.8 Appoint a library director and other administrative personnel with academic responsibilities in consultation with the Academic Dean, the faculty and with the approval of the Board of Directors;
- 2.4.9 Appoint administrative personnel without academic responsibilities;
- 2.4.10 Recommend to the Board academic rank and status for faculty members after consultation with the faculty;
- 2.4.11 Recommend to the Board guidelines and standards for endowed chairs and professorships;
- 2.4.12 Present to the Board a semi-annual written report on the state of the seminary;
- 2.4.13 Provide leadership for and participate in the development program of the seminary;
- 2.4.14 Represent the seminary on formal official occasions and enhance the public image of the seminary;
- 2.4.15 Designate the academic dean to be the acting chief executive officer in the absence of the President.

2.5 Educational Leadership

The President of the seminary shall:

- 2.5.1 Promote the development and implementation of a sound and innovative theological curriculum, including various forms of continuing education for clergy and lay persons; the educational program and curriculum shall be in harmony with the confessions of the Lutheran Church and yet open to the ecumenical responsibilities implied by the Gospel;
- 2.5.2 Staff the faculty with dedicated and competent personnel;
- 2.5.3 Inspire creativity in research, teaching and learning;
- 2.5.4 Cultivate scholarship and the life of faith within the seminary community;
- 2.5.5 Relate effectively with other Lutheran seminaries;
- 2.5.6 Represent the seminary at meetings of the appropriate churchwide **Vocation and Education** unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and
- 2.5.7 Articulate the global vision and responsibility of the seminary and its community.

2.6 Credentials

The President of the seminary shall:

- 2.6.1 Be a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- 2.6.2 Be a member of the active ordained roster of the ELCA.
- 2.6.3 Have a record of service to the church at the regional or national level;
- 2.6.4 Possess expertise in theology and administration;
- 2.6.5 Demonstrate leadership in an academic environment, with an earned doctorate preferred; and
- 2.6.6 Evidence spiritual maturity.

2.7 Rights of the Office

The President of Trinity Lutheran Seminary shall:

- 2.7.1 Be a voting member of the faculty;
- 2.7.2 Be entitled to six weeks vacation per year with a requirement that at least two weeks be taken consecutively during each year;
- 2.7.3 Be empowered to delegate responsibilities and duties to appropriate academic or administrative officers;
- 2.7.4 Be an advisory member of the Board of Directors with voice but without vote;
- 2.7.5 Serve as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board with voice but without vote;
- 2.7.6 Serve as a member of the standing committees of the Board of Directors with voice but without vote;

APPENDIX C

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Service as a director, officer, faculty member or other key employee (each a "Responsible Person") of Trinity Lutheran Seminary ("TLS") carries with it a duty of due care and undivided loyalty to the goals, programs, and economic and other interests of TLS and requires good faith and fair dealing in all matters relating to TLS.

Among other things, personal involvement (whether direct or indirect, through any other person or entity with or in which a Responsible Person has a family relationship or an ownership, contractual or other economic interest) with any outside entity or individual which results in conduct of the type described below is in conflict with this duty:

1. competing against TLS or depriving TLS of any opportunity without the knowledge and express written consent of TLS;
2. realizing personal financial gain from a transaction involving TLS without the knowledge and express written consent of TLS; and
3. conduct which has the potential adversely to impact TLS.

Accordingly, no Responsible Person may directly or indirectly participate in any transaction or arrangement with any other person or entity which may result in personal benefit to the Responsible Person or such other person or entity at the expense of TLS without the knowledge and express written consent of TLS. Responsible Persons who violate this policy are, among other things, subject to loss of their appointment to the Board or as an officer, or, in the case of a key employee, subject to disciplinary action pursuant to TLS's employee disciplinary procedure.

In addition, a Responsible Person shall disclose i) service on a board of, ii) a substantial financial interest in, or iii) employment, including of a close relative, by, any organization doing business with TLS.

Further, a Responsible Person shall not disclose or use confidential information of or about TLS for any purpose that is inconsistent with the best interests of TLS or not a direct result of and within the scope of such Responsible Person's service to or employment by TLS.

Each Responsible Person shall receive a copy of this Conflict of Interest Policy. Board members shall complete a "Conflict of Interest Certification" statement at least annually. Faculty and staff are subject to policies stated in personnel and faculty handbooks.

Approved by the Board of Directors 5/6/08

APPENDIX D

FRAUD RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

The Seminary strives to create awareness of and commitment to high ethical standards. Faculty and staff should strive to act in an ethical manner at all times, and employees are encouraged to raise concerns about any questionable practices they encounter. The Seminary prohibits any retaliation against employees who provide information or assist in an investigation of any alleged violations of applicable laws or seminary policies. Appropriate background checks are performed in an attempt to safeguard the integrity of the Seminary, as well as to protect employees against unsubstantiated allegations. Employees are encouraged to attend workshops and training events that assist in their remaining current in job-related skills, legal requirements and “best practices” in their areas of responsibility.

Employees who believe they have observed questionable practices should direct their concern to the immediate supervisor who will inform the Personnel Officer. In the event a potential complaint is against the immediate supervisor, an employee may go directly to the Personnel Officer, who will immediately notify the President. If a concern is determined to be credible, the Personnel Officer or President will request the complaining employee to provide a written statement and any substantiating evidence. If a complaint directly involves the Personnel Officer, an employee or supervisor may go directly to the President. If it involves the President, the employee and/or supervisor should direct it to the Chair of the Board of Directors. Those involved in responding to a complaint may determine to report allegations and release evidence to civil authorities.

Approved by the Board of Directors 5/6/08

DRAFT –For the April 2015 Meeting of the Church Council

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Chapter 7.

MINISTRY

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7.10. MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIZED PEOPLE OF GOD

7.11. This church affirms the universal priesthood of all its baptized members. In its function and its structure this church commits itself to the equipping and supporting of all its members for their ministries in the world and in this church. It is within this context of ministry that this church calls some of its baptized members for specific ministries in this church.

7.20. ORDAINED MINISTRY MINISTRY MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

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7.21. Within the people of God and for the sake of the Gospel ministry entrusted to all believers, God has instituted the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament. To carry out this ministry, this church calls and ordains qualified persons.

7.22. An ordained minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be a person whose commitment to Christ, soundness in the faith, aptness to preach, teach, and witness, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the documents of this church; who has been properly called and ordained; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of the ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. An ordained minister of Word and Sacrament shall comply with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

7.23. The standards for acceptance and continuance of pastors in the ordained ministersy of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be set forth in the bylaws.

7.24. The secretary of this church shall maintain a roster containing the names of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament who qualify on the basis of constitutional provisions 7.22., 7.23., 7.30., and 7.31., and related bylaws.

7.30. STANDARDS FOR ORDAINED MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.31. In accordance with the description of an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament stated in 7.22., pastors as ordained ministers ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures.

7.31.10. Basic Standards

7.31.11. Persons admitted to and continued in the ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:

- a. commitment to Christ;
- b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
- c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
- d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
- e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
- f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
- g. membership in a congregation of this church.

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7.31.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every ordained ministerpastor shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;

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- 4) provide pastoral care;
- 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
- 6) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
- 7) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.

b. Each ~~ordained minister~~pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:

- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
- 2) supervise all schools and organizations of the congregation;
- 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications;
- 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- 5) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
- 6) with the council, administer discipline.

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7.31.13. Preparation and Approval. Except as provided below, a candidate for ordination as a pastor shall have:

- a. membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
- b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee for at least a year before being approved for call;
- c. satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological school in North America, including practical preparation, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, such as internship and supervised clinical work;
- d. completed at least one year of residency in a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, except when waived by the appropriate committee in consultation with the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- e. been recommended for approval by the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- f. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted~~ed~~ by the Church Council;
- g. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
- h. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

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7.31.14. Admission Approval under Other Circumstances. Candidates for ordination as pastors or for reception who by reason of (a) age and prior experience, (b) ordination in another Lutheran church body, or (c) ordination in another Christian church body, whether in North America or abroad, shall be approved by the candidacy committee for ordination or reception according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In preparing such criteria, policies, and procedures, the appropriate churchwide unit shall consult with the seminaries of this church and, as appropriate, with other churchwide units.

7.31.15. Reinstatement. A person seeking reinstatement ~~to the ordained ministry~~ as a pastor, whether having served previously in this church or in one of its predecessor bodies, shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a pastor in this church.

7.31.16. On Leave from Call. ~~An ordained minister~~A pastor of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, may be retained on the roster of ~~ordained ministers~~ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which the ~~ordained~~

~~ministerpastor~~ is a member, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a. Normative Pattern: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, ~~an ordained minister~~a pastor who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of three years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synodical bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit, ~~an ordained minister~~a pastor engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ~~ordained~~ ministry of Word and Sacrament, may be retained on the roster of ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of six years.
- c. Family Leave: ~~An ordained minister~~A pastor who has been in active service under call for at least three years may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, such a ~~an ordained minister~~a pastor who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the ~~ordained minister~~a pastor or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of ~~ordained~~ ministers ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—for a maximum of six years beginning at the completion of an active call.
- d. Exception to these limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.

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7.31.17. Ordination in Unusual Circumstances. For pastoral reasons in unusual circumstances, a synodical bishop may provide for the ordination by another pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of an approved candidate who has received and accepted properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of minister of Word and Sacrament ~~ordained ministry~~. Prior to authorization of such an ordination, the bishop of the synod of the candidate's first call shall consult with the presiding bishop as this church's chief ecumenical officer and shall seek the advice of the Synod Council. The pastoral decision of the synodical bishop shall be in accordance with policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

7.31.20. Invitation to Service

7.31.21. In accord with bylaw 8.72.11. and following, ~~an ordained minister~~a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may serve contractually in a ministry setting of this church under a "Letter of Invitation to Service" upon the authorization of the bishop of the synod in which such service occurs.

7.40. CALLS FOR ORDAINED MINISTERS~~MINSTERS~~ OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.41. Letters of Call. Letters of call to ~~ordained minister~~ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of ~~ordained minister~~ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council.

7.41.10. General Categories

7.41.11. Service under Call. ~~An ordained minister~~A pastor of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a synodical council or assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

- a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.44.A16.
- b. A pastor serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, a pastor shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.
- c. Ordained minister~~Pastors~~ serving as interim pastors appointed by the synodical bishop may serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by

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the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synodical bishop.

7.41.12. Initial Call to Congregational Service. Because the responsibilities of the office of the ~~ordained~~ ministry of Word and Sacrament are most clearly focused in the congregational pastorate, experience in which is deemed by this church to be invaluable for all other ministry of Word and Sacrament ~~ordained service~~, initial service of at least three years shall be in the parish ministry in this church. Exceptions may be granted under criteria and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

7.41.13. Calls to Non-Congregational Service. Calls to serve in institutions, agencies, and other entities inside and outside this church may be extended where there is an identifiable relationship of the work to the purpose of the ~~ordained ministry~~ ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such calls involve, for example, the care of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, pastoral care, and activities closely associated with those tasks including oversight in the church and in inter-Lutheran and inter-church agencies and institutions. Care is to be exercised so that positions in the church and in the world that can be filled adequately and appropriately by the laity not be filled by ~~ordained ministers~~ pastors for their convenience or status. Synodical councils and the Church Council may seek the advice of the Conference of Bishops in specific situations.

7.41.14. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to an ~~ordained minister~~ pastor for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. Care is to be exercised so that positions in the church and in the world that can be filled adequately and appropriately by the laity not be filled by ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament for their convenience, status, or personal preference. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is deemed to be fulfilling no longer the mission needs of this church.

7.41.15. Calls to Serve in Unusual Circumstances. When it is deemed to be in the interests of this church in the care of the Gospel, ~~ordained ministers~~ pastors may be called for a stated period of time, not to exceed three years, to minister on behalf of this church while employed in an occupation outside the traditional range of the ~~ordained~~ ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such calls may be extended by a Synod Council or the Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops according to criteria and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such calls shall be reviewed annually.

7.41.16. Calls in Predecessor Church Bodies. Accountability for specific calls to service extended in predecessor church bodies shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church.

7.41.17. Retirement. ~~Ordained ministers~~ Pastors may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on the roster of ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the ~~ordained minister~~ pastor is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the roster of ~~ordained ministers~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. If an ~~ordained minister~~ pastor who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no ELCA congregations in the vicinity besides the congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the ~~ordained minister~~ pastor is listed on the roster may grant permission for the ~~ordained minister~~ pastor to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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7.41.18. Disability. ~~Ordained ministers~~ Pastors may be designated as disabled and continue to be listed on the roster of ~~ordained~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the ~~ordained minister~~ pastor is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the roster of ~~ordained ministers~~ ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

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- b. If an ~~ordained minister~~pastor who has been granted disabled status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no ELCA congregations in the vicinity besides the congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the ~~ordained minister~~pastor is listed on the roster may grant permission for the ~~ordained minister~~pastor to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

| **7.41.19. Retention of Roster Records.** When an ~~ordained minister~~pastor resigns or is removed from that roster of this church, the roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church, and the synodical bishop shall invite the person at the time of resignation or removal to provide, annually, appropriate current information for the roster record.

| **7.42.** Each ~~pastor~~person on the roster of ~~ordained ministers~~ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be related to that synod:

- a. to which the congregation issuing the call to the ~~ordained minister~~minister of Word and Sacrament is related;
- b. which issues a letter of call to the ~~ordained minister~~minister of Word and Sacrament;
- c. on whose roster the ~~ordained minister~~minister of Word and Sacrament was listed at the time of the issuance of a letter of call from the Church Council;
- d. on whose roster the ~~ordained minister~~minister of Word and Sacrament, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synodical bishop and Synod Council of each affected synod, to promote proportionate representation of faculty and administration in each synod of its region;
- e. on whose roster the ~~ordained minister~~minister of Word and Sacrament was listed at the time of the issuance of a call to federal chaplaincy or on the roster of the synod of current address, if approved by the synodical bishop and received by the Synod Council;
- f. in which the ~~ordained minister~~minister of Word and Sacrament, upon receiving a call from this church, serves as a deployed staff person or on the roster of one of the synods to which the ordained minister is deployed;
- g. on whose roster the ~~minister of Word and Sacrament~~ordained minister was listed when placed on leave from call;
- h. on whose roster the ~~minister of Word and Sacrament~~ordained minister, if designated as disabled, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the ~~ordained minister~~pastor for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church; or
- i. on whose roster the ~~minister of Word and Sacrament~~ordained minister, if granted retired status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the ~~ordained minister~~pastor for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

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| **7.42.01.** If the service of an ~~ordained minister~~pastor who receives and accepts a letter of call from this church, under 7.42.c., would be enhanced through transfer of roster status from the previous synod of roster to the synod of current address, such a transfer may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

| **7.42.02.** In unusual circumstances, the transfer of an ~~ordained minister~~pastor who is on leave from call may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

| **7.42.03.** In certain circumstances for the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, the transfer of an ~~ordained minister~~a pastor serving under call in the churchwide organization may be authorized, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved in such a transfer after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

| **7.43.** A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to an ~~ordained minister~~a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be either co-terminus with, or not longer than, the duration of the service or employment for which the call was issued. With the exception of persons designated as employees of a synod or the churchwide organization, such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation in regard to employment on the part of the Synod Council or Church Council issuing the call. The recipient of such a call remains subject to this church's standards and discipline for ~~ordained ministry~~ministry of Word and Sacrament, as contained in this

church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.

7.43.01. When the Synod Council or the Church Council, as the calling source, determines that the service or employment no longer fulfills the criteria under which a call was issued, the Synod Council or the Church Council shall vacate the call and direct that the individual be placed on leave from call or, if such leave status is not granted, the individual shall be removed from the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament ordained ministers.

7.43.02. Ordained ministers Pastors previously under call to the churchwide organization or to a synod shall respect the integrity of the ministry in which they no longer serve and shall not interfere with or exercise the functions of the office or position in which they no longer serve unless invited to do so by the presiding bishop or Church Council in the churchwide organization or, in the synods, by the bishop or the Synod Council.

7.44. **Each synod shall maintain a roster containing the names of those ministers of Word and Sacrament ordained ministers who are related to it on the basis of 7.42. of this constitution.**

7.44.A136. Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament Ordained Ministers

a. Principles for Sources of Calls

- 1) A "call" is an action by expressions of this church, as specified in the "Table of Sources of Calls for Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament," through which a person is asked to serve in a specified ministry. Such an action is attested in a "letter of call."
- 2) Interdependence within the body of this church suggests that any action of one of its entities affects other entities. Therefore, interdependence is expressed in all calls extended within this church.
- 3) A call expresses a relationship between this church and the person called involving mutual service, support, accountability, supervision, and discipline.
- 4) A letter of call is issued by that expression of this church authorized to do so which is most directly involved in accountability for the specified ministry.
- 5) Decisions on calls for ministries in unusual circumstances not otherwise provided for but deemed to be in the interests of this church's care of the Gospel are referred to the Conference of Bishops for recommendation to the appropriate calling body.

b. Table of Sources of Calls for Ordained Ministers Pastors

Setting	Calling Body
1.0 Congregational ministry	
1.1 Single congregation	Congregation meeting
1.11 Pastor	
1.12 Senior Pastor	
1.13 Associate/assistant pastor	
1.14 Co-pastor	
1.15 Shared-time pastor	
1.2 Multiple-congregation parish	Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal
1.21 Pastor	
1.22 Other pastoral arrangements	
1.3 Coalition and cluster ministry	Synod Council
1.4 Congregations beyond ELCA	
1.41 Independent Lutheran congregation	Synod Council
1.42 Overseas independent Lutheran congregation	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit

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1.43 Other	<i>Synod Council or Church Council</i>
1.5 Interim pastor	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.6 Pastor in a congregation under development	<i>Synod Council</i>
2.0 Synodical ministry	
2.1 Bishop	<i>Synod Assembly</i>
2.2 Assistant to bishop	<i>Synod Council</i>
2.3 Shared staff by two or more synods	<i>Synod Council of one or more of the participating synods</i>
2.4 Synod staff partially supported by grants from churchwide units	<i>Synod Council</i>
3.0 Regional ministry	
3.1 Staff	<i>Church Council</i>
3.2 Shared synodical-churchwide staff	<i>Church Council</i>
4.0 Churchwide ministry	
4.1 Presiding bishop and secretary	<i>Churchwide Assembly</i>
4.2 Treasurer	<i>Church Council</i>
4.3 <i>Staff of the churchwide organization</i> <i>Presiding bishop's staff</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
4.4 <i>Office staff</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
4.5 <i>Unit executive director</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
4.6 <i>Other churchwide unit staff</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
5.0 Chaplaincy and institutional ministry	
5.1 Institution/agency related or unrelated to a synod	<i>Synod Council</i>
5.2 Institution/agency related more to than one synod	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
5.3 ELCA-related institution/agency	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
5.4 Federal agency/institution	<i>Church Council</i>
5.5 Military	<i>Church Council</i>
6.0 Campus ministry	
6.1 Staff	<i>Synod Council</i>
7.0 Church camp ministry	
7.1 Staff	<i>Synod Council</i>
8.0 Ecumenical ministry	
8.1 Related to a synod	<i>Synod Council</i>
8.2 Related to more than one synod	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
8.3 National/international organization	<i>Church Council</i>
9.0 Inter-Lutheran ministry	
9.1 Related to a synod	<i>Synod Council</i>
9.2 Related to more than one synod	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
9.3 National/International	<i>Church Council</i>

<i>10.0 Educational ministry</i>	
<i>10.1 ELCA-related seminary chaplain/faculty/ administrator</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
<i>10.2 Chaplain/faculty/ administrator of seminary unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
<i>10.3 ELCA-related college chaplain/faculty/ administrator</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which college is located</i>
<i>10.4 Chaplain/faculty/ administrator of a college unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which college is located</i>
<i>10.5 ELCA-related school chaplain/faculty/ administrator</i>	<i>Congregation of which the school is a part or, if related to several congregations, Synod Council of the synod in which the school is located</i>
<i>10.6 Chaplain/faculty of a school unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which school is located</i>
<i>10.7 Director/staff of a continuing education center related to a churchwide unit</i>	<i>Synod Council in which the main office of center is located upon the request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
<i>11.0 Missionary ministry</i>	
<i>11.1 Outside United States</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
<i>11.2 Within United States</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
<i>12.0 Other</i>	
<i>12.1 Non-stipendiary service under call</i>	<i>Synod Council upon approval by the Conference of Bishops</i>
<i>12.2 Unusual ministries (as in conjunction with occupations and in approved situations not otherwise specified)</i>	<i>Synod Council or Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops</i>

7.45. In keeping with the historic discipline and practice of the Lutheran church and to be true to a sacred trust inherent in the nature of the pastoral office, no ordained minister minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall divulge any confidential disclosure received in the course of the care of souls or otherwise in a professional capacity, nor testify concerning conduct observed by the minister of Word and Sacramentordained minister while working in a pastoral capacity, except with the express permission of the person who has given confidential information to the minister of Word and Sacramentordained minister or who was observed by the minister of Word and Sacramentordained minister, or if the person intends great harm to self or others.

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7.46. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between an between a minister of Word and Sacramentordained minister and a congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament ordained ministers of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two ordained ministers rostered leaders and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two ordained ministers rostered leaders and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastoral vacant and the pastor shall be listed on the clergy roster roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

7.47. Persons on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church as defined herein shall be subject to discipline as set forth in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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Ministers of Word and Sacrament Ordained ministers shall be subject to discipline as set forth in Chapter 20 of this constitution and bylaws.

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7.47.01. No person who belongs to any organization other than the Church which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church shall be called and received onto the

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roster ~~ordained~~ or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so ~~ordained called and received onto the roster~~ or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins such an organization. Violation of this rule shall make such minister subject to discipline.

7.50. OFFICIAL ROSTERS OF LAYPERSONS MINISTERS MINISTRY OF WORD AND SERVICE

7.51. This church may establish rosters of laypersons of ministers of Word and Service on which the names may be listed of those who qualify for such according to the bylaws and continuing resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This church calls and receives onto the roster qualified persons to provide a ministry of Word and Service, exemplifying the life of Christ-like service to all persons and creation: nurturing, healing, leading, advocating dignity and justice, and equipping the whole people of God for their life of witness and service within and beyond the congregation for the sake of God's mission in the world.

7.51.02. Ministers of Word and Service shall serve as deacons.

7.52. A minister of Word and Service of this church shall be a person whose commitment to Christ, soundness in the faith, aptness to serve, teach, and witness, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the documents of this church; who has been properly called and received onto the roster; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. A minister of Word and Service shall comply with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

7.53. The standards for acceptance and continuance of ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be set forth in the bylaws.

7.54. The secretary of this church shall maintain a roster containing the names of ministers of Word and Service who qualify on the basis of constitutional provisions 7.52., 7.53., 7.60., and 7.61.?????? and related bylaws.

7.54.01. Ministers of Word and Service shall be known as deacons.

7.51.0192. The standards of acceptance and continuance on the lay roster roster of Word and Service of this church as defined herein shall be included in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.

7.51.02.A16. Under constitutional provision 7.51.,

7.54.A16. Those persons previously rostered in predecessor-church-bodies as commissioned church staff (The American Lutheran Church), deaconesses (The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches), deaconesses (The American Lutheran Church), deacons (The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches), lay professional leaders (the Lutheran Church in America), and commissioned teachers (The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches) shall be retained as associates in ministry deacons of this church (except for removals in accord with the governing documents, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church), in the recognized category of ministry of their previous church body for as long as they are in good standing according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church. Accountability for specific calls shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church. Such persons may resign from the roster or may elect to be rostered in another ELCA category by meeting the appropriate criteria established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and by relinquishing their previous roster category.

7.541.B16. Under Constitutional provision 7.51., Those persons previously rostered as associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be retained as deacons of this church (except for removals in accord with the governing documents, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church). Accountability for specific calls shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church. Such persons may resign the roster or may elect to be rostered in

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another ELCA category by meeting the appropriate criteria established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and by relinquishing their previous roster category.

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7.51.03. Associates in Ministry. This church shall maintain a lay roster of associates in ministry of those commissioned according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church for such service within the life of this church in positions of Word and service on behalf of all of God's people. Associates in ministry are to be faithful to Jesus Christ, knowledgeable of the Word of God and the Confessions of this church, respectful of the people of God, and responsive to needs in a changing world as they serve in congregations and other ministry settings. The roster of associates in ministry, in addition to those listed in bylaw 7.51.02., shall be composed of:

- a. those certified during the period of January 1, 1988, through September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and
- b. those who are approved, subsequent to September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry in this church according to policies and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- c. Upon receipt and acceptance of a valid, regularly issued letter of call, a newly approved candidate shall be commissioned, according to the proper service orders of this church, as an associate in ministry.

Accountability for specific calls shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church. Such persons may resign from the roster or may elect to be rostered in another ELCA category by meeting the appropriate criteria established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and by relinquishing their previous roster category.

7.51.04. Deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This church shall maintain a lay roster of the deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of those consecrated according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church for such service within the life of this church in positions of Word and service on behalf of all of God's people. Deaconesses are to be faithful to Jesus Christ, knowledgeable of the Word of God and the Confessions of this church, respectful of the people of God, and responsive to needs in a changing world. They are to be theologically trained to serve in congregations and other ministry settings.

- a. A newly approved candidate for this roster shall be consecrated, according to the proper service orders of this church, as a deaconess of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- b. As used herein, references to deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America mean members of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America listed on this church's official rosters of laypersons as deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- c. Unless otherwise specified, all constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions regarding associates in ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, except for the service order of consecration as a deaconess of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall apply to those on the lay roster of this church as deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.51.05. Diaconal Ministers. This church shall establish and maintain a lay roster of diaconal ministers of those consecrated according to the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church for service on behalf of this church in positions of Word and service that exemplify the servant life and that seek to equip and motivate others to live it. Diaconal ministers are to be faithful to Jesus Christ, knowledgeable of the Word of God and the Confessions of this church, respectful of the people of God, and responsive to needs in a changing world. Such diaconal ministers shall seek in a great variety of ways to empower, equip, and support all the baptized people of God in the ministry of Jesus Christ and the mission of God in the world.

- a. Upon approval as a candidate for the lay roster of diaconal ministers, and upon receipt and acceptance of a valid, regularly issued letter of call, the candidate shall be consecrated, according to the service orders of this church, as a lay diaconal minister.
- b. All constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions regarding associates in ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall apply to those on the lay roster of diaconal ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.52. The standards of acceptance and continuance as associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers of this church shall be included in the bylaws.

7.52. A minister of Word and Service of this church shall be a person whose commitment to Christ, soundness in faith, aptness to preach, teach, and witness, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the documents of this church; who has been properly called and

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~~????; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of the ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. A ministry of Word and Service shall comply with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.~~

7.53. The standards for acceptance and continuance of deacons in the ministry of Word and Service of this church shall be set forth in the bylaws.

7.54. The secretary of this church shall maintain a roster containing the names of ministers of Word and Service who qualify on the basis of constitutional provision 7.52, 7.53, 7.60, and 7.61, and related bylaws.

7.52.1060. Standards for the Official Rosters of Laypersons of Ministers of Word and Service
STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

7.52.11.61. Associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers
Deacons -In accordance with the description stated in 7.52, -ministers of Word and Service shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures:

a. Basic Standards.

7.61.11. -Persons approved admitted to -and continued in the ministry of Word and Service as associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers
deacons -of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions in its governing documents and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:

- a. 1) commitment to Christ;**
- b. 2) acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;**
- c. 3) willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;**
- d. 4) academic and practical qualifications for ministry, the position, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;**
- e. 5) commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;**
- f. 6) receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and**
- g. 7) membership in a congregation of this church.**

7.61.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every deacon shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;**
- b. Advocate a prophetic diaconia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;**
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;**
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world, that affirms the gifts of all people;**
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;**
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;**
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;**
- h. Share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and**
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.**

a) Every every deacon shall:

- 1. Be rooted in the Word of God, fulfilling a gospel centered purpose that proclaims and furthers the reign of God;**
- 2. Advocate a prophetic diaconia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;**
- 3. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's word, practicing inclusivity in mission that affirms the gifts of all people;**
- 4. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation, build bridges, and accompany others in God's mission;**

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5. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources:
1. 6. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation and build communities for the sake of God's witness and service in the world.

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- b. Every deacon must be fully prepared to meet the following criteria:

- Knowledge and understanding of the Word of God;
A Lutheran understanding of the gospel;
Knowledge and understanding of the Lutheran Confessions;
2. Theological reflection on issues of faith and life;
Personal spiritual formation and ministry identity;
Communication and planning skills necessary for effective witness, both verbally and in action;
Competency in identified areas of service;
Willingness to share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry and assist in leading the church's mission and equipping the whole people of God to proclaim God's love through word and deed;
Commitment to identify other persons who will prepare for the ministry of the gospel;
Ability to work in partnership and serve the mission and ministry needs of this church; and
Activity cultivates faith heartiness: vocationally, socially, interpersonally, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and financially.

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- ?????Deacons along with and pastors and bishops are expected to be:
Accountable to the Gospel through various expressions of the ELCA;
Committed to public ministry on behalf of the church; and
Exercising a leadership role in the life of the greater church. ?????
- 7.61.13. -Preparation and Approval.** Except as provided below, a candidate who is to be called and received onto the roster for the ?????? as a deacon shall have:
a. —membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
b. —been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee for at least a year before being approved for call;
c. —completeted the academic and practical preparation according to criteria and procedures established by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;—
(Such assessment will take the form of a Theological Education Assessment Panel which may be adopted as necessary to the background of the candidate.) ?????does stuff in () need to be included?????
d. —been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
e. —been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
f. — received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

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- b. Preparation and Approval of an Associate in Ministry.** A candidate for approval and commissioning as an associate in ministry of this church shall have:

1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration by its pastor and council of the candidate with the appropriate synodical candidacy committee;

2) been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate synodical candidacy committee for at least a year before being approved for call by the committee;

3) completed the academic and practical preparation for the work for which approved according to criteria and procedures established by the appropriate churchwide unit;

4) been examined and approved by the appropriate synodical candidacy committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the Conference of Bishops and adoption by the Church Council;

5) received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

c. **Preparation and Approval of a Deaconess of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.** A candidate for approval and consecration as a deaconess of this church shall have:

1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration by its pastor and council of the candidate with the appropriate synodical candidacy committee;

2) been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the synodical candidacy committee for at least a year before being approved by the synodical candidacy committee for call;

3) completed the academic and practical preparation for the work for which approved according to criteria and procedures established by the appropriate churchwide unit;

4) been examined and approved by the synodical candidacy committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the Deaconess Community of the ELCA and the Conference of Bishops and adoption by the Church Council;

5) completed the required formation component, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, in the preparation program for service as a deaconess of this church;

6) been recommended for call by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned in accordance with procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;

7) received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

d. **Preparation and Approval of a Diaconal Minister.** A candidate for approval and consecration as a diaconal minister of this church shall have:

1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration by its pastor and council of the candidate with the appropriate synodical candidacy committee;

2) been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the synodical candidacy committee for at least a year before being approved by the synodical candidacy committee for call;

3) demonstrated competence in at least one area of specialization or expertise according to guidelines established by the appropriate churchwide unit;

4) completed a first theological degree from an accredited theological school in North America;

5) completed approved work in Lutheran studies as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit;

6) completed the required formation component in the preparation program for Lutheran diaconal ministry as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit;

7) completed an approved internship or practical preparation as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit;

8) been examined and approved by the appropriate synodical candidacy committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adoption by the Church Council;

9) been recommended for call by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned in accordance with procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;

10) received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

7.52.12.61.14. **Approval under Other Circumstances.** A candidate may, for reasons of age or prior experience, be granted approval under criteria and procedures which permit certain equivalencies as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit. Any thing more needed here?

7.52.13.61.15. **Reinstatement.** A person seeking reinstatement as an associate in ministry, whether having previously served in this church or in one of its predecessor bodies, a deaconess of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or a diaconal minister a deacon of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be endorsed registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of this church of which

such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be, and interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the synodical candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a deacon in this church.

- a. Any person removed from a laythe-rosters of ministers of Word and Service that existed on December 31, 1987, as cited herein, who seeks to return to active ley-roster status must apply for acceptance to a roster of this church under the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures that apply to the official rosters of laypersonsministers of Word and Service, as identified in 7.51.03.b. This same requirement shall apply to those certified during the period of January 1, 1988, through September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry of this church.
- b. A person on the roster of a previous church body or a person on the roster of associates in ministry of this church, who was so certified during the period between January 1, 1988, and September 1, 1993, shall relinquish such a roster category upon being received and accepted on another roster of this church.

7.52.1461.16. On Leave from Call. A deacon of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, may be retained on the roster ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which the deacon is a member, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

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- a. Normative Pattern: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, a deacon who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of three years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synodical bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit a deacon engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Service in this church, may be retained on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of six years.
- c. Family Leave: A deacon who has been in active service under call for at least three years may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, such a deacon who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the deacon or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- d. Exception to these limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.

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Maintenance of Lay Rostersthe Roster of Ministers of Word and Service. Each synod shall maintain a lay roster or rosters containing the names of those related to the synod as members of its congregations who have been approved as associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministersdeacons according to the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church for inclusion on such a roster or rostersthe roster.

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- a. To promote proportionate representation of the rostered faculty and administration in each synod related directly to a seminary of this church, an associate in ministry, a deaconess, or a diaconal ministerdeacon, if a seminary teacher or administrator, shall be assigned to the roster of a synod by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synodical bishop and Synod Council of the affected synod.
- b. For the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, an associate in ministry, a deaconess, or a diaconal minister, serving under call in the churchwide organization, may be assigned to a synod, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

- c. An associate in ministry, a deaconess, or a diaconal ministerA deacon, if granted retired or disability status on the roster, may be authorized to transfer from the synod where last rostered to the synod of current address, upon application for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- d. In unusual circumstances, the transfer of an associate in ministry, a deaconess, or a diaconal minister deacon who is on leave from call may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.52.15.61.17 The secretary of this church shall maintain the lay rosters of associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers on which shall be listed the names of those who qualify according to the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.

7.52.20.61.18 Service as Rostered Laypersons **7.70. CALLS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE**

7.71. Letters of Call. Letters of call to ordained ministersministers of Word and Service of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of ministers of Word and Service shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council.

7.71.10. General Categories

7.52.21.61.197.71.11. Service under Call. An associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal ministerA deacon of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, synod council, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly, or the churchwide organization.

- a. A-eCalls—may be extended either for indefinite or stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

Shall this next section be added to 7.41.11.22222 for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.7452.A163.

- b. Regular, valid calls in this church shall be in accord with criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- e. An associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal ministerA deacon serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal ministera deacon shall be a member of one of the congregations being served. *This section should be added under 7.51.11.222*

7.52.22.61.20 On Leave from Call. An associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal ministerA deacon of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that call without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministersministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a. *Normative Pattern:* By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal ministera deacon who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of three years, beginning at the completion of an active call.

- b. *Study Leave:* By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synodical bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit, an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal ministera deacon engaged in graduate study appropriate for service in this church may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministersministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of six years.

- c. *Family Leave:* An associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal ministerA deacon who has been in active service under call for at least three years may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the

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synodical bishop, such a rostered layperson who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the rostered layperson or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers minsters of Word and Service of this church under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.

- d. *Exception to these limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.*

7.71.12. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a deacon for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is deemed to be fulfilling no longer the mission needs of this church.

7.71.13. —Calls in Predecessor Church Bodies. Accountability for specific calls to service extended in predecessor church bodies shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church.

7.71.14. —Retirement. Deacons may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on a roster of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the deacon is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the roster of ministers of Word and Service shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
 - b. If a deacon who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no ELCA congregations in the vicinity besides the congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the deacon is listed on the roster may grant permission for the deacon to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.71.15.—Disability. Deacons may be designated as disabled, and continue to be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the deacon is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the official roster of ministers of Word and Service shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
 - b. If a deacon who has been granted disabled status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no ELCA congregations in ~~the vicinity~~ the vicinity besides the congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the deacon is listed on the roster may grant permission for the individual to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.71.16. Retention of Roster Records. When a deacon resigns or is removed from the roster of this church, the roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church, and the synodical bishop shall invite the person at the time of resignation or removal to provide, annually, appropriate current information for the roster record.

7.72. Each person on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be related to that synod:

- a. to which the congregation issuing the call to the minister of Word and Service is related;

- b. which issues a letter of call to the minister of Word and Service;
- c. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service was listed at the time of the issuance of a letter of call from the Church Council;
- d. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synodical bishop and Synod Council of each affected synod, to promote proportionate representation of faculty and administration in each synod of its region;
- e. in which the minister of Word and Service, upon receiving a call from this church, serves as a deployed staff person or on the roster of one of the synods to which the minister of Word and Service is deployed;
- f. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service was listed when placed on leave from call;
- g. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if designated as disabled, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of ~~Word and Service for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church; or~~

~~Word and Service for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church; or~~

- h. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if granted retired status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Service for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.72.01. If the service of a deacon who receives and accepts a letter of call from this church, under 7.72.c., would be enhanced through transfer of roster status from the previous synod of roster to the synod of current address, such a transfer may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

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7.72.02. In unusual circumstances, the transfer of a deacon who is on leave from call may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

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7.72.03. In certain circumstances for the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, the transfer of a deacon serving under call in the churchwide organization may be authorized, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved in such a transfer after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

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7.73. A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to a minister of Word and Service of this church shall be either co-terminus with, or not longer than, the duration of the service or employment for which the call was issued. With the exception of persons designated as employees of a synod or the churchwide organization, such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation in regard to employment on the part of the Synod Council or Church Council issuing the call. The recipient of such a call remains subject to this church's standards and discipline for ministry of Word and Service, as contained in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.

7.73.01. When the Synod Council or the Church Council, as the calling source, determines that the service or employment no longer fulfills the criteria under which a call was issued, the Synod Council or the Church Council shall vacate the call and direct that the individual be placed on leave from call or, if such leave status is not granted, the individual shall be removed from the roster of ministers of Word and Service.

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7.73.02. Deacons previously under call to the churchwide organization or to a synod shall respect the integrity of the ministry in which they no longer serve and shall not interfere with or exercise the functions of the office or position in which they no longer serve unless invited to do so by the presiding bishop or Church Council in the churchwide organization or, in the synods, by the bishop or the Synod Council.

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7.74. Each synod shall maintain a roster containing the names of those ministers of Word and Service who are related to it on the basis of 7.72. of this constitution.

7.52.23.61.21 Issuance and Termination of the Call of an Associate in Ministry, Deaconess, or Diaconal Minister a deacon

- a. A letter of call to an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister~~deacon~~ of this church shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation, the synodical bishop, following appropriate consultation, will recommend a course of action to the pastor, lay rostered person, and the congregation. If they agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action shall be taken by the synod. If any party fails to assent, the congregation may dismiss the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister under criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister~~deacon~~ of this church shall be either co terminus with, or not longer than the duration of, the service or employment for which the call was issued. With the exception of persons designated as employees of a synod or the churchwide organization, such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation in regard to employment on the part of the Synod Council or Church Council issuing the call. The recipient of such a call remains subject to this church's standards and discipline for associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers~~ministers~~ of Word and Service, as contained in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.
- c. When the Synod Council or the Church Council, as the calling source, determines that the service or employment no longer fulfills the criteria under which a call was issued, the Synod Council or the Church Council shall vacate the call and direct that the individual be placed on leave from call or, if such leave status is not granted, the individual shall be removed from the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers~~of ministers~~ of Word and Service.

7.52.24. Retirement. Associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on a roster of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the official rosters of laypersons shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. If an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, the bishop of the synod in which the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is listed on the roster may grant permission for the individual to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.52.25. Disability. Associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers may be designated as disabled, and continue to be listed on the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the official rosters of laypersons shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. If an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister who has been granted disabled status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, the bishop of the synod in which the associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister is listed on the roster may grant permission for the individual to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.52.26. Retention of Roster Records. When an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister resigns or is removed from the roster of this church, the roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church, and the synodical bishop shall invite the person at the time of resignation or removal to provide, annually, appropriate current information for the roster record.

7.52.27. Non Stipendiary Service Under Call. When necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to an associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister for non stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. A call to non stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is deemed to be fulfilling no longer the mission needs of this church. **Maintenance of the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service.** Each synod shall maintain a lay roster or rosters containing the names of those related to the synod as members of its congregations who have been approved as deacons according to the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church for inclusion on the roster.

- a. To promote proportionate representation of the rostered faculty and administration in each synod related directly to a seminary of this church, deacon, if a seminary teacher or administrator, shall be assigned to the roster of a synod by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synodical bishop and Synod Council of the affected synod.
- b. For the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, an associate in ministry, a deaconess, or a diaconal minister, serving under call in the churchwide organization, may be assigned to a synod, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- c. A deacon, if granted retired or disability status on the roster, may be authorized to transfer from the synod where last rostered to the synod of current address, upon application for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- d. In unusual circumstances, the transfer of a deacon who is on leave from call may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.61.17 The secretary of this church shall maintain the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers on which shall be listed the names of those who qualify according to the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.

7.5268742.A13A16. Sources of Calls for Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers Deacons Ministers of Word and Service

- a. The principles governing sources of calls for ordained ministers shall, as appropriate, also govern sources of letters of call for associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers/deacons of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

a. Principles for Sources of Calls

- 1) A "call" is an action by expressions of this church, as specified in the "Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service," through which a person is asked to serve in a specified ministry. Such an action is attested in a "letter of call."
- 2) Interdependence within the body of this church suggests that any action of one of its entities affects other entities. Therefore, interdependence is expressed in all calls extended within this church.
- 3) A call expresses a relationship between this church and the person called involving mutual service, support, accountability, supervision, and discipline.
- 4) A letter of call is issued by that expression of this church authorized to do so which is most directly involved in accountability for the specified ministry.
- 5) Decisions on calls for ministries in unusual circumstances not otherwise provided for but deemed to be in the interests of this church's care of the Gospel are referred to the Conference of Bishops for recommendation to the appropriate calling body.

b. Table of Sources of Call for Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers Deacons Ministers of Word and Service

Setting	Calling Body
1.0 Congregational ministry	
1.1 Single congregation	Congregation meeting
1.2 Multiple-congregation parish	Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal

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<u>1.3 Coalition and cluster ministry</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>1.4 Other congregations beyond ELCA</u>		Formatted
<u>1.41 Independent Lutheran congregation</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>1.42 Other</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>2.0 Synodical ministry</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>2.1 Assistant to Bishop</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>2.32 Shared Staff by two or more synods</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>2.43 Synod staff partially supported by grants from churchwide units</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>3.0 Regional ministry</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	Formatted
<u>3.1 Staff</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	Formatted
<u>3.2 Shared synodical-churchwide staff</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	Formatted
<u>4.0 Churchwide ministry</u>		Formatted
<u>4.1 Secretary</u>	<u>Churchwide Assembly</u>	Formatted
<u>4.2 Treasurer</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	Formatted
<u>4.43 Staff of the churchwide organizationOfficer's staff</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	Formatted
<u>4.24 Unit executive director</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	Formatted
<u>4.35 Other churchwide unit staff</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	Formatted
<u>5.0 Institutional/Social ministry institutions</u>		Formatted
<u>5.1 Institution/agency related or unrelated to a synod</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>5.2 Institution/agency related more to than one synod</u>	<u>Synod Council of one of the synods</u>	Formatted
<u>5.3 ELCA-related institution/agency</u>	<u>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</u>	Formatted
<u>5.4 Other</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	Formatted
<u>6.0 Campus ministry</u>		Formatted
<u>6.1 Staff</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>7.0 Church camp ministry</u>		Formatted
<u>7.1 Staff</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>8.0 Ecumenical ministry</u>		Formatted
<u>8.1 Related to a synod</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>8.2 Related to more than one synod</u>	<u>Synod Council of one of the synods</u>	Formatted
<u>8.3 National/international organization</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	Formatted
<u>9.0 Inter-Lutheran ministry</u>		Formatted
<u>9.1 Related to a synod</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>	Formatted
<u>9.2 Related to more than one synod</u>	<u>Synod Council of one of the synods</u>	Formatted
<u>9.3 National/International</u>	<u>Church Council</u>	Formatted

10.0 Educational ministry		Formatted
10.1 ELCA-related seminary	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit	Formatted
10.2 Seminary unrelated to ELCA	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit	Formatted
10.3 ELCA-related college	Synod Council of the synod in which college is located	Formatted
10.4 College unrelated to ELCA	Synod Council of the synod in which college is located	Formatted
10.5 ELCA-related school	Congregation of which the school is a part or, if related to several congregations, Synod Council of the synod in which the school is located	Formatted
10.6 School unrelated to ELCA	Synod Council of the synod in which school is located	Formatted
10.7 Director/staff of a continuing education center related to a churchwide unit	Synod Council in which the main office or or 22f center is located upon the request of appropriate churchwide unit	Formatted
11.0 Missionary ministry		Formatted
11.1 Outside United States	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit	Formatted
11.2 Within United States	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit	Formatted
12.0 Other		Formatted
12.1 Non-stipendiary service under call	Synod Council upon approval by the Conference of Bishops	Formatted
12.2 Unusual ministries (as in conjunction with occupations and in approved situations not otherwise specified)	Synod Council or Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops	Formatted
TERMINATION OF A CALL		
The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a deacon and a congregation shall be as follows:		
a.	The call of a congregation, when accepted by a deacon shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or following consultation with the synodical bishop for the following reasons:	Formatted
1)	mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;	Formatted
2)	resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;	Formatted
3)	inability to conduct the office to which they have been called effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;	Formatted
4)	physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor deacon;	Formatted

- 5) suspension of the ~~pastor~~deacon through discipline for more than three months;
- 6) resignation or removal of the ~~pastor~~deacon from the roster of ministers of Word and ~~Sacrament~~Service of this church;
- 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
- 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
- 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. —When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph ~~4.1)d)~~
~~a.4)~~ above, or ineffective conduct of the office under paragraph ~~4.1)e)~~~~a.3)~~ above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
- 1) e. —the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two ~~pastors or deacons~~rostered leaders and one layperson, or
- 2) —when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two ~~pastors or deacons~~rostered leaders and one layperson.
- c. —In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph ~~a.4)~~ above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant and the deacon shall be listed on the ~~clergy~~ roster of Ministers of Word and Service as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph ~~a.3)~~ above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, the congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph ~~c~~~~e~~ or paragraph ~~d~~~~e~~ above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

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- 7.63 Maintenance of the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service.** Each synod shall maintain a lay roster or rosters containing the names of those related to the synod as members of its congregations who have been approved as deacons according to the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church for inclusion on the roster.
- a. To promote proportionate representation of the rostered faculty and administration in each synod related directly to a seminary of this church, deacon, if a seminary teacher or administrator, shall be assigned to the roster of a synod by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synodical bishop and Synod Council of the affected synod.
- b. For the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, an associate in ministry, a deaconess, or a diaconal minister, serving under call in the churchwide organization, may be assigned to a synod, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- c. A deacon, if granted retired or disability status on the roster, may be authorized to transfer from the synod where last rostered to the synod of current address, upon application for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

d. In unusual circumstances, the transfer of a deacon who is on leave from call may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.61.17 The secretary of this church shall maintain the roster of associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers on which shall be listed the names of those who qualify according to the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.

7.53~~746~~ Persons on the **lay rosters roster of ministers of Word and Service** of this church as defined herein shall be subject to discipline as set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

7.6080. LICENSURE AND SYNODELICALLY AUTHORIZED MINISTRY

7.6181.01. When need exists to render Word and Sacrament ministry for a congregation or ministry of this church where it is not possible to provide appropriate ~~ordained~~ pastoral leadership, the synodical bishop—acting with the consent of the congregation or ministry, in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with standards and qualifications developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council—may authorize a person who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer this ministry. Such an individual shall be supervised by a pastor appointed by the synodical bishop; such service shall be rendered during its duration under the sacramental authority of the bishop as the synod's pastor. Such an individual will be trained and licensed to fulfill this ministry for a specified period of time and in a given location only. Authorization, remuneration, direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the appropriate synodical leadership according to churchwide standards and qualifications for this type of ministry. Authorization for such service shall be reviewed annually and renewed only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation.

7.6181.02. When needed to provide for diaconal ministry as part of a congregation or ministry of this church where it is not possible for such ministry to be provided by appropriately rostered lay ministry, the synodical bishop—acting with the consent of the congregation or ministry, in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with standards and qualifications developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council—may authorize a non rostered person who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer such non sacramental ministry. Such an individual shall be supervised by an ordained minister appointed by the synodical bishop and shall be trained and authorized to fulfill a particular ministry for a specific period of time in a given location only. Authorization, remuneration, direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the appropriate synodical leadership according to churchwide standards and qualifications for this type of ministry. Authorization for such service shall be reviewed annually and renewed only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation.

Final Report of the Task Force on the Ecclesiology of a Global Church

*prepared by the Rev. Lowell G. Almen at the request of
members of the task force and Bishop James Mauney, chair*

The Church Council, at the November 9-11, 2012, meeting, received a request from the Conference of Bishops. The request had been initiated by the Liaison Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations. In response, the council voted:

Voted:
CC12.11.41

To receive with thanks and appreciation the recommendation of the Conference of Bishops regarding the creation of a task force to review the governing documents of this church, including but not limited to Chapter 3 of the ELCA constitution, for the purpose of addressing how this church can affirm and strengthen its self-understanding as part of the Lutheran World Federation;

To authorize the creation of a task force to review the governing documents of this church for the purpose of addressing how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America can affirm and strengthen its ecclesiology and its self-understanding as part of the Lutheran World Federation, and to request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary and the Liaison Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations of the Conference of Bishops, recommend to the Executive Committee of the Church Council persons to serve on such a task force;

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint the members of the task force, which will be known as the Ecclesiology of a Global Church Task Force, and which will undertake the responsibility of reviewing the nature and ecclesiology of this church in the light of the past twenty-five years of significant developments in its ecumenical and global self-understanding and relationships; [and]

To request that the Ecclesiology of a Global Church Task Force submit interim reports on at least a yearly basis to the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council and submit its final report and recommendations to the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council in sufficient time for possible action at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly

The members of the task force considered with care the entire assignment, as specified by the Church Council in the 2012 enabling resolution. Papers were commissioned to address various aspects of the assignment. The nature and focus of certain chapters of the ELCA's constitution were studied. And the content of the constitution in relation to the specific topic of this church's relationship with the Lutheran World Federation was examined.

The concluding meeting of the task force was held on December 18-19, 2014, at which the task force urged the Church Council to adopt the following resolution:

To recommend that the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopt the following amendments:

To amend Chapter 3 to add a new provision 3.02. to read:

3.02. This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.

To renumber existing provision 3.02. as 3.03. (text unchanged) and to add a new provision 3.04. to read:

3.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in the Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

To amend provision 8.10. to read:

8.10. Relationships between of Congregations, Synods, and the Churchwide Organization, and Lutheran World Federation

To renumber and amend provision 8.73. as provision 8.18. and bylaw 8.18.01. to read:

8.73. 8.18. This church acknowledges affirms the relationship established through the Lutheran World Federation as a communion of member churches which that confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God, and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship.

8.18.01. The bylaws on ecumenical availability of ordained ministers under relationships of full communion shall apply to such service within this church of ordained ministers from other member churches of the Lutheran World Federation.

To renumber existing provision 8.74. as 8.73., bylaw 8.74.01. as 8.73.01., bylaw 8.74.02. as 8.73.02., and provision 8.75. as 8.74. (with the text unchanged).

The proposed language of new provision 3.02. echoes the constitution of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and, thereby, reflects this church's deep commitment to the treasured relationships that exist with the other member churches of the LWF.

The task force explored several drafts of possible wording for the new provision 3.04. before proposing the final text. Various verbs were examined at some length to identify accurately the role of the ELCA in relation to the LWF. The word "participates" finally was selected to reflect both the nature of the federation as a communion of churches and the long-standing role of the ELCA and its predecessor church bodies since the formation of the LWF in 1947.

Moving the reference to the Lutheran World Federation in Chapter 8 to an earlier point in the chapter, the task force concluded, would highlight the importance that this church attaches to its relationship with the LWF.

The task force recognized clearly that the LWF is not an "expression" of this church in the technical sense of that word as applied to ELCA congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries in Chapter 8 and elsewhere in the constitution. The word "expression" is used with great specificity in the ELCA's constitution and the task force saw the importance of respecting the particular meaning of that word as it is formally used in the ELCA.

Attention was devoted by the task force, at points, to the distinction between ecclesiology and polity. Many provisions in the ELCA constitution describe and define the ELCA's polity. Some provisions are ecclesiological in their content. A few reflect both ecclesiology and polity, such as provision 8.11., which reads: "This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in a partnership relationship with the others." The task force viewed the principle of interdependence as a matter of polity in identifying the desired

pattern for the ongoing work together of congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries. Intersecting with that statement of polity, the task force saw, is a declaration of ecclesiology. The acknowledgement of the churchly substance of each expression -- "fully the church" but "not the whole church" -- was seen as an ecclesiological teaching.

Meetings of the task force

The first report of the task force was submitted to the Church Council at the council's November 8-10, 2013, meeting. That report summarized the results of the initial meeting of the group on September 13, 2013, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago.

Subsequent to that report, the task force convened for face-to-face meetings on January 26-27, 2014, May 27-28, 2014, and December 18-19, 2014. In addition, a conference call was held on April 24, 2014, to discuss and prepare a written response to a World Council of Churches document, "The Church: Towards a Common Vision." A second conference call was held on October 22, 2014, to discuss comments made in August by gathered theologians prior to the start of the annual Convocation of Theologians of the ELCA.

At the January 2014 meeting, the task force, following extended discussion, drafted a possible text for revision of Chapter 3 in the ELCA constitution. The intention was to seek reaction from both the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council. The task force also explored ecclesiological issues in the life of the ELCA and possible ways in which a wider discussion of the topic might be encouraged.

The task force received at the May 2014 meeting reports on assignments made at the January meeting. A further draft on possible amendments was prepared. In addition -- informed and guided by conversation with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton -- the task force recommended that steps be taken for conversation throughout the ELCA on matters of ecclesiology. The task force urged that Lenten devotional materials be developed for 2015, based on the presiding bishop's emphasis on the ELCA as church.

An interim report on the work of the task force was submitted to the November 7-10, 2014, meeting of the Church Council. That report indicated that the task force had scheduled the December 18-19 meeting to prepare its recommendations for council action.

At the December 2014 meeting, the task force devoted considerable attention to a draft of the materials prepared for Lent 2015, as recommended in the May meeting. Both substantive changes and editorial recommendations were submitted to the drafters of that material. Further, the task force refined its earlier drafts of possible constitutional amendments as well as decided to recommend not only changes to Chapter 3 of the ELCA constitution on the nature of the church but also to Chapter 8 on relationships.

Papers prepared for the task force will be deposited in the Archives of the ELCA, documenting the extensive research and deliberation that transpired in the course of the work of this task force.

Members of the task force

The members of the task force included: Bishop James F. Mauney, chair; the Rev. Dr. Francisco J. Goitia Padilla, Santurce, P.R.; the Rev. Christina Garrett Klein, a seminary student at the time of her appointment and now associate pastor in Homewood, Ill.; the Rev. Dr. Philip D. W. Krey, Philadelphia, Pa.; the Rev. Yvonne Marshall, Eau Claire, Wis.; the Rev. Dr. Cheryl Peterson, Columbus, Ohio; the Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson, Bismarck, N.D.; the Rev. Dr. Robin Steinke, St. Paul, Minn.; and Dr. Gregory Walter, Northfield, Minn. Resource persons were: the Rev. Dr. Lowell G. Almen, Elgin, Ill.; Presiding Bishop Emeritus Mark S. Hanson, Minneapolis, Minn.; and the Rev. Dr. Donald J. McCoid, Pittsburgh, Pa. Staff services were provided by Ms. Heather Dean, the Rev. Dr. Marcus R. Kunz, and the Rev. Dr. James Kenneth Echols.

Disability Ministries Campaign Table Report for ELCA Church Council Program and Services Committee

In November 2014, Church Council voted (CC14.11.20):

To receive the Disability Ministries Case Statement from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit;

To thank the advisory team for its imaginative, thoughtful and diligent work to form and equip the ministries of the ELCA to reach more people with the good news of Jesus Christ;

To approve the implementation of the Disability Ministries program into Always Being Made New:

The Campaign for the ELCA as detailed in the case statement; and

To encourage all expressions of this church to continue to consider ways to support the Campaign for the ELCA in order for the ELCA to be better-positioned to do God's work in Jesus' name throughout the world, for decades to come.

The Disability Ministries Campaign is now under way and funds are starting to come in. Our goal is to raise \$4,000,000 by the end of the four year campaign. A table of people with gifts and passion for this ministry was formed. We met twice in person and several times over conference calls to create a vision for this ministry and decide what we should do with the money and where the funds will go.

Our main goals are:

- **Preparing leaders** for serving people with disabilities, raising up people with disabilities for leadership positions and encouraging the participation of those with disabilities in the wider church.
- **Equipping our synods, congregations and members** with relevant and practical information enabling them to welcome and support individuals with disabilities so they may participate fully in the life of the congregation, and together, all may experience being the body of Christ.
- **Connecting and gathering** those with disabilities and various groups within the church so they may help us become an inclusive, supportive and whole community of faith.

How we plan on carrying these out will be broken into four categories, with \$1,000,000 going to each category:

1. Leadership/Prepare

Immersion Program

Horizon Internship Program

Internships

2. Resources/Equip

Research and Evaluation of current happenings

Database

Worship Resources

Program Development

Braille/Tape

Grants

Speaker's Bureau

Stipend Positions

Advisory Committee/Task Force

3. Gather/Connect

Scholarships (DAYLE, Churchwide Assembly, Synod Events, LSA Conference, etc)

Mentorship

National Conference (rotating location; target audience will vary from year to year)

4. Endowment Fund

With the money raised so far in 2015, we are going to be able to:

- sponsor a welcome dinner at the Definitely-Abled Youth Leadership (DAYLE) Event for all participants, their adult companions, the Planning Team, and those in attendance for the first night of DAYLE 2015
- provide 4 scholarships to the Summer Institute on Theology and Disability
- provide 1 scholarship to the annual LSA Disability Network conference
- develop a database
- start an Immersion Program at MOSAIC
- provide church accessibility grants
- put money into the Disability Ministries Endowment Fund

The Mission Advancement unit is currently working on a mini-case statement for disability ministries that will be published and distributed soon.

ELCA Church Council
PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE
April 10, 2015
Pentecost
A G E N D A

ORGANIZING OUR WORK (9:00 – 9:30 a.m.)

- Opening prayer – Pamela Pritt
- Welcome by Susan McArver, Chair
- Committee member check-in
- Review committee agenda, recommended actions, and resource people
NOTE: Specific exhibits are included in the Church Council materials.
- Approval of agenda
- Approval of minutes for November 3 and 8, 2014, January 26, 2015, March 30, 2015

ITEMS FOR REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION

A. Social Teaching Documents (9:30 – 10:45 a.m.)

- **Women and Justice: One in Christ Social Statement**
- **Social Message on Gender-Based Violence**

Source: Office of the Presiding Bishop, Theological Discernment Team
Background Information: [Proposed Social Message on Gender-Based Violence](#)
Resource people: Marcus Kunz, executive for theological discernment
Roger Willer, director for theological ethics
Mary Streufert, director for justice for women
Robert Moore, liaison to women and justice task force
Pamela Pritt, liaison to women and justice task force

We will receive a verbal update on the progress of the Women and Justice: One in Christ social statement. In addition, there will be an extensive time for us to review the social message on gender-based violence.

PS ACTION

Recommended: *To recommend that the Church Council approve the following action*

To acknowledge the complexities of responding comprehensively to the social issue of gender-based violence and to thank the Theological Discernment Team for their diligent work on the issue; and

To extend the time for the development of the social message on gender-based violence until the November 2015 Church Council meeting.

15-MINUTE BREAK

B. Ministry to and with Same Gender Families working group (11:00 – 11:10 a.m.)

Source: Office of the Presiding Bishop
Background Information: [M2SGF Charter](#)
Resource people: Jodi Slattery, assistant to the presiding bishop, governance
Roger Willer, director for theological ethics
Kayla Koterwski, member of M2SGF working group

The Ministry to and with Same Gender Families (M2SGF) working group (formerly known as the changing family configurations working group) met in-person in January. A verbal report was provided to the Conference of Bishops at its March 2015 meeting.

PS DISCUSSION

C. Programmatic ministries for the Campaign for the ELCA (11:10 – 11:30 a.m.)

Source:	Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM) unit
Background information:	Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA Progress report on disability ministries
Resource people:	Stephen Bouman, executive director, CSM unit

The Rev. Stephen Bouman will be present to give a brief overview of the programmatic work of the campaign priorities. Rachel Bouman, program director for disability ministries, has written a progress paper specifically on the disability ministries priority for the campaign.

PS DISCUSSION

BREAK AND LUNCH (11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

D. Update on Word and Service Task Force (1:00 – 2:30 p.m.; Council Room)

Source:	Congregational and Synodical Mission unit
Background Information:	Word and Service Task Force Progress Report Entrance Rite Discernment Team Progress Report Recommendation from Conference of Bishops Possible amendments to ELCA Constitution Chapter 7
Resource people:	Chris Boerger, ELCA secretary Greg Villalon, director, leadership for mission/candidacy Cherlyne Beck, program director for support of rostered leaders Susan McArver, member of Word and Service Task Force

We will hear an update on the work of the Word and Service Task Force and the Entrance Rite Discernment Working Group. Because of the constitutional amendments that will likely be necessary, the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee will join us for the discussion.

We will also consider a response to the Conference of Bishops recommendation to delay a decision on the appropriate entrance rite and related issues to unifying the word and service roster.

PS ACTION

Recommended: *To recommend that the Church Council approve the following action [to be provided]*

E. Candidacy Manual (2:30 – 3:00 p.m.)

Source:	Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM) unit
Background information:	Candidacy Manual
Resource people:	Greg Villalon, director, leadership for mission/candidacy

The Rev. Greg Villalon will be present to give an overview of the method used to review the ELCA Candidacy Process. He will also make note of the significant changes in the document.

PS DISCUSSION

F. Other business regarding written reports (3:00 – 3:30 p.m.)

- a. Questions on 500th anniversary observance
- b. Questions on study of “The Use of the Means of Grace” conversation
- c. Questions on CSR succession plan progress report

G. Election of new chair and vice-chair (3:30 – 3:50 p.m.)

We will be using an ecclesiastical ballot process for these two elections. Everyone who is eligible will be on the first (or nominating) ballot. Three-fourths of the votes cast will be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, all names listed on the first ballot will proceed to the second ballot, and three-fourths of the votes cast will be necessary for election. The third ballot will consist of the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the votes cast will be necessary for election. The fourth ballot will contain the names of the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the third ballot, and a majority of the votes cast will be necessary for election.

Following are the eligible members to serve as chair or vice-chair:

- i. Jessica Crist (Dec 2015)
- ii. Kayla Koterwski (2016)
- iii. Oliver Thul (2016)
- iv. Paul Archer (2017)
- v. Loren Mellum (2017)
- vi. Robert Moore (2017)
- vii. Pamela Pritt (2017)
- viii. Cynthia Gustavson (2019)
- ix. Leslie Swenson (2019)

For vice-chair, all names except the person named as chair will go forward for the vice-chair ecclesiastical ballot process.

H. Evaluation of meeting and items for future action (3:50 – 4:00 p.m.)

The Report of the Program and Services Committee will be approximately an hour tomorrow afternoon (Saturday, April 11).

Was the conference call time used adequately? Did you feel prepared for the meetings? If not, what else may have been helpful? In addition to your verbal observations, please complete the committee evaluation online. The committee will review the following items at a future meeting of the Church Council. The Program and Services Committee receives early draft copies of these items for discussion and response.

- 1. Action on Word and Service Task Force recommendations
 - 2. Action on M2SGF working group recommendations
 - 3. Action on Candidacy Manual
 - 4. Action on long-term plan for CSR work between churchwide and Portico
 - 5. Action on conversations around “The Use of the Means of Grace” (CC14.04.13i)
 - 6. Action on proposed social message on gender-based violence
 - 7. Action on feasibility of developing a social message on U.S. national drug policy
 - 8. Action on feasibility of developing a social message on regenerative medicine
 - 9. Update on timeline to assess the feasibility of developing a social message on aging
 - 10. Update on timeline for revising “Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns”
 - 11. Update on 500th anniversary observance
 - 12. Update on programmatic work of the Campaign for the ELCA
- Closing Prayer – Oliver Thul

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Corporate Social Responsibility: Progress Report

The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit (CSM) and Portico Benefit Services have verbally affirmed and agreed upon the following related to the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) succession plan:

- There is an agreement that the position should move from a half-time independent contract position to at least half-time with full benefits and to explore the bandwidth required to effectively manage this ministry.
- There is commitment from both the ELCA and Portico that salary and benefits will be shared. Percentage break-down of shared salary and benefits is still being determined.
- There is agreement that lines of responsibility and accountability need to be clearly defined in the job description.

Next steps for exploration of staffing needs:

- June 2015 -- CSM staff will draft a job description for Portico to review and edit.
- August 2015 – CSM and Portico agree upon a job description.
- September 2015 – Respective corporate approvals of the job and the shared expenses is complete.
- October 2015 – Report to Church Council.

Update on the Study of “The Use of the Means of Grace”

The attached summary I developed and shared with the Conference of Bishops at the March 2015 meeting. Since this report, I have received more group and individual responses to the “Table and Font: Who is Welcome at the Table?” conversation.

The first page includes a summary of actions that lead to this conversation and provides a reminder that this is a “conversation” and not a “vote”. The pages that follow give brief previews of the responses that I have received since August 2014. These are broken into two separate categories of groups and then individual responses. Within those two categories, I also broke the comments into three sub-categories: Baptism only, Open Table and Other.

What you will notice is there is a thread of commonality on both sides of this conversation. Many questioned the reason for this conversation now and why, and many voiced not wanting this to turn into a church dividing conversation and leading to a vote.

I think one of the most positive things I keep hearing is that people have been encouraged by deeper conversations around the whole of *The Use of the Means of Grace* and not just about who is welcome at the table.

I have led numerous conversations in synods, congregations and seminary campuses around this topic. I also know that numerous synods have had synod-wide conversations with rostered leaders and laity on this topic. Not all have turned in feedback, but I have encouraged them to do so by June 30, 2015.

I am in the process of working with Bishop Eaton on crafting another e-mail that will be sent out to all rostered leaders. The email will give thanks for their involvement in this conversation, ongoing encouragement to have the conversation, and a positive reminder of how and why this conversation is taking place. We hope to send this out during the Easter season prior to Synod Assemblies beginning.

After the June 30 deadline, I will then work with Research and Development on compiling a more comprehensive report to share with the Conference of Bishops in the fall of 2015 and with the Church Council in November of 2015.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Pr. Kevin Strickland
Director for Worship
Kevin.Strickland@elca.org

Table and Font: Who is Welcome at the table?
Update on the ongoing conversation
The Rev. Kevin L. Strickland, Director for Worship-ELCA

History:

- Memorial Came from Northern Illinois Synod [2012 Memorial]
 - Resolved, that the Northern Illinois Synod memorialize the 2013 Churchwide Assembly to institute a process necessary to review and possibly revise the ELCA's guiding document concerning admission to the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
- Churchwide Assembly Action [CA 13.03.10]
 - To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Northern Illinois Synod requesting a process to review the ELCA's guiding document on communion practices;
 - To invite members, congregations, synods and the churchwide organization into conversation and study regarding the *Use of the Means of Grace*;
 - To request the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, in consultation with the Presiding Bishop and the Conference of Bishops, to establish a process to review current documents concerning administration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion; and to request the CSM Unit to bring a report and possible recommendations to the April 2014 meeting of the ELCA Church Council.
- Church Council Voted April 2014 [CC14.04.13i]
 - To take seriously the invitation to engage one another in conversation and study of *The Use of the Means of Grace*;
 - To request the CSM Unit to provide resources that will help facilitate that conversation;
 - To encourage others to develop and share resources more locally, while guiding people to *The Use of the Means of Grace* with the invitation to read and share it;
 - To let the conversation regarding *The Use of the Means of Grace* serve as the initial step in a process of review, but to delay any further development or implementation of a process until research is done to assess the nature and extent of changing practices, and until a director for worship formation and liturgical resources at the ELCA churchwide organization is in place and prepared to oversee the design of such a process, both in scope and hope-for outcomes; and
 - To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.
- “Table and Font: Who is Welcome? An invitation to join the conversation about Baptism and Communion.”
 - This Study Guide went live on the ELCA website on Friday, August 22, 2014. It includes a guided study for congregations, synods, colleague groups, et cetera with questions.
 - It includes theological and personal papers from scholars, seminary professors, and parish pastors from around the church and varies in scope of opinion on the topic.
 - An e-mail went out from Bishop Eaton on Friday, August 22, 2014 to all rostered leaders inviting them into this study. In addition a letter of invitation from the Presiding Bishop and the Director for Worship are attached to the study guide online.
 - The Study Guide can be found at www.elca.org/worship (feedback needed by June 30, 2015).
 - We have received 99 responses from individuals and 28 responses from congregations. (As of February 19, 2015).

Congregation and Group Responses:

- *Baptism should be first prior to Communion (4):*
 - “Why would anyone who trusted Christ to do the things He promises to do in Holy Communion not want to receive Holy Baptism also?”
 - “Why is this coming up? While this study offered great opportunities for learning and discussion, I found it to be too bare-bones, assuming levels of understanding that aren’t necessarily present. Lay people who do not know the Catechism well would struggle to lead this study on their own. The discussions have also made it apparent that some ongoing work needs to be done to build trustworthy relationships between the congregation and the larger ELCA.”
 - “We want to express our thanks for urging the church to study this important topic. Our belief is that congregations should continue to see Holy Baptism as the normal entry point into the life of Christ and the Christian community. Holy Communion is the sacramental meal of grace given by the Lord to the Church.”
- *Open Table (18):*
 - “Everyone is invited to share communion at Gethsemane regardless of age, denomination or background. Those who do not wish to commune may come forward for a blessing. We strongly disagree with the Memorial’s premise that the ELCA needs to provide better guidance on admission to Holy Communion. In our view, *The Use of the Means of Grace* provides excellent guidance and needs neither modification nor amplification. The memorial includes a churchwide conversation. Our concern is that the structure of the conversation has the potential to form divisiveness.”
 - “Holy Communion can be that open door for discussion that can lead to Holy Baptism and a deeper faith in God. We cannot put God in a box. God’s grace works without us and God’s will be done.”
 - “We are a community that deeply values hospitality. That hospitality includes the Eucharistic celebration. For some of our people, table fellowship came first and continues to move toward Baptism. Others have chosen to abstain from the table until baptism. We choose to be flexible and accommodating as much as we can to individual circumstances. We like our welcome statement for communion as it currently stands, and, we are now considering how we can make the invitation to Baptism equally visible and encouraging.”
 - “Saint Peter’s practices open communion. In presenting this topic, I projected the mission statement of the church and we did a close reading to see how it might be mutually informative when put in conversation with our sacramental practices. Thinking about sacraments in terms of mission was a new way of approaching the issue for many people.”
 - “We do not agree that baptism should be a requirement for receiving communion but rather see the possibility that the Holy Spirit might use communion to bring one to baptism. However, if we need professional theologians to set rules and explain the entry requirements, we probably have it wrong.”
 - “We are a welcoming congregation. As God welcomes all who believe in him, and God knows what is in the hearts and minds of all people, we leave the understanding up to God.”
 - “We found there is no concrete biblical passage connecting the sacraments of baptism and communion. After discussion and prayer, we feel that our congregation’s open invitation to come to the communion table if you believe in the real presence of Christ in

the bread and wine, with no mention of baptism as a prerequisite, is welcoming and desirable.”

- “We found no prerequisites defined in scripture for participation in Holy Communion, aside from Paul’s admonition about ‘unworthiness’, which we did not pursue. The general consensus was that because Baptism at the font and Communion at God’s table are both avenues of grace, each can and should be utilized with absolute hospitality as avenues of welcome and encouragement for all. Therefore, Holy Communion can rightly be viewed as an avenue by which individuals are brought into the faith community of a local congregation. We are particularly sensitive to this possibility as a faith community in a multicultural setting that specifically emphasizes ministry in a university campus setting.”
- *Middle of the road/Other(6):*
 - “There continues to a sense that this conversation is being “foisted” downward from the ELCA Churchwide Offices.”
 - “If our sacramental policies are changed, what effect will this have on our ecumenical and full-communion partners?”
 - “There is a concern that we are elevating inclusivity to the level of the Gospel. In other words, the Gospel is for all and inclusive of all but inclusivity is not the Gospel. Kind of like how we say God is love but love is not God. Does this conversation show that radical hospitality and inclusivity is the new Gospel in the ELCA as opposed to a more classic definition like in article IV of the Augsburg Confession?”
 - “We did not come to a firm consensus in our conversations, but it was a fruitful and thought-provoking exercise. As with all things Lutheran, tension is to be expected. It’s not up to us to resolve the tensions, but to live into them.”

Individual Responses:

- *Baptism should be first prior to Communion (24):*
 - “As confessional Lutherans, are we encouraged or even allowed to give Holy Communion to non-believers and to those not baptized?”
 - “Hospitality disconnected from the sacramental Lord who is hospitality itself soon turns into empty rhetoric indicative less of apostolic faith than survival anxiety. A lack of clarity concerning baptismal identity will poorly serve matters of Eucharistic (or any other ecclesial) hospitality.”
 - “Were the ELCA to approve the practice of communing the unbaptized, it would signify the final capitulation of the ELCA to the culture. But hey, when you subscribe to the idea that ‘world sets the agenda for Church’ (instead of the Gospel), don’t be surprised the Church becomes the world. Baptism comes first.”
 - “I understand baptism as the sacrament that connects us to the salvation promised in the Gospel, and I understand Holy Communion as a celebration of that connection. It makes no sense to get the celebration ahead of the event.”
 - “I do not think the current usage is being used as a weapon or withholding communion to hurt others, but rather is meant to provide a level of accountability to the pastor in order to maintain one of their key roles which is teaching about the sacraments and administrating them. Accountability is critical for this practice over fear of exclusion.”

- *Open Table (46):*
 - “Our congregation just completed a study of “The Use of the Means of Grace” this past year. We found it very helpful, and the group who studied it pressed the congregation to move to weekly communion because of it. We previously were communing twice a month and on festivals. We still believe that baptism should be prior to communion but we are not going to turn away folks who come to the table.”
 - “For some years now it is our congregation’s practice to welcome ALL worshippers to the Lord’s table. This unconditional welcome is both printed in our worship booklet and verbally announced. I am so glad that the ELCA is open to celebrating our Lord’s Supper with a welcome to all.”
 - “Before communion, I announce that ‘Christ is the host of this meal; it is he who invites you. Christ invites you because he wants to give himself to you. I don’t want to play the gate-keeper of the sacrament. I figure if Judas took communion, then anybody can.’”
 - “If it truly is an act of GRACE, than why do we place requirements and prerequisites on it? Even being baptized and coming to some awareness? No one understands the mystery of God and God’s ways, so anything less than ‘All are welcome to receive’ is really grace at all.”
 - “Since we will be charged with the task of examining Eucharistic hospitality, there is another Greek word that must be kept in mind, namely, *koinonia*. The Apostle Paul affirms that this *koinonia* (unity) is made visible and is renewed in, by and through our participation in the Lord’s Supper. It seems safe to say that Paul presumes that this manifestation takes place within the Christian assembly.”
 - “This is great. I think it’s time we took another look at this document. I like most of it but I object to communing only the baptized as I see no scriptural warrant for this practice.”
 - “This cannot be a serious question. It is ridiculous. All are loved by God! All have been made new creations in Jesus’ resurrection. Who does God exclude from His gracious acceptance? Not a single person. Forgiveness is God’s proclamation over the world. Communion is not about the believers state of mind or soul, but rather it is God’s eternal gift given freely. God loves to give good gifts. Gifts are not earned or deserved. No one needs to be baptized first and then receive communion. For then it is not a gift but something one must qualify to receive. How very unlike God’s grace.”
 - “Here in New England where 75% of the population are “nones”, we don’t have time to spend doing “studies” on whether or not Christ welcomes all to the table. Of course He does. And so do we. Study done. Action taken. And now we can move to the heart of ministry—to go where love leads, to serve where love calls. I really hope our benevolence dollars are not being squandered in such “studies”.
 - “We believe that everything speaks. Sometimes waiting until baptism to commune is experienced as exclusion and sometimes it is a gift. Context is everything. Every person has a different story and a different experience. And so we look at each case-by-case.”
- *Middle/Other (3):*
 - “The Use of the Means of Grace document states that authority for communion falls on the pastor in consultation with the council. Bishops need to recognize and follow that statement or it should be removed. Dictating bishops are troublesome and are not viewed well by congregations. ‘For freedom Christ has set us free.’ Do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.”

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- “Regarding the question “Who is Welcome?” at the table, I think the ELCA cannot do much better than to emphasize that our current statements and practices already invite congregations to do what they believe is faithful and appropriate to their contexts.”
- “Why this? Why now? Our church has just experienced one of the most divisive periods in its relative short history. Do we really want to go there? Or is the goal to further drive more members away?”
- “I can’t imagine a more pointless exercise than addressing this matter of congregational communion practices. It is obvious many ELCA congregations already admit anyone and everyone, baptized or not, even Christian or not, to the Lord’s table and that, regardless of anything concluded or suggested at the end of this proposed study, they will continue to do what they have been doing. All this conversation will do is debase the significance of baptism and the Lord’s table—all in the name of hospitality. Let us not trivialize the Church’s true treasures.”

The Method Used to Review the ELCA Candidacy Process/Manual April 2015

At their March 2012 meeting, the Conference of Bishops acted on a recommendation brought to them by Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and the eight ELCA seminary presidents, asking that the Director for Candidacy begin a review of the ELCA Candidacy Process to identify what parts of candidacy were working well, what sections needed improvement, and what parts of the candidacy process needed to be revised or removed. The assumption undergirding the recommendation was that the ELCA Candidacy Process was not serving the church well and that inconsistency in synod Candidacy Committee practices were resulting in an increasing number of denials at Entrance, resulting in a decline in the number of candidates attending seminary.

To test this assumption, Research and Evaluation was asked to collect data identifying the number of applicants to candidacy who were denied or postponed at Entrance, and the reason for denial by a Candidacy Committee. Review of the data showed that these numbers were very low and that denials and postponements were not the cause for the declining number of candidates entering seminary.

To continue the review process, the Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM) Ministry Leadership Coordinators, who resource all of the synod Candidacy Committees in their regions, were asked to help with the review of the process. As the candidacy review team, they were given the opportunity to share what they were hearing from their candidates and committees about the process. This led to the development of numerous drafts of each section of the Candidacy Manual. Each section was vetted by candidacy partners at regional candidacy consultations across the church. At these consultations, Candidacy Committee members and other candidacy partners were asked to review and comment each of the drafts presented. These drafts were also shared with our seminary partners from whom we received many comments and recommendations. The drafts have also been shared with the Conference of Bishops in order to gather their wisdom and comments.

Understanding that this is a lengthy and complex document, this draft of the revised candidacy process is being shared at the April 2015 Church Council meeting so that you will have sufficient time to read through it and send your comments and recommendations to Pr. Greg Villalon, Director, Leadership for Mission/Candidacy at greg.villalon@elca.org. A final draft of this Candidacy Manual and a recommendation for approving the revised process will come to you at your November 2015 meeting, after it is reviewed by the Conference of Bishops in October 2015.

As you read through the manual, you will note that the candidacy process is not new but that sections have been rewritten and include many of the comments received that improved the preliminary drafts of each section that were circulated.

Some of the reworked and expanded sections in the candidacy manual are:

- A renewed emphasis on God's mission in the world and how we actively participate in God's mission.
- The discernment piece.
- A renewed emphasis on health and wellness as illustrated in the Wholeness wheel.
- A new candidate covenant form to assist the Candidacy Committee as it works with candidates attending different seminaries with different tracks leading to the M.Div.
- A new appendix A, which provides an applicant to candidacy with an overview of the process.

The candidacy information related to applicants interested in the Word and Service roster will be added to the manual after decisions have been made by the Church Council to move forward the recommendation creating the new unified Word and Service roster to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

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As you review the manual it may be helpful to know the following:

- The primary audiences for the manual are the Synod Candidacy committees and seminary partners.
- The introduction to the manual states the foundational pieces to candidacy followed by the chapters that address each of the steps in the process.
- The manual is, in some ways, a technical document that is often used as a reference resource.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

CANDIDACY MANUAL



Holy Trinity Icon, by Andrei Rublev (15th Century Russian)

DRAFT – March 21, 2015

Commentary on the icon of the Holy Trinity: Contemplation of the Holy Trinity as a relational, sending God is central to our faith and therefore guides the church in the discernment that is integral to the candidacy process. The Church invites all who engage in any aspect of the candidacy process – applicants, Candidacy Committee members, seminary faculty, congregations, campus ministries, candidates, and others – to center on God throughout the process and to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

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Chapter 1 - Candidacy in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us;...” (II Corinthians 5:17-20a, NRSV)

As the Christian Church participates in God’s mission in the world, there is a renewed awareness that God is making all things new. As both the Church and its contexts for ministry change, the leadership needs of the Church also change. New categories of leadership are emerging and will likely continue to emerge for the foreseeable future.

The ELCA candidacy process is meant to be a welcoming and joyful time for people discerning how to serve through the church. It is a formalized, yet personally and relationally focused, journey that assists people in discernment for church leadership, whether they ultimately become rostered, or serve in lay roles throughout the church in varieties of ways. Discernment is a life-long process which continually assesses how God may be calling a person into a unique ministry. It is not only a means to determine who might serve as a rostered leader in a Word and Sacrament or Word and Service ministry, as well as who might serve in a variety of other lay leadership roles in the church or in the world. The candidacy process will succeed for a person when he or she graciously discovers, through the nurturance of mentors, congregations, and others how and where to serve according to the Spirit’s leading.

ELCA seminaries are vital partners in the candidacy process. Some people enter the formal candidacy process prior to or alongside their enrollment in a seminary. Others may choose to attend seminary as a means of discerning whether a church occupation feels right to them. Some people may even participate in theological education as a means of enriching their current roles as lay leaders in the church. All such explorations are appropriate and beneficial for the Church and God’s mission in the world.

This church recognizes that a renewed emphasis upon God’s mission in the world is emerging in the 21st century. Christians enter into partnership with God’s work in the world through baptism into the Body of Christ. Every faith community of this church is part of a mission field that requires a common understanding among all the baptized that every congregation is a mission center in which rostered leaders are called to equip through Word, Sacrament, and Service every baptized Christian to be an ambassador for God’s mission in the world.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is committed to the intentional identification and support of persons whom God has gifted with missionary imagination and the ability to provide leadership in the church. The grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ means that all the baptized, as

members of a universal priesthood of believers, are called to a vocation of mission in their daily lives. Members of this priesthood are gifted, enabled, and called to active participation in God's mission, both in their faith communities and in the world. Each person pursues a path of discernment culminating in an awareness of his or her unique call. Such discernment often emerges through years of struggle and doubt. For some, the call comes in the form of a dramatic moment of inspiration. For others, it comes in the normal course of a disciplined spiritual life through the church. For still others, the call responds to the urging of leaders in the church.

Within the context of the universal priesthood of all the baptized, some people discern a call to various leadership roles in the church. In the Lutheran tradition a person's call from God to rostered ministry is both internal and external. In the internal call an individual senses God's leading to consider and prepare for rostered ministry. In the external call the Church accompanies the individual in discerning appropriateness and readiness for such service. Finally, at the conclusion of the candidacy process, the internal call is confirmed by a call to serve in a specific setting (first call).

Through a journey of discernment (See Appendix B), some individuals consider whether they are called by God, through the church, to serve in one of its rostered ministries. Candidacy is a churchwide process of preparation and formation for persons seeking to be rostered in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Candidacy involves an active partnership among candidates, congregations, synods, seminaries, peoples of specific culture communities, and the ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit.

Accordingly, a mission-oriented leader can be defined as someone who

- a) is rooted in the gospel;*
- b) is knowledgeable, passionate, and articulate about the teachings and ministry of the church, especially of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and*
- c) through the church participates in God's mission of love, redemption, justice, and reconciliation.*

People who have discerned a call to rostered leadership will demonstrate and build upon the characteristics of a missional leader as they are understood through a Lutheran confessional lens. Through a formation process in candidacy, such persons will develop an understanding of four basic principles:

- I. We are church,**
- II. We are Lutheran,**
- III. We are church together, and**
- IV. We are church for the sake of the world.**

Related to the above principles, this church is seeking candidates for rostered leadership who demonstrate certain competencies. During a candidate's process of formation, the church expects Candidacy Committees to assess a candidate's orientation to mission in a progression from **missional awareness** at Entrance, to **missional articulation** at Endorsement, and finally to **missional actualization** and practice at Approval. Certain competencies listed below have been identified to assist committees in the assessment of a candidate's formation at each of the major

steps in candidacy. These competencies provide a beginning point in understanding the role and forming the skills of a rostered leader.

Once a newly approved roster leader completes candidacy, he or she may be called to a ministry context in which the people do not share an identical imagination for mission. In such situations, a rostered leader's adaptive leadership skills - learned either during the formation process (candidacy) or early in a first call - will help foster a positive relationship between the rostered leader and the ministry context. Adaptive leaders demonstrate an ability to appreciate and celebrate differing orientations toward mission and move together with others in a ministry context towards a common vision for mission. Such leaders are prepared to undertake ministry in any location to assist a community of faith in developing a common life participating more fully in God's mission in the world.

I. We are Church

The ELCA is a church centered around worship of the Triune God. The good news of Jesus Christ conveyed through Word and Sacrament liberates God's people and gives them the freedom and courage to wonder, discover, and boldly participate in God's mission in the world. In our life together we gather around the presence of the crucified and risen Christ, and we respond to the leadership of the Holy Spirit by engaging in ministry in the world.

Competencies

Note: The list of competencies provided below is a descriptive narrative, *not* a template or checklist. It attempts to describe the types of skills and characteristics the church seeks for all rostered leaders. Candidacy committees and seminary faculty should use these competency descriptions in a manner that is flexible, adaptive to context and candidate, and attuned to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

1. Rooted in the presence and activity of the Triune God. A rostered leader nurtures a vibrant faith and relationship with the Triune God within a community of faith and leads other Christians to do likewise as they participate in God's mission. This competency can be assessed as a Candidacy Committee inquires about a candidate's ability to

- engage in theological and spiritual discernment that manifests a faith in the Triune God,
- articulate and live out a clear Christian identity, and
- interpret the Scriptures as the norm for understanding God's mission in the world.

2. Actively participates in God's mission through the church. Some key aspects related to this competency are

- an ability to cultivate a compelling vision for ministry,
- equipping people to share their faith stories,
- skills in hospitality that invite people to join God's mission, and
- awareness of the interconnectedness of the church beyond the local congregation.

3. Cultivates vision and purpose. This competency includes:

- the use of spiritual disciplines (e.g., prayer, biblical and theological reflection),
- knowledge of societal and cultural trends that can inform a congregation's vision and sense of purpose,

- skills for leading congregations and other groups in discernment of God's mission in the world (including the incorporation of input from a diversity of sources and people), and
- courage to lead God's people into that mission as discerned.

4. Leadership skills. Some critical indicators of this competency are

- demonstration of adaptive leadership skills that are sensitive to context,
- skills for leading a community of faith through change while addressing conflicts that might emerge,
- a capacity to engage people to participate in God's mission in the world,
- a facility for encouraging collegial decision-making processes in a congregation,
- demonstration of personal holistic stewardship and skill in equipping others, and
- a grasp of how administrative structures and procedures can serve mission in congregational life.

II. We are Lutheran

While not claiming to possess exclusive theological wisdom in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, Lutherans proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ through a clear focus on God's grace received through faith along with discipleship and participation in God's mission that are a lived response to that grace.

Competencies

5. Engages the way of the cross. Empowered by the resurrected Christ, a rostered leader shows people the crucified Christ through word and deed and enables them to envision what God is doing in the world and in their lives. Some indicators of this competency include:

- a willingness to confront and engage suffering in the lives of others and in one's own life, especially among marginalized people;
- exhibiting qualities of servant leadership;
- willingness to serve, risk, and sacrifice for the sake of God's mission, including an ability to identify and lead in exposing the principalities and powers operative in a given context; and
- responding to life crises as opportunities for experiencing new life.

6. Proclaims the faith. Clear indicators for this competency are the candidate's ability to

- preach the Word as Law and Gospel,
- teach Scripture,
- share the faith with others,
- provide Christian education for all ages and cultures,
- articulate theological wisdom, and
- live a disciplined spiritual life.

7. Leads worship and administers the Sacraments. Key aspects of this competency are

- the ability to plan worship, preach, and administer the Sacraments;
- adapt the Lutheran liturgical tradition to local contexts; and
- a demonstrated manner of invoking in worship a sense of the holy and a welcoming spirit all with a view towards God's mission in the world.

III. We are Church Together

The ELCA as a church body recognizes the interdependence of all expressions of the church – congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization - as well as a wider ecclesiastical ecology that includes seminaries, social ministry agencies, campus ministries, church camps and conference centers, and other affiliated agencies. This church also values the ecumenical interdependence we share with our full communion partners both locally and globally.

Competencies

8. Interprets mission. This competency reflects the ability of a candidate to articulate and interpret in a compelling manner, both theologically and contextually, the wider mission of the ELCA through its interdependent partners and expressions. This competence also includes a commitment to the mission of the wider church, including synods and the churchwide organization, as well as related institutions and agencies of the ELCA, and facility in interpreting and motivating support for the ELCA beyond the local congregation.

9. Cultivates Christian community, discipleship, leadership formation, and the practice of reconciliation of differences. A rostered leader effectively forms and leads Christian communities which intentionally foster the growth of disciples of Jesus Christ and attend to the formation of leaders in the church. Some indicators of this competency are

- the practice of reconciliation and mutual empowerment between diverse groups,
- convening and empowering teams for mission, and
- a sense of stewardship in cultivating gifts manifest in a community of believers and delegating and sharing tasks tailored to those gifts.

10. Cares for people. A ministry of care encompasses both congregational and community care. Some key aspects related to this competency include:

- visitation,
- counseling,
- equipping the baptized to provide ministries of care, both within the congregation and in the wider community,
- knowledge of community resources for appropriate referrals and participation, and
- sensitivity to people in the various seasons and changes of life.

11. Practices wellness in one's personal life (see page 37). Some factors to consider in this area:

- a vibrant and resilient faith;
- a balance between work, play, and self-care;
- maintenance of clear and healthy boundaries in all relationships;
- attention to diet, exercise, and mental/physical health; and
- the nurturing of healthy primary relationships.

IV. We are Church for the Sake of the World

As baptized people of God, we believe we are freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor. This church, accordingly, is a catalyst, convener, and bridge builder which views both the church and the world as interdependent in a way that fosters mutual learning and growth. We participate in partnerships for the sake of unity among Christians, collaboration and dialogue with other faith communities, and for justice and peace locally and globally.

Competencies

12. *Evangelizes.* A rostered leader actively believes and carries out Christ's command to go out and share the Gospel with neighbors. Some key factors related to this competency are

- a passion and imagination for sharing the Gospel,
- a sensitivity and skill for welcoming the stranger into community,
- discovering and implementing creative ways to share the Gospel with people outside the church,
- listening to people's stories and assisting them to interpret their experience in light of the Gospel,
- a valuing of Christian community as formative for faith, and
- an authentic gift for engaging people under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the depths of their lives.

13. *Relates theology with history, context, and culture.* A rostered leader understands and interprets context and culture through the lens of Christian faith and leads a community of faith to opportunities where the Gospel can be understood and shared by people in specific cultural contexts. Some critical indicators of this competency include:

- an ability to engage culture and context theologically, critically, and creatively with a sensitivity to historical factors;
- analysis of congregational and community demographics and trends;
- engagement with complex social and religious issues as a practical theologian in context;
- sensitivity to cross cultural, intra-cultural, and counter-cultural dynamics; and
- skill in addressing cultural differences.

14. *Equips and sends disciples into the world.* A rostered leader prepares disciples to discern the leading of the Spirit as they share the Gospel with neighbors in word and deed. Some important considerations for this competence are

- a demonstrated capacity to mobilize people of faith with different gifts and perspectives that can enrich the church's witness in the world and lead to acts of mercy and justice,
- a personal embodiment of the Christian faith in one's daily life,
- a demonstrated capacity for cultivating communities of well-being and holistic stewardship as illustrated in the Wholeness Wheel,
- a theological sensitivity to the presence and activity of God in the world,
- a recognition of the public vocation of the Christian community in the world, and
- the ability to interpret that vocation to people of faith.

Because this is a time of unprecedented change and increasing diversity, not all ministry contexts will have the same imagination for mission and ministry. The church, therefore, needs adaptive leaders with demonstrated abilities for appreciating and celebrating different orientations toward mission, fostering positive relationships within a context, and moving together with others toward a common vision for mission. Adaptive leaders are prepared to undertake ministry in a variety of locations and to assist a community of faith in developing a common life that participates more fully in God's mission in the world. The church acknowledges that a rostered leader's adaptive leadership skills, reflecting the above competencies, will not be fully formed during the candidacy process. A well-prepared missional candidate will understand that the candidacy process is the beginning of a lifelong process of learning and formation for adaptive leadership.

Standards for Word and Sacrament Ministry

Candidates preparing for Word and Sacrament ministry must engage in a comprehensive program of preparation for rostered ministry, which includes the following:

- 1) theological education leading to a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary (except for TEEM candidates). The course of theological study is designed to provide a pastor with the skills and experiences needed for understanding the four principles outlined above,
- 2) formation for ministry,
- 3) an internship supervised by an ELCA seminary, and
- 4) one unit of Supervised Clinical Ministry.

Standards for Word and Service Ministry

Candidates preparing for rostered ELCA Word and Service Ministry as Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers will follow the standards and academic requirements outlined for each roster in Appendix I. A task force has been appointed by the Church Council and will bring a recommendation to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly for the unification of the 3 existing lay rosters into one new Word and Service roster (Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers). If approved by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, the new standards and academic requirements for the new unified Word and Service roster will be assigned to the candidacy team in the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit.

Candidacy is an Interdependent Process

Interdependence within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America means that throughout the candidacy process, there is a sharing of responsibility and accountability among partners – candidates, congregations, Candidacy Committees, seminaries, and candidacy staff in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Each partner in the process has a distinctive role but also consistently cooperates with the other partners. They all work together and communicate openly to assure that the ELCA prepares gifted people who are called by God to serve as rostered leaders in this church.

A consistent candidacy process is essential for preparing candidates for rostered ministry. Every candidate in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a candidate for the whole church, not just the synod of candidacy, and is available for service in the ELCA according to the needs of the church. In consultation with synods and seminaries of the ELCA, the candidacy staff in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, in consultation with the Secretary of the ELCA, develops churchwide policies and procedures, which are approved by the ELCA Church Council.

Expectations of Partners

Applicant/Candidate

Personal faith, commitment to Christ, and a sense of call are at the heart of an applicant's decision to apply for candidacy. Prior to submitting a Candidacy Application from, a person has discerned a readiness for candidacy. At Entrance an applicant will be invited to share with a Candidacy Committee experiences and learning acquired during the discernment journey. To begin the candidacy process, a person seeking to serve as a rostered leader in this church contacts the synod where he or she is active in a congregation or campus ministry. After contacting the synod and completing a Candidacy Application form, an applicant is expected to exercise initiative in completing the pre-entrance candidacy requirements outlined in this manual. The process of discernment (see Chapter Two) is a lifelong endeavor. It precedes candidacy, continues throughout candidacy and the period of study at a seminary, and evolves into an expression of vocation for the remainder of a person's life. Discernment will be frequently and regularly assessed, not only by the candidate, but also by the community of faith, the seminary, the Candidacy Committee, and others in an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect, and openness to the spirit.

Growth and development are expected as candidates seek to become equipped for rostered leadership. A candidate is expected to be a mature, healthy, and trustworthy partner in the process of preparation, formation, and evaluation for rostered ministry. A candidate provides requested information and a signed release to a Candidacy Committee so that the partners in the Candidacy Process may fully and openly communicate with each other and share relevant candidacy information.

It is also a clear expectation that candidates are willing to serve in response to the needs of this church. While the ELCA is committed to considering the unique circumstances of individual candidates and their families, restrictions that limit a candidate's ability to serve may delay or prevent the receipt of a call to service. Candidates are expected to make every effort to respond to the leadership needs of this church. Assignment to synods is made on the basis of these assumptions and expectations.

Congregation / Ministry Site

Ministry sites (congregations or other ministries) identify and accompany people as they discern their vocations. For people who have discerned a call to rostered ministry, the church community submits a Congregation Registration Form, which identifies and affirms a person's gifts for rostered leadership. Congregations maintain a relationship with candidates through the entire candidacy process. Even though registration by a congregation is an important part of the candidate's discernment of call to rostered ministry, the responsibility for assessing and approving candidates belongs to the Candidacy Committee.

Congregation/Ministry Site Responsibilities

1. Provide a community which encourages and nurtures the discernment of vocation.
2. Complete and submit a Congregation Registration Form, in which a congregation provides a thoughtful and honest summary of the person's involvement in the life of the congregation and its participation in God's mission in the world, identifies characteristics that reflect a person's potential for ministry, and notes any concerns about the person's health, well-being, or

spiritual life. If an applicant is actively involved in a Lutheran campus ministry site, it is appropriate for the campus pastor to add his or her recommendations concerning the applicant as part of the congregation registration.

3. Provide support for the candidate throughout the candidacy process, including prayer, regular communication, and, when possible, financial support to assist with expenses for tuition and other costs related to candidacy. In the case of students enrolled in an ELCA seminary, such assistance is administered by the seminary.
4. Affirm a candidate's potential for ministry through invitations to teach, preach, and lead worship based on the candidate's availability.

Synod

On behalf of the whole ELCA, each synod establishes a Candidacy Committee to perform the important and highly sensitive task of making decisions about the fitness of persons identified as potential candidates for rostered ministry. Synods provide adequate funding for their Candidacy Committees to carry out their responsibilities and meet with applicants and candidates. Synods identify people to serve on Candidacy Committees who bring gifts for welcoming, forming, evaluating, and building relationships with candidates. Synods work to make committee appointments to reflect synodical bylaw S6.04, which specifies the representation of gender, lay/clergy, and people of color or primary language other than English. To achieve the bylaw's expectation that at least 60% be lay people, it is recommended that 50% of the members be non-rostered lay people, 10% from the Word and Service roster, and 40% clergy. It is highly desirable for the composition of Synod Candidacy Committees to reflect the diversity of populates the church is seeking to reach, in order to ensure adequate cultural sensitivity to applicants and candidates who are people of color. For similar reasons it is vital that a Candidacy Committee have young adults as members of the committee who can interpret and be sensitive to the culture of the majority of the candidates with whom a Candidacy Committee is likely to be working.

Voting members on a Candidacy Committee include the synod bishop (or an appointee), appointed (or elected) committee members, and a seminary representative recommended by an ELCA seminary and appointed by the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. As the ELCA seeks to welcome and nurture a wide diversity of candidates for rostered ministry, the need for cross-cultural sensitivity and awareness is critical. In cases where a Candidacy Committee does not have persons serving on the committee who are part of the same cultural background as a candidate of color, it is strongly recommended that the synod Candidacy Committee identify a person of the same culture who can serve as a mentor and welcoming presence for a candidate during the candidacy process. In many instances, such a person might be a mentor who has previously accompanied the candidate in preliminary discernment (see Appendix B), the candidate's home pastor or campus minister, a seminary faculty person, or other suitable persons identified by the synod.

Synod Candidacy Committee Responsibilities

1. Acts on behalf of the congregations of the synod and the whole ELCA.
2. Assesses the character and qualifications of applicants and candidates on behalf of the whole church.
3. Works collegially and has the capacity to make important and sometimes difficult decisions.
4. Evaluates and cares for candidates through the candidacy process.

5. Adheres to churchwide policies and procedures, with the guidance of the candidacy staff of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.
6. Receives training and on-going education.
7. Provides support, guidance, and resources to assist applicants and candidates in their ongoing discernment.
8. Oversees the application process.
 - a. Provide applicants with the necessary information and material.
 - b. Receive an applicant's congregational registration.
 - c. Arrange for an Initial Interview (optional).
 - d. Arrange for a Psychological Evaluation and Background Check.
 - e. Offer financial assistance to candidates, when possible.
9. Conducts interviews at appropriate times throughout the candidacy process.
10. Maintains candidacy files according to procedures determined by the candidacy staff in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.
11. Conveys in a timely manner all requested information to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Having received a candidate's release form, Candidacy Committees communicate fully and openly with other partners in the candidacy process. Candidacy Committees use churchwide standards, requirements, and expectations to assess a candidate's readiness at Entrance, Endorsement, and Approval; maintain complete records; and report all decisions to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

When deemed effective, some aspects of candidacy work may be conducted through a multi-synodical Candidacy Committee. In such situations, each synod maintains its own candidate records and makes the Entrance Decision for candidates from that synod. Multi-synodical committees may act on behalf of participating synods in the Endorsement and Approval Decisions and other aspects of the candidacy process.

Characteristics of Synod Candidacy Committee Members

- a. Faith in the Triune God;
- b. A sense of hospitality and the ability to build nurturing relationships;
- c. An understanding of and sensitivity to context and culture with a diversity of candidates from various cultures including the ability to engage culture and context theologically, critically, and creatively with a sensitivity to historical factors, analyze congregational and community demographics and trends, engage with complex social and religious issues, express sensitivity to cross cultural, intra-cultural, and counter-cultural dynamics, and address cultural differences;
- d. Patience;
- e. Willingness to attend and participate in committee meetings and receive training;
- f. Knowledge of the church and its missional focus;
- g. Respect for the church;
- h. Integrity and trustworthiness;
- i. A commitment to evaluate candidates fairly combined with an ability to speak the truth in love;
- j. Self-awareness;
- k. A sense of partnership and an ability to function cooperatively; and

1. Membership in a congregation of the synod.
- m. Ability to assist candidates in movement toward a lifestyle that incorporates all dimensions of well-being illustrated in the Wholeness Wheel (see diagram on page 37).

ELCA Seminaries

Seminaries of the ELCA, in consultation with other partners in the candidacy process, provide theological education for candidates, including academic certification, practical experience, and formation for ministry. Every Candidacy Committee includes an ELCA seminary faculty representative identified by the seminary dean and appointed by the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. ELCA and ELCIC (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) seminaries provide evaluative material and make recommendations to Candidacy Committees concerning the approval of every candidate for rostered ministry who earns a degree. Seminaries will communicate openly and fully with candidacy partners.

Theological education is a period of theological, spiritual, and vocational formation. Seminary faculties have a critically important and highly respected role in providing learning experiences that equip candidates for effective and faithful rostered ministry with a dual focus:

- *theological* - instilling a critical capacity and the ability to articulate Christian faith from a Lutheran confessional perspective and
- *practical* - developing leadership skills for the context being served.

A candidate, seminary faculty, and a Candidacy Committee are interdependent partners in the preparation, ongoing discernment, and evaluation of candidates for rostered ministry. Throughout the candidacy process, free and honest sharing of information and perspectives is in the best interest of all partners. Additional communication beyond written reports is both valuable and necessary for a Candidacy Committee and a seminary as they collaborate and cooperate in the care and guidance of candidates and make wise and faithful decisions.

Seminary Responsibilities

1. Make a decision concerning the admission of a person for study and report this action to the appropriate Candidacy Committee. Normally, admission to an ELCA or ELCIC seminary for study leading to rostered leadership in the ELCA is subsequent to a positive Entrance decision by a Candidacy Committee.
2. Participate in Candidacy Committees through an ELCA seminary representative, who is normally an ELCA or ELCIC member appointed by the Director for Candidacy upon recommendation by the academic dean. When possible, seminary faculty are appointed to the synod where they are rostered or have congregational membership. The seminary faculty member participates in all Candidacy Committee activities with full voice and vote as a representative of the theological education network in the ELCA. Normally, the seminary provides travel allowances for its representatives, while the committee provides housing and meals.
3. Administer financial aid to students. Funds for this assistance come from a variety of sources: congregations, synods, seminaries, and churchwide units.
4. Provide required safe church/boundary training for candidates,
5. Participate in Theological Review Panels (TRP) and Competency Assessment Panels (CAP) as requested by staff of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

6. Participate in Endorsement panels for candidates attending the seminary.
7. In consultation with the Candidacy Committee, direct and evaluate the student's practical preparation, such as internship and supervised clinical work, and provide internship and supervised clinical ministry reports to the Candidacy Committee.
8. Regularly communicate with a Candidacy Committee regarding a candidate's academic progress and provide updates on any developmental issues (including personal growth and formation) that emerge in the course of candidacy.
9. Determine a candidate's satisfactory completion of the requirements for the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, other professional degrees, or certificates of theological education.
10. In the case of students attending a non-ELCA/ELCIC, participate in an affiliation relationship with candidates (see page 58).
11. Provide a recommendation and evaluative statement to a Candidacy Committee for the committee's process leading to an Approval decision and submit copies of the appropriate report (Form D) to both the Candidacy Committee and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit

The Director for Candidacy, in collaboration with other candidacy staff in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, develops and provides oversight of the candidacy process in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Oversight includes generating standards, procedures, and policies related to the recruitment, preparation, evaluation, and support of candidates for rostered ministry. Development includes monitoring the effectiveness of policies and procedures, identifying problems, and proposing revisions to the ELCA candidacy process as needed. Other candidacy partners, notably ELCA seminary personnel working with candidacy and Candidacy Committees, are consulted at each step in the development and revision process. Candidacy staff of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit (normally the regional coordinator for missional leadership) work directly with Candidacy Committees to exemplify the interdependent partnership as well as the churchwide nature of the process. While the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit staff representative relating to each Candidacy Committee does not vote, he or she is present for all major decisions of a Candidacy Committee, unless mutually agreed upon in advance that the representative will not be involved. The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit maintains (at the Lutheran Center) an electronic database of candidate records submitted by Candidacy Committees.

Responsibilities of Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit Staff

A. The Director for Candidacy

1. Provides for and oversees the development and interpretation of churchwide candidacy standards, procedures, and policies.
2. Registers psychological consultants.
3. Reviews and grants all equivalencies and waivers requested for candidates.
4. Initiates and facilitates ongoing reviews and updating of candidacy policies and procedures.

B. Candidacy Staff of the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit

1. Provide consultation and serve as resource persons for all partners in the candidacy process.
2. Attend Candidacy Committee meetings and other events related to the candidacy process.

3. Convene and oversee Theological Review Panels (TRP) and Competency Assessment Panels (CAP).
4. Encourage full and open communication among all partners in the candidacy process.
5. Collaborate with seminary administrations in providing orientation and training to faculty and students regarding the ELCA Candidacy Process.
6. Implement a churchwide candidacy training program, including regular opportunities for interview training and orientation to candidacy for synod and seminary candidacy leaders.

Privacy

The integrity and trustworthiness of each Candidacy Committee member and all candidacy partners are critical to a fair and faithful process for identifying, evaluating, and approving candidates for rostered ministry. The collective wisdom, centered in the work of the Holy Spirit, enlivens, strengthens, and supports the decisions made by Candidacy Committees.

Some assumptions can be made regarding privacy in this church. The boundary of privacy requires honesty, good judgment, respect for others, and an ability to hold privileged information. Privacy in the candidacy process is primarily a concern for the interests and well-being of individuals (as well as this church), not a legal concern. Privacy concerns should not hinder or restrict the free flow of information to and from the Candidacy Committee. In the United States the church has a constitutional right to decide who its rostered ministers will be, to treat certain internal information as private, and to share or reveal that information as needed among partners within this church.

On behalf of the whole ELCA, Candidacy Committees may seek any necessary information regarding applicants or candidates in order to protect this church and its members and act on their behalf, but also to protect all people from the possibility of abuse by a rostered minister.

What is essential is that the committee and its members are very clear about why they are seeking the information. This church should seek out whatever information is important and necessary to assess qualifications for rostered ministry. Religious institutions may make inquiries and enforce standards of character that apply to the private lives of those involved in rostered ministry to a degree that is not legally permitted in secular occupations and professions. Healthy, honest and responsible rostered ministers are essential to the faithful witness of this church in the world.

While it is not necessary for committee members to excuse themselves from decisions regarding an individual whom they know personally, committee members must share the nature of any such personal relationship with the Candidacy Committee. In fact, such personal knowledge can provide insight and awareness to the committee in making its decisions. In the case of a family or pastoral relationship with a candidate, a committee member may recuse himself or herself from the interview.

Any and all information regarding a candidate's qualifications, history, or life patterns can be valuable in making candidacy decisions. Private information, including personal letters to a synod bishop or notes of conversations, should be gathered with great care, shared as necessary, and appropriately safeguarded. Information and analysis from psychological reports and background checks should be used in an ethical and responsible way. Committee members need to be trained in interpreting these reports.

Although some information received in confidence should not be revealed to the candidate, it is always essential to be fair and allow an individual to respond to negative information and correct misinformation. The Candidacy Committee should take all steps necessary to ensure it has dealt effectively and faithfully with any concerns or issues.

Management of Candidacy Files

Synod Records

It is essential for synods to maintain complete and accurate records on every candidate for rostered ministry. The following guidelines provide specific criteria for the management of the materials in a candidate's file – all of which are confidential.

1. Files on applicants/candidates are the property of the Candidacy Committee and should be maintained in a secure location and manner.
2. At its discretion, a Candidacy Committee may allow an applicant or candidate access to his or her candidacy file. The committee may choose not to allow access to confidential communications, letters, or other information. The applicant or candidate may read the contents of the file at a location and under a procedure determined by the Candidacy Committee. When a candidate or applicant reviews the file, someone from synod staff or the committee should be present. Copies should be made only as authorized by the committee.
3. Committees should use care when duplicating candidacy file material in preparation for meetings. Duplicated file material should be sent as CONFIDENTIAL mail and destroyed at the conclusion of the meeting. Copies of Psychological evaluations and background checks should not be mailed or electronically sent to committee members. Review of these documents may take place immediately prior to the Entrance interview. All electronic distribution of candidacy files must be password protected and in compliance with ELCA policies on electronic data filing.
4. A candidacy file shall be maintained at the appropriate administrative office of a candidate's seminary in a secure location and be available to the faculty advisor and Candidacy Committee members as appropriate.
5. A candidacy file transferred from another synod requires a new Congregational Registration Form from a congregation in the receiving synod.
6. In the case of a candidate whose Endorsement or Approval has been denied or who has withdrawn from the candidacy process, the synod of candidacy will retain the candidate's file for 10 years, after which it may be destroyed.
7. In the case of a candidate who has been granted Approval, the synod will retain the file for 50 years, after which it may be destroyed.
8. All relevant information on a candidate - Form D and Form E - is shared with the synod of assignment through the churchwide assignment process. Because the candidacy file is not intended for use as part of the call process, the contents of the candidacy file remain with the Candidacy Committee and are not forwarded to the synod of assignment.
9. If for any reason a candidate is transferred to another synod, all materials in the candidacy file will be copied and sent to the new synod of candidacy. The originating synod also retains these records.

10. Synods may choose to maintain candidacy files electronically in up-to-date formats. Note: Because technology changes rapidly, synods must update technology so that files are accessible for 50 years.

Seminary Records

Seminaries are to maintain candidacy files in a secure manner and location.

Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit Deployed Staff Records

Deployed candidacy staff of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit should retain files on active candidates in a secure manner. The file may include all information in the Candidacy Committee file.

Churchwide Records

The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit tracks the progress of every candidate. Essential dates and decisions become part of the ELCA Constituent Information System.

General Guidelines for the Candidacy Committee

A Candidacy Committee, functioning on behalf of the entire ELCA to approve candidates for rostered ministry, has a variety of functions, including the following:

1. Schedule meetings, retreats, and other events for the candidacy process.
2. Follow the policy and procedures for reinstatement to the roster.
3. Make requests to the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for equivalencies or waivers from any essential standards or requirements of candidacy, including:
 - a. TEEM program entry
 - b. Educational requirements
 - c. Supervised clinical ministry requirements, and
 - d. The Lutheran Year residency requirements for students attending a non-ELCA/ELCIC seminary.
4. Extend hospitality, provide a sense of community, and arrange appropriate pastoral care for candidates, (One valuable resource a number of synods have instituted for offering candidates both hospitality and pastoral care is a pastor/chaplain who is present with candidates prior to and following interviews with a Candidacy Committee. Such a person is not a member of a Candidacy Committee and does not participate in interviews with candidates).
5. Summarize interviews with candidates through clear and comprehensive written comments and recommendations on report forms.
6. Give support and guidance for an applicant's continuing discernment journey and confirm use of resources, including *What Shall I Say? Discerning God's Call to Ministry, Vision and Expectations*, *The Evangelizing Church: A Lutheran Contribution, and Topics for Preliminary Discernment (Appendix B)*.
7. Encourage candidate participation in required seminary or synod safe church/boundary workshops.

8. Provide ongoing support for candidates through regular contact with members of the committee, including visits with candidates on seminary campuses or gatherings on the synod territory.

Following a positive decision (Entrance, Endorsement, or Approval), if a Candidacy Committee receives additional information that proves to be harmful to the church and might have resulted in a decision to postpone or deny, the committee, in consultation with the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, may decide to review its prior action and withdraw its positive decision. Any decision to review a positive decision and the results of such a review shall be reported to

- the candidate,
- the seminary,
- the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, and
- the synod of assignment (in the case of an Approved candidate following a churchwide assignment).

If a Candidacy Committee or related synod staff receives additional information about an Approved candidate after he or she has received a call, the information shall immediately be communicated to the bishop of the synod where the call was issued.

Guidelines for Handling a Disagreement with a Decision

Candidacy is an interdependent partnership involving candidates, congregations, synods, seminaries, and the churchwide organization. Entrance, Endorsement, Approval, and Reinstatement decisions are the responsibility of synods through their Candidacy Committees and bishops, following churchwide policies and procedures. There is no churchwide appeals process. No individual or body has the authority to overrule a Candidacy Committee's Entrance, Endorsement, or Approval decision, or a synodical bishop's decision whether or not to allow an applicant to begin candidacy for Reinstatement. If an applicant or candidate disagrees with an Entrance, Endorsement, Approval, or Reinstatement decision, a request for reconsideration may be made to the Candidacy Committee or synod bishop, whoever made the decision.

If a candidate considers that proper candidacy procedures have not been followed, he or she shall first consult with the bishop of the synod. If that consultation does not resolve the concern, he or she may request in writing, with supporting documentation to verify the concern, a review of the process by the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The Director for Candidacy will request comment from the synod and may request additional information from any other partners. The Director will report his or her findings to the candidate, the synodical bishop, and the Candidacy Committee.

Guidelines for Transfer of Candidacy

Continuity and consistency in candidacy serve both the candidate and this church. In a rapidly changing and mobile world, however, there may be circumstances when it will best serve the candidate and this church to transfer candidacy from one synod to another, in order for a candidate

and a Candidacy Committee to work together more effectively in mutual relationship and accountability. At the request of a candidate who has consulted with the synodical bishop in their synod of origin and received consent for a transfer of candidacy, a synod may transfer his or her candidacy to another synod, provided the receiving synod consents to the transfer. In accordance with ELCA bylaws, if an applicant is seeking both reinstatement to a roster and a transfer to another synod, the Secretary of the ELCA must consent to the transfer, in addition to the consent of the synods involved. In addition, a transfer of candidacy when a reinstatement is involved (see below) requires the concurrence of both Candidacy Committees and both bishops, as specified in Section II.C on page 21 in the “Manual on the Management of the Rosters.”

A transfer request is not equivalent to one of the three decisions in the candidacy process— Entrance, Endorsement, or Approval.

A synod Candidacy Committee may neither deny nor delay a transfer of candidacy solely on the grounds of a candidate’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship status. (For specific policy governing candidates in same gender relationships, see the section on pages 21 - 22 of this Manual.)

Normally, a candidate will remain with the Candidacy Committee where the process originated, especially in the following situations:

- If a candidate’s Entrance, Endorsement, or Approval has been denied or postponed on other grounds;
- If denial or postponement has been recommended by an interview team or a Theological Review Panel on other grounds; or
- The Candidacy Committee has not considered the recommendation.

A person who withdraws from candidacy for any reason must reapply for candidacy in the synod where he or she was originally a candidate. A Candidacy Application form to reapply may be accompanied by a request from the candidate for transfer to another synod.

In all instances involving a transfer of candidacy, the committee chairpersons of both synods, after consultation with the Candidacy Committees of their respective synods, will give written authorization for the transfer. Consultation with the Candidacy Committees may be done by email or other electronic means to avoid undue delay. To assure full awareness and the sharing of relevant information, the sending synod shall copy all records pertaining to the candidate in question, including summaries of their current assessment of the candidate, and transmit them to the receiving synod. Whenever candidacy is transferred to another synod, the candidate must submit a new Congregational Registration Form from a congregation in the receiving synod. The receiving synod may also inquire of the candidate’s previous congregation concerning additional relevant information made available since the original registration. If a candidate is already enrolled in or affiliated with an ELCA/ELCIC seminary, the Candidacy Committee of the receiving synod shall notify that seminary concerning a transfer between synods.

Guidelines Related to the Candidacy for Rostered Leadership of People in Publicly Accountable, Lifelong, Monogamous, Same-Gender Relationships

1. With all candidates, the goal of the candidacy process is to help them discern their callings and to help this church bring forth and support the leaders it needs for God's mission in the world. The process is a partnership among congregations, synods, seminaries, and the churchwide organization.
 2. People in the ELCA who represent the diversity of convictions on this matter are welcome to serve and will be supported in their service on Candidacy Committees of this church. Candidacy Committee members and others working with candidates follow the policies and procedures of this church.
 3. When working with an applicant or candidate who is in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship, the Candidacy Committee will follow the same processes for discernment and evaluation as with all other candidates and will use the standards of this church and the *Vision and Expectations* document for the appropriate roster.
 4. When this church's diversity of faith-based opinions concerning these matters is present on a Candidacy Committee and/or in its context, some conversations and decisions will be complex and challenging. Integrity can be maintained best when committee members honor others with differing convictions and keep in mind the foundational responsibilities and purpose of the Candidacy Committee. Aspects of this integrity include:
 - a. Treating each committee member, applicant, and candidate with respect;
 - b. Inviting and expecting candor by all applicants and candidates about their relationships; and
 - c. Being candid with one another on the committee and with applicants and candidates about whether committee members are able to support or not support the rostering of people in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships.
 5. In some instances, the transfer of candidacy to another synod will be a helpful tool for respecting the faith convictions of the candidate and of all members of a Candidacy Committee; and a candidate may be encouraged to seek a transfer (see "Guidelines for Transfer of Candidacy" on pages 19 -20). Similarly, in some instances an applicant wishing to begin candidacy, after consultation with the bishop of his or her congregation's synod, may be well advised to apply for candidacy in a synod other than the one of congregational membership. In that case, the Candidacy Committee may depart from normal practice and accept registration from the congregation of membership, even though it is in another synod.
 6. Heterosexual and homosexual applicants and candidates shall be treated equitably.
 7. In working with a candidate who is in a same-gender relationship, as in working with a married heterosexual candidate, a Candidacy Committee will satisfy itself that there is sufficient evidence of public accountability, including a public commitment to a lifelong and monogamous relationship. For a person in a same-gender relationship, given present legal and churchly options, sufficient evidence may not be the same in every case.
- The following are *appropriate considerations*:

- a. Evidence of compliance with local and state law recognizing such relationships, if available where a candidate resides.
- b. Evidence that the couple's relationship has public recognition and support within their congregation.
- c. Evidence of shared and public responsibilities, such as joint home ownership, joint adoption of children, insurance documents providing for mutual coverage, or legal documents such as powers of attorney or those pertaining to insurance or estate planning.
- d. Statements in the candidate's congregational registration, internship reports, seminary faculty recommendation, and other references from those who know the person and his or her relationship.
- e. Duration of the relationship.
- f. Other evidence of the candidate's willingness to be held accountable in his or her same-sex relationship. An affidavit may be offered.

If there is no legal recognition of marriage or civil union, the records of the Candidacy Committee should state its reasons for concluding a candidate is publicly accountable in her or his same-gender relationship.

8. Candidacy Committees already ask a candidate whether he or she has been divorced. The committee shall now also ask a candidate whether he or she has been in a prior same-gender relationship that was held up as publicly accountable, lifelong, and monogamous. If such a relationship has ended, as with a divorce, the circumstances of ending the relationship and the candidate's response to it are important matters for conversation between the candidate and the Candidacy Committee.
9. It is always appropriate in the candidacy process to invite further conversation about a candidate's responses on the Candidacy Application form and other forms. The Candidacy Application form states: "In establishing and nurturing a relationship of trust between a candidate and a Candidacy Committee, as later between a rostered leader and a congregation, honesty and forthrightness are vital. To assist the synodical Candidacy Committee in its discernment with you, please write briefly about any plans or additional factors that may bear on your present or future response to these questions about relationships (for example: a marital or same-gender partner relationship experiencing difficulties, the possibility of entering a marriage, the possibility of entering a same-gender relationship)." Responses to this invitation may open the possibility for further helpful conversation with a candidate.
10. In this arena of responsibility, as in others, this church continues to trust its Candidacy Committees and others to whom it has given the responsibility to discern who should and should not be rostered or called to rostered ministry in this church. Accordingly, it is essential that the committee report to the synodical bishop and to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit any relevant information, as well as any procedural or policy problems encountered, so that the ELCA candidacy process can be enhanced for the sake of mission and the good of all concerned.

Guidelines for Reinstatement to the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*From "Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the ELCA,"
Adopted by action of the Church Council as policy of the ELCA, April 16, 1989, revised on
November 14, 1994, and further revised by the Church Council on April 12, 1999 [CC99.04.29],
November 14, 2004 [CC04.11.69c] and November 15, 2009 [CC09.11.80]*

I. Reinstatement Process

- A. Reinstatement to the rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is the responsibility of the Candidacy Committee of the synod where the applicant was last rostered as an ordained minister, associate in ministry, deaconess, or diaconal minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.¹
- B. In the case of an applicant whose rostered ministry was last in one of the ELCA predecessor churches, the successor ELCA synod has the responsibility. In every case, the process begins in the synod from which the applicant left the roster or its successor.
- C. In the case of an applicant whose removal from the roster was the result of either:
 1. The official disciplinary process of this church, or
 2. Resignation or removal from the roster in lieu of the disciplinary process, or
 3. Application of ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.31.16., where the person was on leave or without call after conduct or allegations that could lead to disciplinary charges, then a minimum of five consecutive years without call must elapse before an application for reinstatement may be considered. The passage of five years without call does not guarantee reconsideration.

II. Application

- A. The applicant provides the completed Application for Reinstatement to the appropriate roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the synod, and the synod sends a copy to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for information.
- B. Upon receipt of the Application for Reinstatement, the synodical bishop will notify the Office of the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and request any pertinent information the churchwide office may have concerning the applicant.
- C. With the approval of the ELCA secretary the reinstatement process continues with the completion of a new Candidacy Application form and a new RLP. At this time the applications may be transferred from the synod of previous roster to the synod of current residence, upon the written concurrence of both candidacy committee chairs (in consultation with members of the candidacy committee) and both synod bishops. The original synod will provide the receiving synod with all information and documentation concerning the applicant.

¹Any person removed from a lay roster that existed on December 31, 1987, who seeks to return to active lay roster status, must apply for acceptance to a roster of this church under the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures that apply to the roster of associates in ministry, as identified in ELCA churchwide bylaw 7.52.13. This requirement shall apply to those certified during the period of January 1, 1988, through September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry of this church.

- D. The bishop of the synod in which the reinstatement application will be considered schedules an interview with the applicant. The purpose of this interview is to determine the applicant's eligibility to be a candidate in the synod for ministry. The bishop also determines whether the application is timely under paragraph I.C. or premature under paragraph I.D. above.
- E. In the case of an applicant where inappropriate conduct or allegations of misconduct led to resignation or removal from the roster, the synodical bishop examines the applicant for indications of repentance and amendment of life as well as indication of or attempts at reconciliation with those injured by the conduct, and documents the corrective actions that have occurred before proceeding with the reinstatement process. The bishop should invite comments from those directly affected by the applicant's inappropriate conduct or alleged misconduct.
- F. The Candidacy Committee considers an applicant for reinstatement when the synodical bishop forwards the application to the committee. The bishop may, in his or her sole discretion, decline to forward the application to the Candidacy Committee or may forward the application with a written statement of the bishop's opinion of the application.

III. Candidacy Committee

- A. The synod Candidacy Committee will receive and review the registration by the pastor and Congregation Council of the congregation of which the applicant is a member in good standing. The registration attests that the applicant is an active member of an ELCA congregation.
- B. The committee shall determine that it has received all records and information concerning the applicant, including verification of synodical records concerning the reason for removal from the roster. If synodical records are incomplete, this verification may include conferring with the former bishop, synod staff, or with the churchwide office.
- C. The committee may request any additional information from any source that it deems necessary in order to determine the applicant's readiness for ministry and suitability for reinstatement to the roster.
- D. The applicant must prepare an Approval essay and submit it to the Candidacy Committee.
- E. The committee may request a new psychological evaluation when necessary however, in the case of any applicant who has been off the roster or without call for more than five years, the Candidacy Committee will require the applicant to participate in the Psychological Evaluation and Career Consultation according to the policies of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The expense of this evaluation is the responsibility of the applicant.
- F. The Candidacy Committee follows the Candidacy Manual standards and procedures for new applicants as its guide in considering a request for reinstatement. The Candidacy Committee interviews the applicant to explore all concerns related to reinstatement, including but not limited to
 1. The circumstances surrounding the removal of the applicant from the roster, including the applicant's reason(s) for leaving the roster;

2. The applicant's reason(s) for requesting reinstatement to the roster with a special focus upon what has changed in the person's life, faith, attitudes, and circumstances since the time of removal;
 3. Discussion of the applicant's understanding of ordained, commissioned, or consecrated ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the applicant's willingness to serve in response to the needs of this church; and
 4. Discussion of "*Vision and Expectations*," and the applicant's commitment to live according to the expectations of this church.
- G. The Candidacy Committee may request the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to convene a Theological Review Panel to determine the applicant's theological readiness for ordained ministry. The Theological Review Panel will make a recommendation to the committee following the procedures developed by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

IV. Decision

- A. The Candidacy Committee will decide the applicant's suitability to serve as a rostered minister of this church. This decision is one of the following:
 1. Approval of the candidate for reinstatement upon receipt and acceptance of a letter of call;
 2. Postponement of Approval with specific recommendations for remedial or developmental work before further consideration for reinstatement; or
 3. Denial of Approval for reinstatement.
- B. If the decision of the Candidacy Committee is to deny an applicant reinstatement, that decision is final. Any such applicant who desires reconsideration must begin the process again by applying under II.A. above.
- C. If an applicant who was removed from the roster under the circumstances described in paragraphs I.D. above is approved for reinstatement by the Candidacy Committee, such Approval is not effective unless affirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the total membership of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. After the Candidacy Committee reports its approval and the reasons for that Approval to the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, the Executive Committee may obtain whatever additional information or advice, including legal advice, it deems necessary before reviewing the decision of the Candidacy Committee.

V. Approval

- A. If approved, the candidate will complete the normal assignment paperwork and will participate in the churchwide assignment process through the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.
- B. If after consultation with the synodical bishop, the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in consultation with the unit executive determines that the process for reinstatement described herein has not been fully or properly completed, then the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit shall postpone the candidate's participation in the assignment process until all requirements are met.
- C. An approved candidate is eligible for a call for a period of one year after Approval by the synod. Any delay occasioned by a postponement under V.B. above is not counted toward that one-year period of eligibility.

- D. The process for Renewal of Approval, as defined by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in the Candidacy Manual, is the same as that for other candidates for rostered ministry.
- E. Upon receipt and acceptance of a properly issued and duly attested letter of call, the candidate is reinstated to the appropriate roster of this church.

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Chapter 2 – Preparing for Entrance

Discernment as Preparation for Candidacy

Prior to applying for and being granted an Entrance decision, individuals should engage in intentional discernment about a sense of call and readiness for candidacy, including but not limited to participation in discernment opportunities provided by congregations, campus ministries, synods, and seminaries. If such intentional discernment has not been the experience of an applicant when contacting a Candidacy Committee, it is appropriate for synod candidacy staff to recommend resources and possible discernment mentors to work with such an applicant in advance of an Entrance interview.

For those who choose to apply for candidacy as a result of their preliminary discernment, a written reflection on discernment is part of the Entrance essay submitted to a Candidacy Committee. An applicant who has worked with a mentor may invite him or her to share some written reflections with the Candidacy Committee and the applicant, including a letter of reference for Entrance, and to accompany him or her to the Entrance interview with the Candidacy Committee.

Guidelines for Psychological Evaluation

Persons seeking to serve as rostered leaders in the ELCA shall complete a psychological evaluation. The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit has developed these guidelines for use by both psychological consultants and Candidacy Committees. The primary purposes for a psychological evaluation are to provide a Candidacy Committee with insights regarding an applicant's psychological health and readiness for candidacy and to help individuals gain greater self-understanding and appreciation of their own emotional well-being. A psychological evaluation is part of a larger discernment process (see Appendix B and pages) that relates to the ELCA candidacy process, in which a Candidacy Committee is also responsible for keeping the purpose of a psychological evaluation in perspective. The desired outcome is an evaluation that candidly assesses an applicant's psychological health and readiness for candidacy and potentially future rostered leadership.

Responsibilities of the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit

The Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit has the following responsibilities:

1. Establishing and maintaining churchwide policies and guidelines for assessing applicants;
2. Registering and regularly reviewing the services of participating psychological consultants; and
3. Providing consultation and guidance regarding particular situations, such as for candidates of color and candidates with unusual circumstances.

Responsibilities of the Synod Candidacy Committee

A Candidacy Committee is responsible for deciding whether an applicant is ready to begin candidacy and theological study. A psychological consultant's report is only one of the components used by a Candidacy Committee in making such a determination. A Candidacy Committee is responsible for the evaluation and care of a candidate throughout the Candidacy process.

With regard to a psychological evaluation, a Candidacy Committee has the following responsibilities:

1. Gathering the required information for registering a psychological consultant used by a Candidacy Committee and submitting it to the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for approval and registration before a contract is finalized. Using the form "Registration of a Psychological Consultant with a Candidacy Committee," a Candidacy Committee provides the Director for Candidacy with information about the education, experience, professional affiliation, licensure, and liability coverage of the person who seeks registration as a consultant. In addition, the ELCA expects a commitment to the underlying intent of the evaluation process; namely, to provide insights regarding the applicant's psychological health and readiness for candidacy.

To be accepted for registration by the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, a psychological consultant must

- a. Be licensed as a psychologist and competent to sign an evaluation report, or be licensed as a mental health professional (career counselor, counselor, social worker, psychotherapist, etc.) and consult with a licensed psychologist registered with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to supervise and oversee the evaluation process and co-sign the evaluation report;
- b. Demonstrate through professional education, experience, and affiliations both competence in providing psychological evaluations and an ongoing commitment to professional growth;
- c. Display interest in working with the ELCA and an understanding of the psychological concerns and ecclesiastical goals of the ELCA candidacy process; and
- d. Be familiar with the standards and criteria by which the ELCA assesses its candidates.

2. *Contracting with a psychological consultant registered with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.* The synod enters into a contract with a psychological consultant for psychological evaluation services. Any contract should include clear expectations regarding instruments used, fees, etc. Forms or guidelines for reporting should be provided, including a written release-of-information form. It is desirable for the consultant to meet with a Candidacy Committee at least annually to review the clinician's approach to evaluation reports and to provide assistance to committee members in understanding and utilizing evaluation reports.

3. *Arranging for a Psychological Evaluation as part of the Entrance process.* Following the Initial Interview (if used) and well in advance of an Entrance interview, a Candidacy Committee instructs an applicant to schedule a psychological evaluation. The synod covers the fee for a psychological evaluation. As deemed appropriate, an applicant may be assessed an "application fee" to cover a portion of the total costs related to candidacy. Each synod Candidacy Committee determines the amount of such fees.

A Candidacy Committee must receive a written psychological evaluation report prior to an Entrance interview. When there is serious concern about an applicant's psychological health or situational factors, the Candidacy Committee may confer with the psychological consultant.

If a psychological consultant recommends counseling, treatment or other services, the Candidacy Committee will determine whether or not the recommended counseling/therapy should be completed prior to granting Entrance. If the Candidacy Committee decides to Postpone Entrance for this reason, the committee may suggest at least three counselors - none of whom provided the applicant's psychological evaluation - and ask the applicant to seek prior approval from the committee for counseling with a particular therapist. Normally, a Candidacy Committee will request written communication from the therapist an applicant chooses for additional counseling.

4. Concerns and complaints about psychological consultants. The Candidacy Committee should periodically review the contract with psychological consultants and may terminate the relationship with a consultant if services provided are not satisfactory.

An applicant who is dissatisfied with a psychological evaluation may secure a second opinion from another professional registered with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Applicants are financially responsible for such additional evaluation. When an applicant requests a second evaluation, both reports – the original and the second opinion - must be released to the Candidacy Committee in order for the applicant to be considered for Entrance into candidacy.

If there are any complaints about a psychological consultant, a Candidacy Committee will notify the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Such notification should include concerns regarding any pattern of complaints indicating a particular psychological consultant is perceived as being insensitive or inappropriate toward persons on the basis of gender, age, class, race, culture, etc. Such notification is also appropriate if the evaluations received by the committee do not reflect the intended completeness or usefulness of the reports for the candidacy process (see above). Such notification is critical for the integrity of psychological evaluations and their continuing helpfulness to both applicants and Candidacy Committees.

Guidelines for Background Checks

Background Checks are required of all applicants seeking Entrance into candidacy. Applicants are also required to submit on the Entrance Information Form written answers to specific questions about personal history and conduct. Recent legislation and technological advances have made it easier to obtain personal information about applicants. Given the unique position of trust enjoyed by rostered leaders in the church, denominations regularly make use of background checks as part of a comprehensive candidacy screening process. .

Areas to be covered by a background check include:

1. Criminal history database search;
2. County criminal record check;
3. Sex Offender Criminal Registry;
4. Credit check report;

5. Social Security trace; and
6. Motor vehicle check.

The Background Check should cover at least seven years. If a candidate has moved during the period in question, all relevant geographical areas should be included in the Background Check. These guidelines are intended to be the minimum focus for candidate Background Checks. Candidacy Committees may be flexible in determining when additional checks are needed or advisable. A committee does not have to use exactly the same list of checks for all candidates. Because different background check firms use varying terminology, Candidacy Committees should endeavor in good faith to match the required checks with those available through the chosen provider.

Purpose

The ELCA candidacy process seeks to maintain a good balance between hospitality and relationship building on the one hand and discernment, formation, evaluation, and screening on the other. Gathering information to assure thorough and careful assessment of an applicant's character and past behavior is a necessary part of determining a person's readiness to begin candidacy.

A criminal background check, or any other screening tool, is only a small portion of the entire Candidacy Process, which focuses on the evaluation and assessment of applicants. In this process, a Candidacy Committee needs to identify the types of people most likely to do well in rostered ministry, as well as characteristics and behaviors that suggest a good fit with rostered leadership in this church. A Candidacy Committee is obligated to screen out people who might use their position as a rostered leader in damaging or illegal ways.

Candidacy Committees should exercise care and good judgment in using information about an applicant so as not to damage the person's reputation or self-identity as a valued child of God. The candidacy process rightfully looks carefully at each individual and assesses and discerns that person's potential for ministry with the assistance of various components in the Entrance Process. Background Checks are not a substitute for using other screening tools or risk reduction techniques, nor are they infallible records of a person's previous conduct or misconduct. The absence of any reported misconduct is not a guarantee of future behavior. If an individual has never been arrested or convicted, a criminal background check will not reveal anything; however, background checks must include any and all instances of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

The principles which undergird screening in the ELCA candidacy process include fair and equitable application and interpretation of screening tools, which are to be applied consistently with all applicants. Each Candidacy Committee has the right to add specific checks to the basic minimum standards. Candidacy Committees may explore a variety of options, since individual applicants may require different types of background checks. As with all screening tools utilized in the ELCA candidacy process, the results are normally shared with the applicant, especially if there is any negative information. Such practice provides the applicant with an opportunity to explain and verify the information.

Because of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and laws separating church and state,

Candidacy Committees have greater freedom in asking applicants questions. Both the committee and the ELCA are protected by law; therefore it is possible to ask whatever is necessary in assessing future church leaders.

Responsibilities of the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit

The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit is responsible for

1. Establishing churchwide policies, guidelines, and programs for evaluating applicants and candidates;
2. Arranging for and regularly reviewing the services of participating firms that provide required background checks; and
3. Periodically evaluating the approach used for background checks to meet changing needs.

Responsibilities of Firms Providing Background Checks

1. Any firm providing background checks for ELCA Candidacy Committees is expected to
 - a. Implement background checks in ways that are consistent with the needs and goals of the ELCA candidacy process;
 - b. Be sensitive to ways that race, language, gender, age, and ethnicity may play a role in the process;
 - c. Provide the necessary forms and communications so the process can be conducted in a professional, consistent, and fair manner; and
 - d. Assist both the Candidacy Committee and the applicant in understanding the rights of individuals and the significance of any results provided.

Types of checks to be provided:

- a. **Criminal Background Checks** should include any indication of sexual misconduct, child abuse, or other serious misconduct. Such checks can be done in a number of ways:
 - 1) Some synods may choose to work through local law enforcement agencies and on-line registries to check on criminal behavior.
 - 2) Other synods may use background check firms that provide a comprehensive service to synods seeking information on criminal and other records.

Federal, state, and county authorities have increased the availability of criminal background information. Technological advances allow for faster, more widespread, and more accurate searches. Nevertheless, criminal background searches are not a quick and easy process. Currently, there is no nationwide up-to-date repository of criminal history records available to employers or the general public. In reality, searches for criminal records must be conducted through various jurisdictions throughout the United States, wherever arrest and conviction records are initiated and/or compiled. Information may be available through federal, district, and statewide searches, specialized registries, child abuse registries, and sex offender registries.

- b. **Credit Checks** assist in confirming the identity of an applicant. Since each applicant has a Social Security number, it is possible to verify identity information via a "social security number trace" through a credit bureau. Credit reports also disclose outstanding debts and payment history, as well as civil actions (e.g., judgments, liens, and bankruptcies). Credit reports provide a seven-year history of individual or joint financial information. Since rostered leaders will be in a position of handling money or other organizational assets and have check-writing or investment authority, a credit check is a reasonable risk-management procedure.

c. **Motor Vehicle Records** (MVRs) are available through the Department of Motor Vehicles in all 50 states and most countries. Depending on the state, violations are provided for the last three to five years. Since most church leaders will be required to operate a company or church vehicle, rental car, or their own vehicle for business purposes, checking an applicant's driving records is a reasonable risk-management procedure.

Responsibilities of the Candidacy Committee

The Candidacy Committee is responsible for the evaluation and care of candidates throughout the candidacy process, all of which is part of an individual's formation as a Christian and a public servant in the church. The Candidacy Committee oversees the following:

1. Obtaining a background check covering the areas listed above. For this purpose the Candidacy Committee may contract with a firm to provide required background checks. The synod staff person responsible for this process should consult with the synod's attorney regarding appropriate procedures and forms for authorizing a Background Check.
2. Arranging for an applicant to complete the necessary forms for a Background Check. A good practice is for the Candidacy Committee to identify one staff contact person who understands the process to handle requests, receive reports, and maintain an appropriate degree of privacy.
3. Arranging for payment of fees for Background Checks. Synods are responsible for the cost of applicant background checks but they may request an application fee from applicants to cover a portion of the total costs incurred in the candidacy process. In addition, synods may request a congregation registration fee to be paid at the time the congregation submits the registration form. This is a tangible gesture of support on the part of a congregation to both the applicant and the synod.
4. Receiving and reviewing the results of a Background Check prior to the Entrance interview and sharing concerns or issues with the applicant and the applicant's seminary as deemed appropriate.

Note: The Candidacy Committee will notify the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit if there are patterns of concern or complaints that suggest a firm providing a Background Check is being insensitive or inappropriate with applicants on the basis of gender, age, class, race, culture, etc., or if the results of a Background Check do not reflect the intention and guidelines of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for the candidacy process. Such notification is critical for the integrity of candidacy screening and continuing helpfulness to applicants.

Using Background Check Results

When reporting the results of a Background Check, a Candidacy Committee needs to have in place a procedure for evaluating the resulting information for each applicant and appropriately sharing pertinent information with the full committee. Guidelines for such procedures need to address the types of information that are to be shared with the full Candidacy Committee, what offenses or other information will disqualify an applicant, and what other factors should be considered. Circumstances to consider when evaluating an offense include:

1. The nature and seriousness of the offense;
2. The circumstances under which the offense occurred;
3. The age of the person at the time of the offense and how much time has passed since the

- offense occurred;
4. Societal conditions that may have contributed to the nature of the offense;
 5. The probability that the person will repeat the offense; and
 6. The person's commitment to rehabilitation, restitution, and reconciliation.

An applicant should be denied Entrance when he or she has knowingly made a false statement of any material fact or attempted deception or fraud in the application process.

Releases. The Candidacy Application form contains a release, in which the applicant agrees to authorize the ELCA synod or seminary to check references and background information and also permits third parties to release and provide personal information and opinions. A Candidacy Committee may ask applicants to complete additional Background Check authorization forms as part of the application process.

Chapter 3 - Entrance

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (I Corinthians 12:4-7, NRSV).

Entrance Components

The Entrance process in candidacy is the first formal discernment by a Candidacy Committee and an applicant of the applicant's readiness for candidacy. A decision to grant Entrance officially accepts an applicant into candidacy. Normally, a Candidacy Committee will grant Entrance prior to when an applicant begins seminary studies. Entrance into candidacy begins a formal relationship in a community of discernment that includes the appropriate Candidacy Committee, the worshipping community of which a candidate is a part, the seminary of enrollment, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. As these relationships are formed and cultivated, a candidate continues his or her discernment of call – either to rostered ministry or to other forms of service and mission in the world or through the church as a lay leader. At Entrance, therefore, a Candidacy Committee is beginning a relationship with a candidate and forming a partnership for further discernment. A key aspect of the ongoing discernment being fostered through candidacy is attendance at a seminary and gaining experience in contextual settings. It is very legitimate for a candidate to pursue such a course without having total clarity about what God is inviting him or her to consider in living out one's Christian vocation.

As part of the Entrance process, the synod office will establish a file for each applicant. As an inquirer moves through application and into candidacy, the file will serve as the applicant's official file. At the time of the Entrance Interview, the file should include a record of the following:

1. An application essay and other materials that identify the applicant's use of discernment resources (including *What Shall I Say*, a discernment mentor, discernment retreats, and other resources).
2. Evidence of active membership in an ELCA congregation for a minimum of one year, during which the applicant has demonstrated appropriate leadership roles. Such evidence is usually part of the Congregational Registration Form. Very rarely, as in the case of an applicant currently rostered in another Christian tradition whose on-going membership in that tradition is required in order to maintain job-related accreditation, the applicant may be exempt from formal congregational membership and may be an associate member of an ELCA congregation. *Active participation in an ELCA worshiping community, however, is required.*

Because there is a significant and ongoing partnership in candidacy between the home congregation and the Candidacy Committee, there may be benefit in inviting a home pastor or campus minister to accompany a candidate to the Entrance interview (and subsequent interviews with the Candidacy Committee) and observe the actual interview process. The role of a home pastor or campus minister is not that of an advocate for a candidate but primarily to be an observer and caregiver for a candidate. Such a person can

- provide the committee with a helpful longitudinal perspective on a candidate and can also offer regular support and pastoral care to a candidate throughout the candidacy process.
3. Information provided by the applicant, including the Candidacy Application form, an Autobiographical Essay, a Personal Financial Worksheet, a Personal Health Assessment, the Entrance Information Form, letters of reference, transcripts, licenses, certificates of completion for continuing education, and evidence of payment of an application fee.
 4. Information gathered by the Candidacy Committee: a Congregational Registration Form; screening reports completed by agencies and other professional assessors, including the Initial Interview Report Form (an optional resource for Candidacy Committees), a Psychological Evaluation Report (see Appendix C), and required Background Check Reports (see pages 28 – 34).

THE WHOLENESS WHEEL

The Wholeness Wheel, a guide for balancing all aspects of a person's health, depicts the interconnectedness of individual aspects of wellness. It visually portrays a process that is colorful, dynamic, vital, centered, balanced, contained, and inter-related.

One use of the Wholeness Wheel is as a tool and resource at the time of Entrance. It helps those in discernment and those accompanying them to understand better an applicant's giftedness and readiness for beginning the candidacy process. In preparation for the Entrance Interview, applicants provide information, participate in evaluations, and articulate in writing and in interviews answers to questions that are asked of all applicants – many of which touch upon various aspects included in the Wholeness Wheel.

Candidacy Committees in turn can use the Wholeness Wheel as a guide for exploring an applicant's balance and well-being. Committees review information provided by applicants in the following areas as they interview, discern, and make an Entrance Decision about an applicant:

Social and Inter-Personal Well-being

Candidacy is carried out in the context of various formative and trustworthy communities, including partners in the candidacy process.

Entrance components:

- One letter of reference from a non-family member who knows the applicant in social and non-work related settings.
- One letter of reference from a member of the ELCA worshiping community where the applicant currently participates.
- Completed Background Check.

Emotional Well-being

Being emotionally healthy is a necessary aspect of candidacy. Knowing who one is as a person and where one's emotional strengths and challenges lie is a significant understanding to bring to candidacy and to address frequently throughout the process.

Entrance component:

- *Completed report of the required Psychological Evaluation.*

Physical Well-being

Because candidacy is a challenging and demanding process, for many candidates staying well will be a challenge. Understanding one's physical health and the ability to manage this aspect of living is the candidate's responsibility.

Entrance component:

- *Personal Health Assessment completed by the applicant (see Appendix).*

Financial Well-being

Personal financial wellness is essential for a successful candidacy experience and for long-term faithful service as a rostered leader in the church.

Entrance components:

- *Completed report of the required Background Check (see Appendix).*
- *Completed Personal Financial Worksheet (see Appendix).*

Vocational Well-being

Candidacy involves accountability, responsibility, and performance. An applicant's work experience contributes to a person's readiness for candidacy.

Entrance component:

- *Completed report of all previous and current employment (included in Candidacy Application form).*

Intellectual Well-being

Candidates are expected to exhibit intellectual ability, curiosity, and analytical and communication skills.

Entrance components:

- *Copies of transcripts of all post-secondary education (completed degrees and non-completed degrees).*
- *Copies of certificates of completion for all continuing education and other professional and academic work.*

Spiritual Well-being

Every candidate participates in the life of a worshiping community through Word and Sacrament. The candidate's worshiping community is an important partner in the candidacy process because it identifies, nurtures, and supports potential leaders for public ministries in this church.

Entrance component:

- *Completed Congregation Registration Form.* The registration is neither a decision regarding candidacy nor a determination for service as a rostered minister. Instead, it is an important statement concerning an applicant's readiness to begin the candidacy process and his or her potential to serve in rostered ministry from the perspective of a community

of faith which has discerned in the applicant gifts for candidacy and rostered ministry. Information provided by a campus minister, when applicable, can be a helpful addition or attachment to the Congregation Registration Form.

THE WHOLESOME WHEEL



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Entrance Interview

As Candidacy Committees prepare for an Entrance interview, they will focus on many characteristics of readiness, including a candidate's potential for missional leadership. At Entrance the focus of the Candidacy Committee is on a candidate's *awareness* of missional leadership characteristics and God's mission in the world. When a Candidacy Committee evaluates an applicant at the time of Entrance, the following aspects of readiness also deserve careful consideration:

1. Faith in the Triune God, spiritual maturity, passion for justice, and compassion for God's people;
2. Demonstration of a healthy lifestyle;
3. Awareness of both missional leadership characteristics and what it means for the church to participate in God's mission in the world;
4. Awareness of both theological and practical perspectives on the nature of Christian ministry, the various forms of rostered ministry in the ELCA, and an understanding of the call to rostered ministry;
5. Familiarity with Lutheran congregational life, including a minimum of one year's active participation in an ELCA worshiping community;
6. Academic readiness, including:
 - a. Appropriate undergraduate preparation,
 - b. Language skills—oral and written, and
 - c. Foundational knowledge of the Scriptures and Lutheran theology;
7. A realistic assessment of one's potential for rostered ministry including gifts, abilities, and pertinent situational factors.

The Entrance Interview may not be held until all components of the candidacy application process are complete. The candidate, the Candidacy Committee, and the seminary of enrollment can utilize various Entrance components to identify growth and developmental issues for the candidate and to assist the candidate's formation and growth in specific areas.

Guidelines for the Entrance Interview

This interview guide describes the flow of a thorough interview process. Each Candidacy Committee may adapt the structure to its own style and needs, while keeping in mind the important components set forth in this manual. These guidelines assume that interview panel members will have read and become familiar with the following:

1. *What Shall I Say? Discerning God's Call to Ministry;*
2. *Vision and Expectations;*
3. The Discernment Guide (see Appendix B: Guidelines for Discernment);
4. The Entrance section of the Candidacy Manual; and
5. The applicant's file, including all Entrance components.

The Entrance Interview may involve the entire Candidacy Committee or a panel with no less than three committee members. Since the purpose of the interview is to build relationships with

applicants and to be comprehensive in reviewing submitted materials, the committee will need to allow sufficient time for the interview and committee deliberation.

I. Introduction

Extending hospitality to an applicant is critical to the effectiveness of both the interview itself and the candidacy process. Hospitality conveys to an applicant encouragement and a sense of community. All members of the panel or Candidacy Committee will introduce themselves to the applicant. Many applicants and Candidacy Committees value the opportunity to begin each interview with prayer.

II. Interview with the Applicant

The following is a suggested order for the flow of conversation during an Entrance interview:

A. Discernment Process

1. Describe your personal discernment process. What was the depth and extent of the process? In your discernment, what did you discover, both positively and negatively?
2. Lutherans recognize a corporate dimension to discernment. Where in this church have you sought or found your sense of call identified or affirmed? Who else has recognized it?
3. How do you understand or perceive the rostered ministry to which you feel called?
4. What do you consider to be the most pressing need of this church today? How do you envision your prospective vocational role might address that need?
5. How might you as a rostered leader in the ELCA identify, support, and advance God's mission in the world?

B. Readiness for Candidacy

More than ever, the church today is seeking leaders who understand and are oriented toward mission. This means having an ability to analyze context critically, evaluate needed changes, identify new approaches to ministry, and lead people in mission - often beyond their comfort zone. The following questions are suggested to encourage applicants to tell their own faith story with a missional lens and to give the committee a means of evaluating their missional awareness:

1. What rostered leaders have influenced your view of mission and ministry? In what ways have they been either a positive or a negative influence for you?
2. Where do you see God active in your life? In the world?
3. How do you understand God is present in suffering?
4. Describe the context of your own worshiping community, including its history, setting, and current practices.
5. Describe an instance where you shared your faith/God's love with another person.
6. Describe a community or group where you have held a leadership role (formal or informal). What did that look like? What was difficult for you? What did you learn?
7. How does the Christian faith inform your orientation to and engagement with the world? In what ways do you see the world as the arena for God's mission?
8. How will your pursuit of candidacy and rostered ministry affect your family life?
9. To what extent have you considered mobility issues in your discernment?

In the course of the interview, the committee will also review and discuss the Psychological Evaluation reports. The following questions might facilitate helpful discussion of these two Entrance components:

10. What was your response to the Psychological Evaluation? What insights from this conversation have been useful in your discernment process? Note: Interviewers will want to be attentive to any concerns regarding health-related issues (physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual) that are reflected in the reports or the interview itself.

C. Required Entrance Questions

Because ELCA rostered leaders accept responsibility for protecting both this church and its members, they are called to live in the world as faithful examples of the Christian life. For that reason, Candidacy Committees need to ask those considering rostered ministry about their personal conduct. An applicant may or may not have self-knowledge and self-awareness that can assist the committee in assessing readiness for candidacy. Some situational factors must also be addressed to invite awareness and openness regarding potential for healthy leadership in the ELCA. Some factors will disqualify applicants, including a history of sexual attraction to minors or sexually deviant behavior with children or minors. Careful attention should be given to an applicant's answers on the Candidacy Application form and the ways issues have been addressed or resolved. The Candidacy Committee should inquire specifically about issues that could indicate significant obstacles to readiness.

As part of the Entrance interview, the committee should invite an applicant to offer reflections and/or clarifications related to his or her responses to the required Entrance questions. The committee may also raise any additional questions generated by an applicant's responses. If the committee identifies concerns related to an applicant's fitness for candidacy or rostered ministry, it should make further inquiry and consultation pertaining to such concerns before making an Entrance decision. At the time of the Entrance interview, both an applicant and a member of the Candidacy Committee will sign a copy of the Candidacy Application form and the Entrance Information Form. The signed copies, along with any written analysis or review by the Candidacy Committee, should become part of the candidacy file.

During the Entrance interview, usually near the conclusion of it, the Candidacy Committee will discuss the following questions asked on the Candidacy Application form with every applicant:

Out of care for the church every candidate answers these questions as part of the Candidacy Application form. Now we invite you to discuss your written answers and share other information you feel would be helpful to the Candidacy Committee.

1. Are you familiar with the document Vision and Expectations? Do you intend to live in accord with its standards of conduct as a candidate and as a rostered leader in the ELCA?
2. Do you belong to any organization or lodge like the Free Masons or Eastern Stars which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church?
3. Do you have or have you had any health conditions (physical or psychological) that might interfere with your ability to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA?
4. Are there issues in your family situation or personal life that could adversely affect your ability to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA?
5. Is your personal debt, excluding mortgage, greater than \$31,500?

6. *Have you ever defaulted on a loan or declared bankruptcy?*
7. *Do you now engage or have you ever engaged in any addictive behavior, including drug or alcohol abuse or sexual or pornographic addictions?*
8. *Have you ever been terminated or resigned from any employment or volunteer activities due to accusations of misconduct, whether financial, sexual, ethical, or other improper behavior?*
9. *Have you ever engaged in, been accused of, charged with, or convicted of a crime or illegal conduct, including conduct resulting in suspension or revocation of your driver's license? .*
10. *Have you ever been engaged in, accused of, sued, or charged with sexual molestation, sexual harassment, child neglect or abuse, spousal neglect or abuse, or financial improprieties? .*
11. *Do you have any sexual attraction toward children or minors, or any history of sexually deviant behavior, including behavior with children or minors?*
12. *Have you engaged in any behavior or been involved in any situations that, if they became known by the church, might seriously damage your ability to continue in candidacy for rostered ministry?*
13. *Are you prepared to accept a call from this church based on the needs of the church which might require service in a location different from where you now live?*
14. *Is there additional information that would assist the Candidacy Committee in considering your candidacy or that you believe the committee should know?*

D. The Spiritual Journey

Spiritual formation has both individual and corporate dimensions. An applicant for candidacy is expected to be a member in good standing of an ELCA worshiping community for a minimum of one year. The Candidacy Committee will ask about the applicant's involvement in the life of his/her worshiping community.

It is important for the committee to explore an applicant's ability to articulate and be formed by faith experiences. Here are some possible lines of inquiry that could be incorporated into an Entrance interview:

1. What is your sense of God's presence in your life right now?
2. What Bible stories or scripture passages are especially meaningful to you now or represent your spiritual journey?
3. What or who has been most formative in your spiritual growth?
4. How will your faith life be sustained and nurtured during candidacy? (An applicant might propose a plan for his/her faith life that includes such practices as the use of a trained spiritual director, participation in a group discipleship experience, retreats, personal devotions and daily prayer, and regular participation in worship in a seminary setting and a congregation.)
5. What are your plans for offering service to others?
6. In what ways are you currently practicing wholistic stewardship?
7. How do you intend to engage in ongoing vocational discernment during candidacy?
8. What kinds of healthy habits for self-care are you developing for yourself?

III. The Recommendation

At the conclusion of the Entrance interview, an applicant should be excused from the room, while the panel or committee comes to a decision and prepares a written statement regarding the applicant. In the case of a panel recommendation, the actual Entrance decision is made by the full Candidacy Committee.

The Entrance Decision

Using all available information, a Candidacy Committee makes an Entrance decision. In the case of a multi-synodical Candidacy Committee, primary responsibility for a candidate resides with the synod of candidacy. All Entrance decisions should be clearly communicated on the Entrance Decision Form to the applicant, the ELCA seminary of choice, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The Entrance decision is one of the following:

- **Entrance Granted.** An Entrance Granted Decision indicates the committee's confidence in the applicant's potential and readiness for candidacy, theological study, and vocational formation. The decision means that the applicant demonstrates gifts, abilities, and potential for rostered ministry.
- **Entrance Postponed.** If the applicant demonstrates gifts and abilities but lacks sufficient readiness (physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual), the committee recommends postponement. In doing so, the committee will identify developmental or situational issues that need to be addressed and/or conditions that must be met before an applicant can be reconsidered for Entrance. Factors that might indicate postponement include the following: emotional and psychological factors that could improve with therapy or other interventions; indication of current substance abuse; current or very recent marital distress, separation, or divorce; a family situation that will be highly stressed by geographic relocation; financial stress with a heavy debt load; limited familiarity with Lutheran congregational life; lack of basic biblical and catechetical knowledge; substantial health problems; or recent life crises without adequate time for healing. Other factors relating to academic readiness, including poor writing skills or inadequate undergraduate preparation, will be determined by the seminary admissions process. If the committee has academic concerns, consultation with the appropriate seminary admissions director is advised.

When postponement is indicated, the committee must clearly state on the Entrance decision form the reasons for the decision. The committee will also ask the applicant to submit a written plan for addressing the identified issues, concerns, or difficulties. The applicant and the committee together will determine how progress will be monitored, when reconsideration may be scheduled, and what procedure will be followed for reconsideration.

- **Entrance Denied.** This decision states specific reasons why an applicant is not an appropriate candidate for rostered ministry. The rationale for such a decision may include issues related to discernment, health, readiness, or other situational factors. If the applicant clearly lacks the gifts and abilities needed for rostered ministry, then a Candidacy Committee will consider denying an applicant Entrance. In the event of denial, the committee should provide appropriate pastoral care at the time the committee shares its discernment with an applicant. The Candidacy Committee should also assist an applicant

in further discernment as to where his or her particular gifts might be more appropriately used in this church or in other areas of service. The Candidacy Committee has an important contribution to make in relation to an applicant's understanding of vocation and may need to devote extra time to discern with an applicant other possible avenues whereby an applicant can live out her or his vocation. A candidate whose Entrance has been denied may reapply for Entrance after one year. The Candidacy Committee will at its discretion determine whether or not to act on such reapplications.

Reporting Entrance Decisions

The decision of the synod Candidacy Committee will be reported to the applicant, the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, and the ELCA seminary of choice, using the Entrance Decision Form. All reports and decisions of the Candidacy Committee, including denials, shall be maintained in the candidate's file. Such files shall be maintained according to Candidacy Records Management Policy (see pages 12-13).

Withdrawal of Entrance

Entrance does not guarantee the committee's final Approval of a candidate. If warranted by written allegations of actions that may prove harmful to the church, a Candidacy Committee has the responsibility to withdraw Entrance prior to Endorsement. A decision to withdraw Entrance is a significant action that ends candidacy. When withdrawal is being considered, a Candidacy Committee will normally communicate with a candidate prior to making such a decision.

Reapplication after Entrance Denial

The reapplication must be made to the original synod of application, unless there are extenuating circumstances (see Guidelines for Transfer of Candidacy, pages 21- 22). If the Candidacy Committee decides to act on the reapplication, the Candidacy Committee will retrieve, activate, and appropriately update the applicant's stored file.

The Candidacy Committee reports any new Entrance decisions to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. A candidate who has been denied Entrance must reapply with the same synod, unless there are

Contact Person/Relator

Because personal contact with a candidate throughout the Candidacy Process is essential for formation, growth, and personal development, Candidacy Committees need to appoint a contact person/relator who is a member of the committee for each candidate receiving a positive Entrance decision. The contact person/relator serves throughout candidacy as a liaison between the committee and the candidate to share mutual joys and concerns. The following guidelines are suggested for the role of a contact person/relator:

1. Be present for all interviews with the candidates.
2. Exchange contact and other personal information with assigned candidates early in the relationship.
3. Be prepared to update the current status of the candidate prior to any committee meetings or decisions.
4. Pray for the candidate.
5. Maintain contact through letters, e-mail, telephone calls, visits, retreats, birthday cards, etc.

6. Encourage the candidate to share significant news or concerns and provide updates on academic and practical progress.
7. Assist the candidate in ongoing discernment of call, identifying and monitoring areas of growth, developing a candidate plan, and sharing experiences of grace.

Because the role of the contact person/relator is critical for continuity and healthy communication throughout the candidacy process, Candidacy Committees need to be attentive to the activities of these persons and the frequency and quality of their contact with assigned candidates. When a committee member leaves the committee, the Candidacy Committee in a timely manner will identify a replacement contact person/relator for all candidates who were relating to the departing committee member. Special sensitivity to how the departure of committee members affects candidates is very appropriate, including seeking the input of a candidate concerning a suitable replacement for the former contact person/relator.

Seminary Admission

In consultation with the Candidacy Committee, individuals normally apply to a seminary of the ELCA or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and follow the seminary's admissions process. Those who consider study at a theological school or seminary other than an ELCA or ELCIC seminary must affiliate with an ELCA seminary before completing the Candidacy Covenant (see description below). ELCA and ELCIC seminaries will normally not extend an offer of admission to an ELCA applicant until receiving notification of a positive Entrance decision by a Candidacy Committee. An applicant who has begun but not yet completed Entrance into candidacy may receive a provisional offer of admission by the seminary. Such a provisional offer will be withdrawn unless the Candidacy Committee makes a positive Entrance decision by the end of the first term or semester of study. A positive Entrance decision does not guarantee seminary admission. A seminary may deny admission for academic or other reasons.

Candidacy Formation Covenant

The increasing number and diversity of seminary leadership formation programs and related curricula available for candidates has made it necessary for Candidacy Committees to develop a process for gathering candidate information that includes the seminary program in which a candidate is enrolled. A Candidacy Committee needs access to such information when scheduling Endorsement and Approval interviews. Many Candidacy Committees already have a good system for gathering candidate information to help them project possible timing for scheduling interviews with candidates. Such practices should be continued.

The primary intent behind the development of a candidate covenant, which can assume a variety of formats and patterns, is to strengthen the partnership between Candidacy Committees and ELCA seminaries throughout the candidacy process.

The following model is presented as an option for Candidacy Committees to consider.

1. Following the decision to grant Entrance, a candidate will assume primary responsibility, in consultation with the seminary of enrollment and the contact person/relator on the Candidacy Committee, for gathering the necessary information to complete the Covenant form. (Appendix E).

2. The purpose of such consultation is to develop a tentative timetable for the remainder of the candidacy process, including the timing of the Endorsement interview, so that it fits the circumstances of the candidate and the particular seminary program in which the candidate is enrolled. Details will vary on a case by case basis.

3. Participants may use distance conferencing media to avoid excessive time and expense.

Copies of a completed covenant for each candidate will be kept by the Candidacy Committee, the seminary of enrollment, and the candidate.

Guidelines for Affiliated Students

All candidates for ordained ministry in the ELCA are strongly encouraged to earn an M.Div. degree at an ELCA/ ELCIC seminary; however, some candidates may elect to attend any seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. Candidates considering a non-ELCA/ELCIC seminary follow the same steps outlined in this manual for Entrance to candidacy in the ELCA (see Chapter 3).

Candidates for ordained ministry must be recommended for Approval (see Chapter six) by the faculty of an ELCA or ELCIC seminary. Accordingly, candidates planning to graduate from a non-ELCA/ELCIC seminary with an M.Div. degree must formally affiliate with an ELCA seminary, normally before Endorsement. Affiliation will assist candidates in completing ELCA candidacy requirements for ordained ministry. Affiliation is best established following the granting of an Entrance decision and during the period of formulating a Candidacy Formation Covenant (see above and Appendix C). Faculty from both the seminary of enrollment and the seminary of affiliation will collaborate with the candidate in developing such a covenant. When completed, a copy of the candidate covenant is submitted to the Candidacy Committee. If for some reason the affiliation process is not completed prior to Endorsement, the candidate can expect delays in Approval, assignment, and ordination.

Normally, at Entrance each candidate, in consultation with his or her Candidacy Committee, has chosen an ELCA/ELCIC seminary with which to affiliate. It is the candidate's responsibility to contact the selected ELCA/ELCIC seminary for purposes of affiliation. Candidates are also responsible for developing a Candidacy Formation Covenant in consultation with the seminary of affiliation, the seminary of enrollment, and the Candidacy Committee, in order to ensure the completion of all ELCA requirements for ordination. A faculty person(s) at the seminary of affiliation will accompany the candidate throughout the candidacy process after affiliation and will arrange, if needed, for completion of the supervised clinical ministry requirement; administer the internship year (see below); provide a year of resident theological study (see below); and submit a recommendation (Form D) regarding approval for ordination to the appropriate Candidacy Committee.

A one-time affiliation fee - applicable to every student enrolled at a non-ELCA seminary and preparing for ordained ministry - is due at the time of affiliation. Affiliation with an ELCA/ELCIC seminary is not admission to a degree program nor any other program of study for academic credit, nor is it a guarantee of admission at the seminary of affiliation.

Lutheran students enrolled at non-ELCA/ELCIC seminaries follow the normal candidacy process, with the exception that the Endorsement panel (see below) is replaced by an Endorsement interview with the Candidacy Committee. Recommendations in writing or in person from the faculties of both the non-ELCA seminary and the ELCA/ELCIC seminary of affiliation may be requested by the Candidacy Committee in order to make a fully informed Endorsement decision. *Note: Students who delay Entrance into the Candidacy process or who defer affiliation with an ELCA/ELCIC seminary until after their first year of study may encounter an extended period of preparation for rostered leadership. At least one year must elapse between Endorsement and Approval of a candidate by a Candidacy Committee.*

Internship and Supervised Clinical Ministry

For candidates enrolled at non-ELCA/ELCIC seminaries, the seminary of affiliation arranges for and determines the timing of the internship year in consultation with the Candidacy Committee. ELCA/ELCIC seminaries typically require that a candidate be Endorsed before beginning an internship placement.

400 hours of supervised clinical ministry is also a requirement of all ELCA candidates for ordained ministry. Typically, this requirement is fulfilled by completing one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education(CPE) accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), the National Association of Catholic Chaplains, or the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education. Fulfillment of the supervised clinical ministry requirement can be arranged through either the candidate's non-ELCA seminary or the ELCA seminary of affiliation. When a candidate completes this requirement through a non-ELCA seminary, he or she must determine through the seminary of affiliation that the program meets ELCA ordination standards.

Residency

The required Lutheran year of residency for candidates enrolled at non-ELCA/ELCIC seminaries may come at any point during a candidate's M.Div. program, or it may follow completion of the M.Div. degree. The year of residency has the following purposes and objectives:

1. To provide a solid grounding in Lutheran systematic theology and the Lutheran Confessions and to enable articulation of a Lutheran theological perspective through the study of theology, church history, Bible, worship, preaching, Christian education, pastoral care, and ethics. Such grounding in a Lutheran theological perspective occurs not only in classrooms but also through the total teaching/learning environment and culture of an ELCA/ELCIC seminary.
2. To provide a candidate with a holistic understanding of ministry in a Lutheran context, including the integrity and varieties of Lutheran worship; an appreciation of the relationship between lay and ordained ministries; familiarity with policies and practices associated with Approval, call, and mobility; and expectations of the ELCA of its ordained ministers.
3. To enable a candidate to participate in current theological conversations within the ELCA and establish relationships with future colleagues characterized by mutual support and consolation, accountability, and a clear sense of shared mission.

Candidates at non-ELCA/ELCIC seminaries should plan their M.Div. studies in regular consultation with ELCA faculty advisors at the seminary of affiliation, in order to make optimal

use of resources available at the non-ELCA/ELCIC seminary and to formulate through their affiliation relationship a program design that will accomplish the goals and purposes of the year of residency at an ELCA/ELCIC seminary. It may be possible for a candidate with an M. Div. degree from a non-ELCA/ELCIC seminary to work toward or earn an advanced degree while fulfilling the objectives of the year of residency. A candidate seeking to earn an advanced degree while fulfilling the residency requirement must also complete admission requirements at the ELCA/ELCIC seminary of affiliation.

ELCA/ELCIC seminaries, through the academic dean, will advise affiliated candidates about designing a course of study for the year of residency in order to make sure that the objectives of the year can be met and the needs and experience of the candidate are considered. Competencies expected of those preparing to serve as ordained ministers in the ELCA (see pages 1-6) should inform the intended study plan. Such a plan might appropriately include: Old Testament (senior level exegesis), Gospels and/or Paul (senior level exegesis), Reformation history, theology of Luther, Lutheran Confessions, Lutheranism in North America, global Lutheranism, systematic theology (particularly Christology/salvation), Lutheran ethics (including ELCA social statements), contemporary Lutheran theologians, Lutheran ecclesiology and polity, Lutheran worship, Lutheran preaching, Lutheran education/confirmation practices, evangelism, stewardship, missiology/congregational mission, and theology of ministry. In addressing such competencies in the fullest possible manner, individual seminaries will refer to the preceding list in selecting courses for a particular candidate.

Because the required year of residence at an ELCA/ELCIC seminary provides *formation as well as education*, it will normally not be waived or reduced in length. In exceptional cases, the required year of residency at an ELCA/ELCIC seminary may be waived, in full or in part. The three objectives of the year of residency (see above) provide the criteria by which the requirement may be waived. The decision to waive or reduce the residency requirement is made by the Candidacy Committee at the request of a candidate and in consultation with the ELCA/ELCIC seminary and, if possible, with Lutheran faculty advisors at the non-ELCA seminary. Any such waiver request must be approved by the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit upon recommendation by the Candidacy Committee.

A decision to waive the residency requirement must occur at the point of Endorsement. Every candidate granted such a waiver will still need to complete particular course requirements in Lutheran studies, demonstrate continued active participation in an ELCA congregation, and have significant experience in Lutheran church life and formation. Waiver of the residency requirement does not alter the requirements for an internship supervised through an ELCA/ELCIC seminary and a supervised clinical ministry experience.

Candidates for whom the residency requirement has been waived must receive the recommendation of an ELCA/ELCIC seminary of affiliation (Form D) in order to be approved for ordination. To assist an ELCA/ELCIC faculty in making an informed recommendation, the candidate will arrange for and participate in an interview with ELCA/ELCIC seminary faculty and provide samples of academic papers and other written documents that provide sufficient evidence of competence in learning, ministry practices, and familiarity with ELCA polity and contexts.

Change of Roster

Current ELCA rostered leaders who apply for a different roster enter the candidacy process at Endorsement. The Candidacy Committee will thereafter follow the same procedures outlined in this manual for the remainder of the candidacy process.

Guidelines for Supervised Clinical Ministry

Introduction

The ELCA requires all candidates for ordained ministry to complete one unit of supervised clinical ministry. Candidates normally complete this unit before Endorsement and must meet this requirement prior to internship and the Approval interview. The preferred way for meeting this requirement is a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). Other recognized accrediting bodies include the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) and the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE).

Supervised clinical ministry offers candidates the opportunity to experience learning in direct, integrated ways while practicing the art of pastoral ministry. Among the benefits of such a learning experience are growth in pastoral identity, self-understanding, and theological reflection. Interaction with peers and a supervisor in an interpersonal learning group is a key feature of the experience.

The seminary, in consultation with the appropriate synod Candidacy Committee and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, shall evaluate and approve alternative programs and equivalencies in advance. Candidates who opt for a non-accredited program should be mindful that it will not fulfill the unit of CPE required for admission to an ACPE residency. This may have important implications for candidates considering future training leading to ecclesiastical endorsement and certification in specialized pastoral care ministry.

The seminary has primary responsibility for the management and administration of this educational requirement. The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit maintains and provides programmatic standards, criteria for evaluations, and guidelines for the approval of programs and supervision.

Standards

The programmatic standards for an approved supervised clinical ministry program shall include, but are not limited by, the following:

1. A specified time period of no less than 400 hours, including supervised clinical practice in ministry, structured group discussion, and individual study and reflection.
2. Active reporting and evaluation of one's practice of ministry, utilizing a small peer group and individual supervision.
3. Supervision by an individual who is appropriately trained, qualified, and credentialed.
4. An inductive, experiential model of learning that uses the clinical/case method and focuses on one's whole person in the practice of ministry.

5. Growth in learning the art of pastoral and spiritual care through conceptual models from theology, ethics, and the behavioral sciences.
6. A context of interpersonal ministry, which potentially includes involvement in pastoral care, social justice, worship and music, preaching, program management, teaching, etc.
7. An individual contract for learning, developed collaboratively by the student and supervisor, that addresses:
 - a. The expression of a personal theology of pastoral ministry;
 - b. An enhanced self-understanding and self-integration: spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, and relational;
 - c. The ability to initiate helping relationships;
 - d. The identification of personal strengths and weaknesses in pastoral activities;
 - e. The ability to use supervision for personal and professional growth and to develop the capacity for self-evaluation in ministry;
 - f. The capacity to consult with a peer group and receive supportive and challenging feedback in ministry;
 - g. The development of one's pastoral identity and authority while working collaboratively with interdisciplinary teams; and
 - h. The formulation of clear and specific goals for continuing pastoral formation.

Chapter 4 - Admission under Other Circumstances

Theological Education for Emerging Ministries

Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) is a leadership formation process in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) designed for persons who meet the established criteria for participation in it. Authorized in the ELCA constitution (7:31.14) and described in the Study of Ministry (2003), the Study of Theological Education (1993; 1995), and the ELCA's Plan for Mission adopted at the 2003 Churchwide Assembly, the TEEM process responds to the ministry needs of the ELCA.

Consideration for admittance into the TEEM process begins with the granting of Entrance by a Candidacy Committee followed by a recommendation from the synod bishop (see below). The Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit then grants acceptance of a candidate into the TEEM process.

Criteria for Acceptance into TEEM

A person seeking to complete all the academic and practical requirements for ordained ministry in the ELCA through the TEEM process will demonstrate the characteristics outlined on pages 3-6 of this manual. Every candidate participating in the TEEM process must be serving in an emerging ministry site identified by the synod bishop as defined below.

What is an emerging ministry?

Emerging ministries are Word and Sacrament communities that meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Ethnic-specific, multicultural, or recent immigrant ministries;
2. Small membership rural or urban congregations where a synod bishop has had difficulty identifying and placing a candidate for call;
3. New mission starts authorized through normal ELCA processes;
4. Redevelopment ministries authorized through normal ELCA processes;
5. Ministries with people who are differently abled.

The TEEM Process

TEEM candidates must complete all the steps in the candidacy process outlined in this manual. In that process, a candidate's admittance into TEEM occurs only after the following have been completed:

1. The synod bishop provides a letter recommending a candidate for admission into the TEEM process.
2. The bishop's letter of recommendation must identify a specific ministry site where a candidate will serve during the TEEM process. The same ministry site will serve as both the candidate's teaching parish experience and the site for a supervised internship.
3. The Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit must accept a candidate into the TEEM process.

After TEEM candidates complete their academic and practical ministry requirements and are granted Approval by a Candidacy Committee, they normally serve their first call in the ministry site identified by the synodical bishop. Following first call, the opportunities for mobility are the same as for all ELCA rostered leaders.

Steps in Candidacy for TEEM

1. Candidates for the TEEM process must be granted Entrance by a Candidacy Committee. In preparation for an Entrance interview, the following are required:
 - a. Candidacy Application form and Entrance Information Form
 - b. Congregational Registration
 - c. Background Check
 - d. Psychological Evaluation
 - e. An Entrance Essay
2. Following the granting of Entrance, a Candidacy Committee sends the following documentation to the Director for Candidacy in the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit:
 - a. The Entrance decision form
 - b. Entrance Essay
 - c. The bishop's letter of recommendation identifying the ministry site where the candidate will be serving.
3. After review of the documentation, the Director for Candidacy sends the synodical bishop and the Candidacy Committee a written notification of acceptance or rejection into TEEM with copies to the regional Missional Leadership Coordinator. Candidates not accepted into TEEM may continue the candidacy process by applying for admission into a Master of Divinity program at an accredited seminary.
4. Competency Assessment Panel (CAP)
Following notification of a candidate's acceptance into the TEEM process, the regional Missional Leadership Coordinator will normally convene a Competency Assessment Panel (CAP) at a seminary that offers a TEEM curriculum and where the candidate can complete the academic requirements. In situations when a CAP is convened in a synod, the synod will be responsible for travel costs for seminary faculty asked to serve on the CAP. In rare cases a synod may request the regional Missional Leadership Coordinator to convene a CAP using electronic technology. The primary responsibility of a Competency Assessment Panel is to assess a candidate's knowledge and leadership abilities in each of the identified competency areas identified below. In conversation with a candidate, the members of a CAP will identify the academic work needed to strengthen a candidate's ministry skills. A Competency Assessment Panel does not have the authority to reverse a Candidacy Committee's Entrance decision.

CAP members normally include:

- a. The seminary TEEM director and one seminary faculty person.
- b. The synodical bishop or his/her designee.
- c. A Candidacy Committee member.
- d. Deployed candidacy staff in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit or another CSM candidacy staff person.

- e. When a candidate is a person of color, a member from the appropriate ethnic community is invited.
- f. Approved lay mission developers are accompanied by a synod's Director for Evangelical Mission.

The seminary TEEM director normally serves as a candidate's faculty advisor and accompanies a candidate from the initial Competency Assessment Panel meeting through Approval and Assignment.

The frequency and number of CAP meetings with a candidate varies depending on synod and seminary expectations. Normally, a CAP will meet with a candidate at the beginning of the process, at Endorsement, and again prior to Approval. New communication technologies (conference calls, web meetings, and others) may be used to facilitate CAP meetings.

5. Endorsement

At approximately the mid-point of the process, a TEEM candidate participates in an Endorsement interview with the CAP, which serves as an Endorsement panel and makes a recommendation concerning Endorsement to the Candidacy Committee. Prior to the interview, the candidate must complete an Endorsement Essay. The appropriate seminary TEEM director, or in some cases the faculty advisor, participates in the panel. Based on the CAP recommendation, the Candidacy Committee makes an Endorsement decision. Endorsement is a pivotal point in the candidacy process, because it provides a Candidacy Committee with an opportunity to assess a candidate's progress and readiness to complete candidacy.

6. Approval

Upon successful completion of a candidate's program of study, a Competency Assessment Panel acts on behalf of the seminary faculty and completes the Approval recommendation (Form D) to the Candidacy Committee. The Candidacy Committee then follows the regular process for Approval. This final step includes preparation of an Approval Essay and participation in an Approval interview. The granting of Approval by a Candidacy Committee is required for completion of the TEEM process.

7. Assignment

Following the granting of Approval and the completion of the necessary assignment forms, TEEM candidates participate in the Churchwide Assignment process, which administratively assigns them to the synod where their ministry site is located. If a TEEM candidate is granted an Approval and the ministry site where the candidate is serving is no longer able to extend a call, the candidate will enter the regular Churchwide Assignment process to seek assignment and first call.

Competencies

A Competency Assessment Panel (CAP) assesses a candidate's understanding of Lutheran confessional identity and identifies additional resources and required course work that will strengthen a candidate's ability to integrate Lutheran theological understandings with the praxis of ministry. The following competencies are assessed by a CAP:

1. **Bible** – Skills for understanding and interpreting Scripture through a Lutheran hermeneutic reflected in preaching and teaching.

2. **Theology and Ethics** – An ability to analyze critically through Lutheran theological and ethical lenses.
3. **Lutheran Confessions** – An ability to teach the foundational teachings of the Lutheran church.
4. **Church History** – A basic understanding of the history of Christianity in the United States.
5. **Worship** – An ability to develop liturgy for a gathered assembly and to function as a spiritual and liturgical leader.
6. **Teaching** – An ability to teach others the Christian faith.
7. **Evangelical Mission and Stewardship** – Skills and knowledge for leading and developing communities of faith in responding to God's mission in the world in a way that is transforming and sustainable.
8. **ELCA Structure and Polity** – An understanding of the interrelationship among all expressions of the church and how ELCA structure and polity reflect Biblical and theological principles.
9. **Administration** – Basic church administrative skills and familiarity with denominational expectations.
10. **Service** – An understanding of the church's commitment to justice and the knowledge and skills needed to address hunger and poverty in specific ministry contexts and in the world.
11. **Pastoral Care** – Foundational knowledge, skill, and experience in providing basic pastoral care to persons in various life circumstances, transitions, and stages of life as well as the ability to lead and prepare others in a ministry setting to provide appropriate ministries of care.

Seminary Experience

Seminary TEEM programs provide the following:

1. A solid grounding in Lutheran theology and the Lutheran Confessions to enable a candidate to articulate a Lutheran theological perspective;
2. A firm understanding of ministry and mission in a Lutheran context, including the integrity and variety of Lutheran worship; an appreciation of the relationship between lay and ordained ministries; a familiarity with policies and practices associated with Approval, call and mobility, and expectations of the ELCA of its ordained ministers;
3. Opportunity for a candidate to become a participant in the current theological conversations of the ELCA and to establish relationships with future colleagues in ministry that are marked by mutual support, accountability, and a strong sense of shared mission; and
4. Participation in the seminary's boundary and safe church workshops or the equivalent offered by a synod.

Internship

During the first two years of the TEEM process, a TEEM candidate participates in a supervised internship experience in the site where a candidate is presently serving. An internship experience provides a TEEM candidate with the opportunity to receive structured feedback from an experienced pastor. Seminary internship evaluations or other structured feedback forms are normally completed during a candidate's second year of service in a ministry site and sent to the appropriate Candidacy Committee and the seminary TEEM director.

Supervised Clinical Ministry

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), which is required of all candidates, is important for the development of pastoral care skills for mission. Because pastoral care practices differ among

cultures, the CPE program selected must be sensitive to and understand a candidate's culture and ministry responsibilities. When a ministry setting where a candidate is serving would be negatively affected by a candidate's prolonged absence, or when a regular CPE program is not available, a Candidacy Committee may recommend an alternative contextualized CPE program that provides for the development of pastoral care skills.

Admission of Persons Ordained in Another Lutheran Church or in Another Christian Church Body

Sections I-VII below are from "Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Rosters of the ELCA," originally adopted by the Church Council as policy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, April 16, 1989 [CC89.04.54], and adopted, as revised, by the Church Council, November 14, 1994 [CC94.11.86].

Candidacy for persons ordained in another Christian tradition requires attention to a variety of circumstances and issues. Candidacy Committees should honor the background of every individual who seeks to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA and provide hospitality and appropriate orientation to the candidacy process. The candidacy process provides an opportunity, through a supportive partnership, to engage in mutual conversations with a focus on discernment and assessment.

The particular needs of this church are an important factor in determining who is approved for rostered ministry. The mission of the ELCA involves worship, nurture, outreach, service, and advocacy for justice. While the scope of this mission is global, its particular focus is on ministry in the United States and the Caribbean. It is essential, therefore, to have leaders who thoroughly understand and have experience with the cultural context of this diverse area. Candidates need to appreciate and be familiar with the teachings, polity, liturgy, and traditions of the ELCA.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) - Following certification of good standing on the roster of the ELCIC and with the approval of the bishop of the ELCA synod in which they are to serve, ordained ministers of the ELCIC shall be received by transfer, upon acceptance of a valid call from an ELCA congregation, a synod council, or the Church Council of the ELCA. This process is not a Candidacy Committee responsibility.

Full Communion Partners - The availability of ordained ministers to the ELCA from church bodies which are in full communion with the ELCA is not a candidacy matter. Guidelines for such exchange can be found in the Orderly Exchange documents of this church. When an ordained minister of a full communion partner church seeks to be rostered in the ELCA, a Candidacy Committee will follow the ELCA candidacy process according to the procedures outlined below. If the ordained minister has already served in an ELCA congregation, such experience should be acknowledged.

Lutheran World Federation Partners - Many ordained ministers of LWF churches serve in the ELCA through short-term or temporary arrangements with ELCA congregations or synods. Such exchanges adhere to the same principles of availability as relationships with full communion partners and do not require rostering. Although such programs can benefit both Lutheran churches involved, these matters are not candidacy concerns.

A Candidacy Committee may consider the application of an ordained minister of an LWF church seeking to commit to long-term service within the ELCA. Early consultation with the Global Mission unit is essential in such cases. Any concerns related to agreements or implications for the churches involved can be identified and considered when there is open communication between partners.

The candidacy process should always include a deep respect for the credentials and background of those seeking to be rostered in the ELCA; however, the credentials need to be examined in order to ensure that a candidate has good standing in the partner church, is theologically sound, and possesses good moral character. For applicants who come from outside the United States, there are additional factors to consider, such as length of time in the United States, familiarity with American culture, and prior service in the ELCA.

Other Lutheran Church Partners - Ordained ministers of other Lutheran churches should be treated with dignity and respect. The perspective of an individual with such credentials can enrich the ELCA and broaden an understanding of mission. The primary foci of the candidacy process in such situations are evaluation for suitability, screening, and orientation to the ELCA. The procedures for Candidacy Committees to follow are outlined below.

Other Ordained Ministers – Ordained ministers who serve in other Christian traditions may be admitted to the roster of the ELCA, if they meet and maintain ELCA standards for ordained ministers and are committed to the confession of faith of this church. The appropriate candidacy procedures appear below. They provide an opportunity to engage in mutual conversations for discernment and assessment through a supportive partnership.

Policy and Procedures

I. Basic Standards for Word and Sacrament Ministers

- A. According to ELCA bylaw 7.31.11, persons admitted to the ELCA roster of ordained ministers shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following:
 1. Commitment to Christ;
 2. Acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
 3. Willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
 4. Academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
 5. Commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
 6. Receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
 7. Membership in a congregation of this church.
- B. Any person seeking admission to the ordained ministry of this church must be able to meet and maintain the above standards. In the case of a person previously ordained by another Lutheran church body or another Christian tradition, the applicant needs to be familiar with the Confession of Faith of this church and committed to it.

II. Initial Application

- A. The applicant registers with the synod of residence. In the case of someone who does not reside in the United States, registration may be made to a synod where there is a familial or mentor relationship; or a request may be made to the Conference of Bishops for a

synodical assignment. Synods should consult with the Global Mission unit regarding candidates from outside the United States (other than the ELCIC).

- B. The applicant provides the synod Candidacy Committee with the following information:
 1. A Candidacy Application form (including the signed release on the last page), the Entrance Information Form, and the Application Form for Persons from Another Lutheran Church or Christian Tradition;
 2. Academic transcripts for all post-secondary education (degree or non-degree);
 3. Certificates of study (if any);
 4. Documentation of supervised field experience (i.e. internship, clinical education, etc.);
 5. A statement or certificate of ordained status in another Lutheran church body or Christian tradition;
 6. A letter of reference from the applicant's current or former ecclesiastical supervisor;
 7. INS documentation (for those seeking to immigrate to the United States);
 8. A completed Psychological Evaluation and Background Check;
 9. A recent sermon;
 10. A personal statement, including the theological rationale for why the applicant seeks to serve on the ordained roster of the ELCA; and
 11. A recent photograph.
- C. Upon receipt of the foregoing information, the synod bishop, in consultation with the synod Candidacy Committee, arranges an interview with the applicant. The purpose of this interview is to determine the applicant's readiness to enter the ELCA candidacy process. Entrance into candidacy is based upon the adequacy of the information provided and the applicant's intention to serve as an ordained minister of the ELCA. If the applicant comes from an overseas church with formal relations with the ELCA, the Candidacy Committee will consult with the Global Mission unit for the purpose of receiving additional information regarding the applicant that is available from the applicant's church body. After completing the interview and receiving the required information, the Candidacy Committee will consider the applicant for Endorsement.

III. Theological Review Panel/Endorsement

- A. After granting Entrance to a candidate, a Candidacy Committee will request the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to convene a Theological Review Panel (TRP). Such a panel normally will include the seminary representative serving on the Candidacy Committee. The Theological Review Panel may be convened either on the territory of the synod or at an ELCA seminary.
- B. The Theological Review Panel, following an interview with a candidate, makes a recommendation to the Candidacy Committee concerning Endorsement. Recommendations from the panel may include:
 1. Immediate recommendation for an Approval interview with no additional requirements.
 2. A plan of preparation outlined in the Theological Review Panel report including participation in a Boundary/Safe Church workshop, followed by an Approval interview.
 3. A plan or preparation as outlined in the report with a follow-up interview with the same Theological Review Panel prior to the Approval interview.
 4. A recommendation for Postponement or Denial of Endorsement.
- C. The panel informs the Candidacy Committee and the candidate in writing of its

recommendation. The Candidacy Committee then acts on the recommendation at its next regular meeting.

IV. Approval

Upon successful completion of the required work recommended by the Theological Review Panel, a Candidacy Committee considers a candidate for Approval. Normally, a positive recommendation from the TRP is necessary for a Candidacy Committee to grant Approval. In the case of a candidate who has been denied a positive recommendation by a TRP, a Candidacy Committee must consult directly with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, which will arrange for a member of the TRP to be present at the Approval Interview and participate in the committee's deliberations. A Candidacy Committee reports an Approval decision in writing to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The candidate completes the churchwide assignment forms in order to be assigned to a region and a synod for a call process.

V. Ordination or Reception of the Candidate

- A. After a candidate receives and accepts a letter of call, the synodical bishop consults with the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA concerning reception of the candidate.
- B. The ELCA will receive ordained ministers from churches which believe, teach, and confess the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds.
- C. Those from other traditions which do not confess the above creeds will be ordained according to the Service of Ordination. The Office of the Secretary of the ELCA determines how this policy applies in the case of each candidate.¹
- D. The basis for this policy is the recognition that while ordination is into the Church catholic, it is always particularized in a specific tradition of the Church, never in the abstract. As the ELCA lives out its ecumenical vision and policy, it is necessary to avoid the impression that this church is taking unilateral action implying the recognition or exchangeability of ordained ministers from another Christian tradition. At the same time, it is equally important to give a clear witness to this church's willingness to affirm the ordination of churches which believe, teach, and confess the ecumenical creeds.

VI. Pastoral Care and Support

For those who come to the ELCA from other Christian churches, the beginning of service as an ordained ELCA pastor is an important time - a time to establish significant relationships for support and growth. During the early years of service, it is recommended that the synod bishop offer the newly rostered pastor a mentor who would assist in providing such support and nurture.

Guidelines for Theological Review Panels

Congregational and Synodical Mission unit staff – usually a regional coordinator – convene a Theological Review Panel (TRP) to assess a candidate's theological readiness to serve on a roster of the ELCA. Partnership with ELCA seminaries is highly valued in the Theological Review Panel process for persons ordained in another Lutheran church or another Christian tradition, for reinstatement, and in other situations that might benefit from such a panel. Note: In the process used for Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM), there is a similar panel – now called a Competency Assessment Panel (CAP) to avoid confusion – that exercises

a different function (see Guidelines for Theological Education for Emerging Ministries, pages 52-56).

Review Panels may be held at regularly scheduled times throughout the year on an ELCA seminary campus. They may also be convened on the territory of a synod and include the Candidacy Committee's seminary faculty representative. The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit staff determines the participants on the panel, which may include:

1. Congregational and Synodical Mission unit candidacy staff
2. ELCA seminary Faculty (usually two, one of whom normally is the seminary representative on the Candidacy Committee)
3. Candidacy Committee member(s) - usually two
4. An ethnic or community representative (if appropriate)
5. An interpreter (if needed)

The Review Panel meets only after a Candidacy Committee has granted Entrance. Congregational and Synodical Mission unit central or deployed staff schedule and convene the TRP and distribute appropriate materials from the candidate's file to the TRP prior to the meeting. The CSM unit staff person also serves as convener for the TRP and submits the report from the TRP to the Candidacy Committee and the Director for Candidacy.

In preparation for the Theological Review Panel, a candidate needs to be familiar with the following:

1. *ELCA Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions*, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
2. Luther's *Small Catechism*
3. *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and other ELCA worship resources
4. *The Book of Concord* (available in English, German, Scandinavian languages, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish)
5. *Vision and Expectations*
6. *Use of the Means of Grace*

A candidate needs to be prepared to address the following with a TRP:

1. An understanding of the mission and ministry of the ELCA;
2. Familiarity with the life, history, and culture of American Lutheranism;
3. Involvement in the life of an ELCA congregation (a minimum of one year);
4. An understanding of worship, stewardship, and evangelism practices;
5. Theological competence in interpreting the doctrine of this church;
6. Academic readiness, with careful attention to competency in the Lutheran Confessions and Lutheran theology;
7. Supervised ministry experience, including field work, internships, and clinical ministry; and
8. Indigenous experience that has prepared the candidate for public ministry

The TRP should give attention to the following:

1. Membership in an ELCA congregation and active participation in its ministry;
2. Recommendations that are clearly written with measurable outcomes and expectations;
3. Recommended (as appropriate) coursework, reading, mentoring, internships, or other means of preparation and formation; and
4. A suggested timeline for completing the recommendations and any follow-up review or recommendations.

Following an interview with a candidate, the TRP recommends an appropriate course of preparation. The CSM staff person convening the TRP writes a panel report with the panel's recommendations and clear expectations and distributes it to all panel members, the candidate, the Candidacy Committee, the ELCA seminary of affiliation, and the Director for Candidacy in the CSM unit.

Possible actions that may be recommended to a Candidacy Committee include:

1. Immediate scheduling of an Approval interview;
2. A plan of preparation to be completed prior to an Approval interview;
3. A plan of preparation to be completed with a follow-up meeting with the TRP prior to an Approval interview; or
4. Postponement or Denial of Approval (with reasons clearly stated in the report).

If necessary, the TRP may meet a second time for the purpose of making a final recommendation concerning Approval. When a candidate has met all expectations and outcomes, the TRP prepares a final report clearly stating to the candidate and the Candidacy Committee the satisfactory completion of the candidate's preparation and the panel's recommendation. .

Chapter 5 - Endorsement for Rostered Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’” (Luke 10:1-2, NRSV).

THE ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

Endorsement - a second major point of discernment in the candidacy process - normally occurs after a candidate has completed one third of the academic work required or its equivalent. Whereas Entrance focuses on discernment of readiness for candidacy, at Endorsement a Candidacy Committee and its seminary partners affirm the following:

- A candidate’s continued discernment of a call to and gifts and skills for a specific rostered ministry;
- Mutual discernment among a Candidacy Committee, seminary faculty, and a candidate of the specific roster in which the candidate is seeking to serve; and
- Discernment of a candidate’s readiness to complete candidacy successfully.

At Endorsement a Candidacy Committee acts on behalf of the whole church in affirming a candidate’s call and gifts for rostered ministry. Both a Candidacy Committee and seminary faculty together express support and affirmation of a candidate’s continued progress in candidacy leading towards Approval (see Chapter 6).

By the time of Endorsement, a candidate, a committee, and seminary faculty will know each other well enough and have sufficient information to determine whether or not it is desirable to proceed further. Some practices Candidacy Committees have found useful for building relationships between a Candidacy Committee and candidates include the following:

- Regular contacts between the candidate and his/her relator or contact person;
- Developmental interviews with the committee between Entrance, Endorsement, or Approval;
- Retreats that include candidates and members of the Candidacy Committee;
- Conversations with a seminary faculty advisor; and
- Annual updates to the committee from candidates.

If a Denial or Postponement is being considered, Endorsement is the time to make such a determination, rather than delaying it. Endorsement is the most appropriate time for determining that a candidate is not a good fit for service in one of the rostered ministries of this church. Such a decision may be made by a candidate as a result of his or her ongoing discernment, by a Candidacy Committee, or by both. In instances where a candidate does not seem well-suited for

rostered ministry, making such a discernment at Endorsement relieves a candidate of taxing unnecessarily finite resources of time, finances, and emotional energy. At this point honest feedback and clarity of discernment by a Candidacy Committee can be an expression of deep caring and love for both a candidate and the church. It is appropriate for a candidate and discernment partners to reach mutual agreement that a candidate's gifts and sense of call are better suited for some type of service other than rostered ministry. To arrive at such a decision is not a failure on the part of a candidate, a seminary, or a Candidacy Committee. Rather, it is an indication of faithfulness in being open to how God is speaking to a candidate and to the church.

The mutual discernment leading to an Endorsement decision includes the Candidacy Committee, faculty from the seminary of enrollment, and the candidate. The Endorsement decision is the official action of a Candidacy Committee recognizing and affirming:

- (a) a candidate's readiness to complete the candidacy process and
- (b) a candidate's demonstration of appropriate gifts and characteristics for a specific rostered ministry.

The period between Entrance and Endorsement will vary in length due to the variety of curricular approaches and timelines utilized by different seminaries and a candidate's own rate of progress. This period is normally a time for theological study, ongoing spiritual formation, personal growth, and continuing discernment and clarification of call. Topics that will be addressed during this period include:

1. A candidate's *articulation* of God's mission in the world and missional leadership;
2. A candidate's understanding of a call to a specific rostered ministry or to some other form of service;
3. Personal spiritual growth and faith commitment;
4. Educational and theological wisdom; and
5. Personal and interpersonal skills.

Some Indicators of Readiness for Endorsement

The following suggestions *may* assist candidates, Candidacy Committees, and seminary faculty in determining when a candidate *might* be ready for an Endorsement interview:

- Has the candidate successfully completed CPE?
 Relevant candidacy file/portfolio items - final CPE evaluations.
- Has the candidate achieved success and competence in theological study in core areas such as Bible, theology, and the Lutheran Confessions?
 Relevant candidacy file/portfolio items - transcripts and faculty evaluations.
- Has the candidate demonstrated competence and leadership in practical areas of the ministry roster for which she or he is preparing? Appropriate areas are preaching, teaching, program development and project administration, community involvement, evangelism, and stewardship.
 Relevant candidacy file/portfolio items – appropriate feedback from the seminary of enrollment pertaining to contextual field work.
- Has the candidate had experience with and attained understanding of the larger church beyond a given ministry site?

Relevant candidacy file/portfolio items - a summary of synodical, churchwide, and ecumenical ministries in which the candidate has participated. Note: At this stage of candidacy, many candidates will have limited experience with the larger church. Even so, this is an important area for a Candidacy Committee to discuss and monitor with a candidate.

- Has the candidate cultivated collegial relationships and accountability?

Relevant candidacy file/portfolio items - a summary of collegial engagements with cohorts, mentors, spiritual directors, and supervisors, as well as other assessments or recommendations.

ENDORSEMENT INTERVIEW PANEL

The timing of Endorsement normally occurs at mid-point in the candidacy process and will be included in the candidate covenant following Entrance (see Chapter 3, pages 31-32). The Endorsement interview panel will include representatives from the Candidacy Committee (e.g., at least the candidate's contact person and another committee member) and faculty from the candidate's seminary (e.g., the candidate's faculty advisor, the dean of students, or others who know and work with the candidate). Congregational and Synodical Mission unit churchwide staff may also be asked to participate in Endorsement panels.

As previously indicated, during the Endorsement process, a Candidacy Committee and seminary faculty collaboratively monitor and assess a candidate's progress in formation for rostered ministry and review issues already identified at Entrance. Candidates who attend a non-ELCA/ELCIC seminary must affiliate with an ELCA/ELCIC seminary prior to Endorsement.

For candidates enrolled at ELCA seminaries, a member of the Candidacy Committee convenes and chairs the Endorsement interview panel at a time and location arranged through the seminary. Optimally, the Endorsement interview panel meets on the seminary campus in a face-to-face format. Any variance to this procedure will be in consultation with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit candidacy staff person for the candidate's synod. The panel makes its recommendation to the full Candidacy Committee, and the latter makes the official decision regarding Endorsement. Regional coordinators and Candidacy Committees will arrange Endorsement interviews for candidates not attending an ELCA seminary (see below for more details).

ENDORSEMENT COMPONENTS

Well in advance of the Endorsement panel interview, the synod of candidacy will distribute to each member of the panel the following confidential items:

- Entrance Decision Report, including noted areas for growth and any related materials pertaining to those areas.
- The questions for the required **Endorsement Essay** (10 pages written by the candidate, see Appendix E) are available on the ELCA website (www.elca.org/candidacy). In the essay a candidate reflects on what he or she has discerned during the first year of study, his or her understanding of ministry and sense of call to a particular form of rostered ministry, and ways in which he or she has addressed developmental issues identified at Entrance. A

candidate also responds to particular issues stated in the essay, including the baptismal call, one's gifts for ministry, the leadership needs of the ELCA, the Lutheran confessional witness, functions of ministry, personal development, and *Vision and Expectations*.

Normally, candidates submit the essay to a Candidacy Committee toward the end of the first year of seminary study, typically by September 1.

- CPE report (Normally, candidates complete CPE prior to Endorsement).
- Seminary transcripts including participation in safe church/boundary training.
- Information on a candidate's participation in seminary community life including Boundary/Safe Church workshops.
- Examples of a candidate's demonstrated aptitudes for missional leadership (see pages 3-6).

Guidelines for an Endorsement Interview

This interview guide for use by Endorsement interview panels and Candidacy Committees is not intended to be narrowly prescriptive. Instead, it describes the flow of a thorough Endorsement interview. Each synodical or multi-synodical Candidacy Committee may adapt the basic elements of this guide to fit its own style and situational needs. Even so, each Endorsement interview panel needs to adhere to a fundamentally consistent pattern in its approach, so that all candidates perceive that an equitable approach is shared among the various Candidacy Committees of the ELCA. The Endorsement interview typically requires a period of one to two hours for the interview itself and panel deliberations.

• Pre-interview Panel Briefing

Prior to the interview with the candidate, panelists will introduce themselves to one another and review the candidate's file materials (see Endorsement Components above). Panel members will also discuss their responses to the candidate's Endorsement Essay and other relevant materials and share their knowledge of the candidate. The panel can identify primary topics for discussion during the interview and even formulate lead questions for each of the topics, including the major foci in the Endorsement Essay (see Appendix E), other materials in the candidate's file, and issues identified at Entrance regarding the candidate's formation and goals for growth.

• The Endorsement Interview

A member of the Candidacy Committee convenes the panel and begins with prayer. In introducing the interview process to a candidate, the panel will want to establish a conversational tone and invite a candidate to engage in dialogue grounded in a relationship of mutual interest, trust, and exploration. It is helpful to remind a candidate that this is a time for mutual assessment of his or her strengths and growth areas in discernment of readiness for completing candidacy. By being fully prepared for the interview, listening carefully, and demonstrating empathy and concern, the panel will enable a candidate to receive the greatest benefit from the interview.

What follows are some possible questions offered as a resource for an Endorsement interview:

Characteristic 1: A rostered leader is rooted in the presence and activity of the Triune God.

1. Share with us the spiritual practices in which you currently engage.
2. In what ways have you experienced grace in your life? How have you shared that experience with others?

3. What is your theology of mission? How do you practice that theology? In what ways have you been sent?

Characteristic 2: A rostered leader engages the way of the cross.

1. How do you understand the connections between suffering and faith?
2. How do you talk with people about what God is doing in their lives?
3. How do you practice accompaniment with others?
4. How is the particular form of rostered ministry to which you are called grounded in the cross?

Characteristic 3: A rostered leader relates theology with context and culture.

1. Give examples of different contexts where you have lived. How did you adapt to each? Which adaptations were most difficult for you and in which context(s) was that true for you?
2. What experiences have you had sharing your faith with people of a different culture?
3. Many claim that theology is contextual. How might that be lived out in the church and in the world?

Characteristic 4: A rostered leader evangelizes.

1. Describe a relationship you have had with an unchurched person. In what ways were you able to express your core faith to that person?
2. What is the heart of your faith story? What are your most deeply held convictions?
3. How do you engage in conversation with people of different or no faith?

Characteristic 5: A rostered leader cultivates Christian community and discipleship and embodies holistic stewardship/well-being as illustrated in the Wholeness Wheel.

1. In what ways have you participated and engaged in the seminary community? What have been the joys and challenges for you in that participation?
2. How central is an understanding of baptismal vocation for Christian community? How central is such an understanding for mission in the world?
3. Choose one of the areas of well-being on the Wholeness Wheel and give an example of how you are working to embody this into your daily life.
4. How do you identify and encourage the gifts of others?
5. How do you empower others for personal holistic stewardship, mission, and discipleship?

Characteristic 6: A rostered leader equips and sends disciples into the world.

1. What are some ways you live out your Christian faith in daily life?
2. What do you understand to be the mission of God in the world? How does the church relate to it?
3. What do you consider to be missional about your particular form of rostered ministry?

In the event of unusual circumstances or special needs, particularly if the candidate was previously postponed for Endorsement, the panel may schedule additional time to permit more extensive discussion.

The Endorsement Essay asks the candidate to reflect on his or her understanding of *Vision and Expectations*. The panel needs to ask if the candidate is living and intends to continue to live and

conduct his or her life as a candidate in a manner consistent with the expectations expressed in *Vision and Expectations*.

At the conclusion of the interview, the panel will invite the candidate to leave the room and return later to receive the panel's recommendation.

- **Panel Reflection and Consultation**

During this time the panel consults together and discusses the candidate's readiness for Endorsement. The panel then prepares a draft Endorsement report that makes a recommendation concerning Endorsement to the Candidacy Committee and addresses the candidate's specific strengths and areas for growth. When the recommendation is to postpone Endorsement, the panel will carefully and clearly identify specific areas that need further development and the persons responsible for communicating with the candidate, a process for accountability, and a timeline for follow up. When the recommendation is to deny Endorsement, the panel will arrange for appropriate pastoral care for the candidate.

- **Panel Recommendation**

After reflection and consultation, the panel invites a candidate to meet with the panel face to face and shares the results of its reflection and consultation, including the recommendation that will be made to the Candidacy Committee. After such reporting, the panel provides an opportunity for a candidate to respond and ask questions. The panel needs to clarify with a candidate that its report is only a recommendation and that the final decision is made by the full Candidacy Committee. The latter will communicate its official Endorsement decision to a candidate in a timely manner. When the panel's recommendation is to postpone Endorsement, the panel and candidate together will clarify goals and requirements and establish a timeline for a subsequent review of the recommendation.

- **Report Preparation**

The panel prepares and submits to the appropriate synod Candidacy Committee a final written report regarding its Endorsement recommendation. Once written, the report is not to be changed; however, additional information may be submitted at any time to the Candidacy Committee.

Guidelines for Endorsement of Candidates at Non-ELCA/ELCIC Seminaries

In order to avoid unnecessary delays and misunderstanding, it is the responsibility of candidates enrolled at non-ELCA/ELCIC seminaries, following an Entrance decision, to work closely with the appropriate Candidacy Committee and the ELCA/ELCIC seminary of affiliation. Affiliate students (those receiving a degree from a non-ELCA/ELCIC seminary but completing an internship and core Lutheran courses in residency through an ELCA/ELCIC seminary) will complete a check list (see Appendix D) and submit it along with the Endorsement Essay to the Candidacy Committee. In completing the checklist, the candidate will need to consult with the appropriate seminary dean and/or other appropriate persons in formulating a Candidacy Formation Covenant for completing all candidacy and degree requirements.

As a candidate moves through the candidacy process following Entrance, there may be a need to make adjustments to the candidate covenant (page 55). Whenever such adjustments arise, both the seminary of affiliation and the Candidacy Committee need to share a common understanding of how the candidate intends to meet both academic and candidacy requirements.

The Endorsement Decision

At the time of Endorsement, based upon the recommendation of the Endorsement interview panel and other relevant information concerning the candidate, a Candidacy Committee may take three possible actions: **Endorsement Granted, Endorsement Postponed, or Endorsement Denied**. The full Candidacy Committee makes the Endorsement decision using all available information.

When the decision of the Candidacy Committee is different from the panel's recommendation, the committee will inform faculty members of the panel of its decision in order to honor the partnership between seminary and the Candidacy Committee. In all cases, the final responsibility for the Endorsement decision rests with the Candidacy Committee.

- **Endorsement Granted** reflects a Candidacy Committee's confidence in the candidate's formation and growth. Unless there are unforeseen difficulties, there is every reason to believe a candidate will continue to grow in readiness to serve in rostered ministry. The committee may make recommendations for continued growth and formation at this time and include them in the Endorsement Decision Form.
- **Endorsement Postponed** indicates that while the Candidacy Committee sees potential for a candidate to serve in rostered ministry, certain developmental issues must be addressed and/or specific conditions realized before a candidate can be endorsed. The Endorsement Decision Form should clearly specify any developmental issues and/or conditions that are to be met prior to reconsideration of Endorsement. The committee should designate who will monitor its recommendations and indicate when reconsideration may be scheduled and procedures to be followed.
- **Endorsement Denied** is discernment by a Candidacy Committee that there are specific reasons why a candidate is not suitable for rostered ministry in this church. A Candidacy Committee must clearly identify its reasons for Denial. In properly documenting its decision and the reasons for it, a Candidacy Committee will make certain the candidacy process has been faithfully followed. The committee will offer appropriate pastoral care when communicating its decision to a candidate and arrange for follow-up care, including assistance in identifying and affirming where a candidate's particular gifts for ministry might be appropriately used in this church and/or the community.

Reporting Endorsement Decisions

Using the Endorsement Decision Form, the Candidacy Committee reports its Endorsement decision to the candidate, the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, and the appropriate seminary.

Withdrawal of Endorsement

Although Endorsement is a strong word of confidence, it does not guarantee the committee's final Approval of a candidate. If warranted by written allegations of actions that may prove harmful to the church, a Candidacy Committee has the responsibility, after prayerful deliberation, to

withdraw its Endorsement prior to Approval. A decision to withdraw Endorsement is a significant action that ends candidacy. When withdrawal is being considered, a Candidacy Committee will normally communicate with a candidate prior to making such a decision. If the allegations are proved false, the Committee may reverse its decision to withdraw and reinstate the candidate in the candidacy process at the point where candidacy was terminated.

Reapplication

A minimum of one year must pass before a person denied Endorsement or whose Endorsement was withdrawn may reapply for candidacy. A Candidacy Committee must consult with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to determine the appropriate point of reentry into candidacy.

From Endorsement to Approval

Endorsement remains in effect until the time of Approval. While there is no annual renewal of Endorsement, Candidacy Committees will maintain regular contact with candidates at least through a contact person. Candidacy Committees and the seminary of enrollment (or the seminary of affiliation, in the case of candidates studying at non-ELCA/ELCIC seminaries) share responsibility for monitoring a candidate's continued growth. For its part in this responsibility, a Candidacy Committee may provide suggestions to a seminary concerning what it considers an appropriate internship setting for a candidate as well as other recommendations concerning a candidate's ongoing formation and preparation for rostered ministry. The seminary in turn will provide regular reports to the Candidacy Committee on a candidate's course work, supervised clinical ministry (CPE), contextual education, internship, and any other pertinent information that might assist the committee.

Guidelines for Internship

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America requires candidates for rostered ministry to complete satisfactorily an approved internship. Internship consists of a supervised contextual experience designed to contribute to the formation of pastoral identity and the development of skills for service in God's mission through the church. Understanding that new and varied seminary models are being implemented which call for internship to take place at different points in a candidate's formation process, see Appendix G for detailed guidelines for an internship to fulfill the expectations of the ELCA.

Chapter 6 – Approval for Rostered Ministry

“Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy” (I Corinthians 4:1-2, NRSV).

Approval Process

The final step in the ELCA candidacy process is Approval; and it is a significant milestone in a candidate's lifelong journey of discernment. At this stage a Candidacy Committee, the seminary of enrollment (or affiliation), and a candidate are discerning readiness to serve as a rostered leader after successful completion of all academic and candidacy requirements. Such discernment is the culmination of an extensive process that began prior to Entrance as a period of preliminary discernment, continued at Entrance with a mutual discernment of readiness for candidacy, became more focused at Endorsement with a discernment of readiness to complete candidacy, and now reaches a point of mutual affirmation and celebration of readiness for service as a rostered leader. The climate for Approval, barring unexpected complications, should normally be one of positive confirmation of earlier discernment.

Approval is not the primary step for redirecting candidates away from rostered ministry. In an effective and faithful candidacy process, such a determination will normally occur much earlier, preferably at Endorsement. Even at this point in the Candidacy Process, it is appropriate for a candidate and the other discernment partners – a Candidacy Committee, seminary faculty, and others – to reach mutual agreement that a candidate's gifts and sense of call are better suited for some type of service other than rostered ministry. To arrive at such a decision is not a failure on the part of a candidate, a seminary, or a Candidacy Committee. Rather, it is an indication of faithfulness in being open to how God is speaking to a candidate and to the church.

In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the responsibility for the Approval of candidates for rostered ministry resides with a Candidacy Committee. The process described in this chapter reflects procedures and guidelines developed by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in regular consultation with all candidacy partners.

Granting a candidate Approval is of major significance, not only for the individual candidate but also for the ministry settings in which a candidate will serve as a rostered leader. When a Candidacy Committee grants Approval, it is acknowledging on behalf of the ELCA that this person is qualified and suited to serve under call in a specific rostered ministry. This final step in the candidacy process is also a threshold in the sense that when a candidate receives and accepts a letter of call, there will be further public acknowledgment of the candidate's qualifications for rostered leadership.

Two documents of this church speak directly to a candidate's qualifications for rostered ministry - the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and *Vision and Expectations*. The first document defines the basic standards candidates must meet for the roster for which they are being approved. The second document sets forth what this church expects of those who serve in positions of trust and responsibility and states a vision for what rostered ministry can be in the life of the ELCA. At the time of Approval, candidates will

be asked and must state a clear intention to live and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with *Vision and Expectations*.

1. Approval Components

Candidacy Committee members interviewing candidates for Approval need to have a candidate's complete file available for review and study. In addition, the following material is necessary for the Approval decision:

- The Approval Essay
 - a. The Approval Essay, which is prepared by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit with the assistance of a writing team appointed by the unit, is available to candidates, Candidacy Committees, and ELCA/ELCIC seminaries on the ELCA website. Because candidates attending non-ELCA/ELCIC seminaries may not have the same awareness of timelines and access to announcements, a Candidacy Committee should give such candidates direct notification about the posting of the essay assignment along with the deadline for submitting it.
 - b. The Approval Essay provides an opportunity for a candidate to demonstrate readiness for rostered ministry by exercising theological wisdom related to practical situations and ministry tasks. Candidates also prepare a personal reflection on rostered leadership, identify theological building blocks informing their understanding of God's mission in the world and the Church's participation in that mission, and submit a sermon or project. It is a candidate's responsibility to send the completed Approval Essay to the Candidacy Committee by the required date.
- The ELCA or ELCIC Seminary Faculty Recommendation (Form D)
- The Report of Internship
- Academic transcripts
- Final report on CPE or other supervised clinical ministry, especially if completed after the Endorsement decision
- The Approval Information Form

A Candidacy Committee may request and review any other materials it deems relevant to discern a candidate's readiness for rostered ministry.

The Approval Interview

Approval is a threshold for rostered ministry in this church, not the conclusion of a process. Discernment and formation for rostered leadership are lifelong processes that encompass candidacy, First Call Theological Education, and lifelong learning.

The Approval Interview is a Candidacy Committee's final meeting with a candidate. In preparation for this interview, members of a Candidacy Committee read the Approval Essay, as well as other pertinent material from a candidate's file (see Components listed above), previous decisions of the Candidacy Committee, and Form D. The purpose of an Approval interview is to review and inquire in depth into a candidate's *readiness for rostered ministry*.

In preparing for and conducting an Approval interview, Candidacy Committee members will be mindful of the competencies expected of rostered leaders.

1. Rooted in the presence and activity of the Triune God. A rostered leader nurtures a vibrant relationship with the Triune God within a community of faith and leads other Christians to do likewise as they participate in God's mission. This competency can be assessed as a Candidacy Committee inquires about a candidate's ability to

- engage in theological and spiritual discernment,
- articulate and live out a clear Christian identity, and
- interpret the Scriptures as the norm for understanding God's mission in the world.

2. Actively participates in God's mission through the church. Some key aspects related to this competency are

- an ability to cultivate a compelling vision for ministry,
- equipping people to share their faith stories,
- skills in hospitality that invite people to join God's mission, and
- awareness of the interconnectedness of the church beyond the local congregation.

3. Cultivates vision and purpose. This competency includes:

- the use of spiritual disciplines (e.g., prayer, biblical and theological reflection),
- knowledge of societal and cultural trends that can inform a congregation's vision and sense of purpose,
- skills for leading congregations and other groups in discernment of God's mission in the world (including the incorporation of input from a diversity of sources and people), and
- courage to lead God's people into that mission as discerned.

4. Leadership skills. Some critical indicators of this competency are

- demonstration of adaptive leadership skills that are sensitive to context,
- skills for leading a community of faith through change while addressing conflicts that might emerge,
- a capacity to engage people to participate in God's mission in the world,
- a facility for encouraging collegial decision-making processes in a congregation,
- demonstration of personal holistic stewardship and skill in equipping others, and
- a grasp of how administrative structures and procedures can serve mission in congregational life.

5. Engages the way of the cross. Empowered by the resurrected Christ, a rostered leader shows people the crucified Christ through word and deed and enables them to envision what God is doing in the world and in their lives. Some indicators of this competency include:

- a willingness to confront and engage suffering in the lives of others and in one's own life, especially
 - among marginalized people;
- exhibiting qualities of servant leadership;
- willingness to serve, risk, and sacrifice for the sake of God's mission, including an ability to identify and lead in exposing the principalities and powers operative in a given context; and
- responding to life crises as opportunities for experiencing new life.

6. Proclaims the faith. Clear indicators for this competency are the candidate's ability to

- preach the Word as Law and Gospel,
- teach Scripture,
- share the faith with others,

- provide Christian education for all ages and cultures,
- articulate theological wisdom, and
- live a disciplined spiritual life.

7. Leads worship and administers the Sacraments. Key aspects of this competency are

- the ability to plan worship, preach, and administer the Sacraments;
- adapt the Lutheran liturgical tradition to local contexts; and
- a demonstrated manner of invoking in worship a sense of the holy and a welcoming spirit all with a view towards God's mission in the world.

8. Interprets mission. This competence reflects the ability of a candidate to articulate and interpret in a compelling manner, both theologically and contextually, the wider mission of the ELCA through its interdependent partners and expressions.

9. Cultivates Christian community, discipleship, leadership formation, and the practice of reconciliation of differences. A rostered leader effectively forms and leads Christian communities which intentionally foster the growth of disciples of Jesus Christ and attend to the formation of leaders in the church. Some indicators of this competence are

- gifts for forming partnerships and networks,
- the practice of reconciliation and mutual empowerment between diverse groups,
- convening and empowering teams for mission, and
- a sense of stewardship in cultivating gifts manifest in a community of believers and delegating and sharing tasks tailored to those gifts.

10. Cares for people. A ministry of care encompasses both congregational and community care.

Some key aspects related to this competence include:

- visitation,
- counseling,
- equipping the baptized to provide ministries of care, both within the congregation and in the wider community,
- knowledge of community resources for appropriate referrals, and
- sensitivity to people in major life and cultural transitions.

11. Practices wellness in one's personal life. Some factors to consider in this area:

- faith hardiness and resiliency in the face of difficulties;
- a balance between work, play, and self-care;
- maintenance of clear and healthy boundaries in all relationships;
- attention to diet, exercise, and mental/physical health; and
- the nurturing of healthy family relationships.

12. Evangelizes. A rostered leader actively believes and carries out Christ's command to go out and share the Gospel with neighbors. Some key factors related to this competence are

- a passion and imagination for sharing the Gospel,
- a sensitivity and skill for welcoming the stranger into community,
- discovering and implementing creative ways to share the Gospel with people outside the church,
- listening to people's stories and assisting them to interpret their experience in light of the Gospel,
- a valuing of Christian community as formative for faith, and
- a natural and authentic gift for engaging people under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the depths of their lives.

13. Relates theology with history, context, and culture. A rostered leader understands and interprets context and culture through the lens of Christian faith and leads a community of faith to

opportunities where the Gospel can be understood and shared by people in specific cultural contexts. Some critical indicators of this competence include:

- an ability to engage culture and context theologically, critically, and creatively with a sensitivity to historical factors;
- analysis of congregational and community demographics and trends;
- engagement with complex social and religious issues as a practical theologian in context;
- sensitivity to cross cultural, intra-cultural, and counter-cultural dynamics; and
- skill in addressing cultural differences.

14. Equips and sends disciples into the world. A rostered leader prepares disciples to discern the leading of the Spirit as they share the Gospel with neighbors in word and deed. Some important considerations for this competence are

- a demonstrated capacity to mobilize people of faith with different gifts and perspectives that can enrich the church's witness in the world and lead to acts of mercy and justice,
- personal embodiment of Christian faith in one's daily life,
- a demonstrated capacity for cultivating communities of well-being and holistic stewardship as illustrated in the Wholeness Wheel,
- a theological sensitivity to the presence and activity of God in the world,
- a recognition of the public vocation of the Christian community in the world, and
- the ability to interpret that vocation to people of faith.

In addition to the above, Candidacy Committees will want to explore the following:

- **A candidate's personal integrity** expressed through consistent behaviors, values, methods, principles, expectations, and morals, as well as a commitment to live one's life faithfully among the people of God as articulated in *Vision and Expectations*;
- **A candidate's trustworthiness** reflected in a reliable ability to respect confidentiality and inspire confidence by caring for and being respectful of others; and
- **A candidate's call to ministry and ministry gifts**, whereby the committee can confirm to its satisfaction that a candidate possesses the preparation, commitment, character, and gifts and abilities expected of those called to rostered ministry in this church.

Guidelines for an Approval Interview

This interview guide - to be used by Candidacy Committees - describes the flow of a thorough Approval interview with recommended components. It is a broadly conceived model each Candidacy Committee will need to adapt to its particular situation and needs.

Preparation for the Interview (Pre-Work)

A. *Vision and Expectations*

Prior to the Approval interview, a Candidacy Committee will arrange for each candidate to respond to a series of questions (see below) related to the document *Vision and Expectations*. The latter document articulates this church's vision for both ordained ministry and Word and Service ministries. It sets forth this church's expectations for those who serve, or who seek to serve, in those ministries. At Approval those expectations deserve consideration and in depth conversation.

In discussing *Vision and Expectations* during an Approval interview, it is useful to ask candidates about their understanding of the call to rostered ministry; their faithfulness to this church's Confession of Faith; their view of the importance of living an exemplary life; and their articulation of a faithful witness in the church and in the world.

To assist both a committee and a candidate in clarifying a candidate's knowledge of and commitment to the expectations of the ELCA, the following questions may be asked:

- a. What does it mean to be properly called and ordained/commissioned or consecrated?
- b. What is your understanding of the Confession of Faith of the ELCA? (Chapter Two of the ELCA Constitution)
- c. Do you have any questions or reservations concerning that Confession of Faith?
- d. What is your understanding of the expectations of the ELCA for rostered leaders to be personal examples and faithful witnesses of holy living?
- e. In what ways will you as a future rostered leader in this church support the mission and ministries of the ELCA beyond the local congregation or site where you serve? How important is this to you personally?
- f. Are you living and do you intend to continue to live and conduct your life in a manner consistent with *Vision and Expectations*?

Vision and Expectations is not a juridical document but one that is intended to identify important traits and habits of rostered ministers. It is essential that a candidate affirm his or her current and future compliance with these expectations (as stated in the responses in the rites for Ordination, Consecration, and Commissioning: "I will, and I ask God to help me").

B. Approval Information Form

Prior to the actual Approval interview, the candidate will complete an Approval Information Form that includes the following items:

- No Yes 1. Do you now engage or have you ever engaged in any addictive behavior, including drug or alcohol abuse or sexual or pornographic addictions?
- No Yes 2. Have you ever been terminated or resigned from any employment or volunteer activities due to accusations of misconduct, whether financial, sexual, ethical, or other improper behavior?
- No Yes 3. Have you ever been engaged in, accused of, charged with, or convicted of a crime or illegal conduct, including conduct resulting in suspension or revocation of your driver's license?
- No Yes 4. Have you ever been engaged in, accused of, sued, or charged with sexual molestation, sexual harassment, child neglect or abuse, spousal neglect or abuse, or financial improprieties?

- No Yes 5. Do you have any sexual attraction toward children or minors, or any history of sexually deviant behavior, including behavior with children or minors?
- No Yes 6. Have you engaged in any behavior or been involved in any situations that, if they became known by the church, might seriously damage your ability to be a rostered minister?
- No Yes 7. Do you have or have you had any health conditions (physical or psychological) that might interfere with your ability to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA?
- No Yes 8. Are there issues in your family situation or personal life that could adversely affect your ability to serve as a rostered leader in the ELCA?
- No Yes 9. Is your personal debt, excluding mortgages, greater than \$31,500. If your answer is “yes,” be prepared to discuss this matter with the Candidacy Committee.
- .
- No Yes 10. Have you ever defaulted on a loan or declared bankruptcy?
- No Yes 11. Are you familiar with the document *Vision and Expectations*?
- No Yes 12. Do you intend to live in accord with its standards of conduct as a candidate and as a rostered leader in the ELCA?
- No Yes 13. Are you prepared to accept a call from this church based on the needs of the church which might require service in a location different from where you now live?

Following a discussion with the Candidacy Committee about the candidate’s responses to these questions, the form is signed by the candidate and at least one member of the Candidacy Committee and placed in the candidate’s permanent file.

C. *The Candidate’s File*

Prior to the Approval interview, members of the Candidacy Committee will review pertinent information from the candidate’s file, including the Approval Essay, internship evaluations, CPE reports, and other relevant material.

The Approval Interview

Throughout the candidacy process, candidates are monitored and assessed as theologians, leaders, and proclaimers of the Gospel. At the point of Approval, a Candidacy Committee has the privilege and responsibility to welcome candidates, affirm ways in which they have been formed in the foregoing areas, and have intentional conversation with them about these areas. Candidacy

Committees utilize a variety of formats for the Approval interview, such as panels instead of the entire committee, retreat settings, and separate sections for different foci in the interview. Consideration of the role of the candidate's contact person needs to be part of preparing for the interview.

At the beginning of the interview, each person on the committee or panel will briefly introduce himself or herself to a candidate. A member of the Candidacy Committee can offer prayer as the interview begins. Understandably, there is considerable anxiety for candidates in anticipation of this interview. The panel or committee, therefore, will take care to clarify for a candidate the purpose of this interview and establish a tone of hospitality and appreciation for the candidate.

To facilitate and strengthen conversation during the Approval interview, a Candidacy Committee may structure the interview around the following components:

- a. Reflection on leadership (internship). A Candidacy Committee will want to review internship evaluations and faculty recommendations (Form D) for clear instances of behavior and experience in which a candidate has demonstrated the characteristics of a missional leader (see above).
- b. The Approval Essay. The focus here could be a candidate's theological articulation of the Church's understanding of mission and how that relates to God's mission in the world. It is important to have conversation about each section of the Approval Essay. The goal is to provide opportunity to discuss all areas of the essay. In some cases there may be concerns in one area that require more detailed questioning. Strengths revealed in the essay should also be affirmed.
- c. Developmental needs of a candidate. The committee will review and discuss with a candidate the following areas in order to assess how adequately he or she has addressed them:
 - growth areas and developmental needs previously identified at Entrance and Endorsement;
 - any issues that have surfaced from the discussion of *Vision and Expectations* and the Approval Information Form;
 - identification of focal points for ongoing discernment and First Call Theological Education; and
 - hopes for future ministry settings.

In the Approval interview it is critical that a Candidacy Committee allow sufficient time to address all three of the components outlined here to ensure a comprehensive consideration of all vital factors for the Approval of a candidate. To that end a committee will want to budget the time and approach used for the interview to maintain a balance among the three components in order that none of the components is neglected or short-changed.

One possible strategy for attaining such a balance is for a Candidacy Committee to set up separate panels for each of the components – internship, Approval Essay, and developmental needs. After the panels have met, the entire committee could discuss together what each panel heard and concluded from its segment of the interview. Another model for such a process is an Approval retreat utilizing a three panel format. Candidacy Committees will determine how to handle the suggested process for an Approval interview and the format that works best for them.

Following the interview, a Candidacy Committee will excuse a candidate while it enters into further discernment and discussion related to the Approval decision. It is difficult to determine in advance exactly how much time might be required for such discussion. If a committee anticipates a difficult decision regarding a candidate's Approval, it is important to allow adequate time for careful deliberation. The goal of such deliberation is for a Candidacy Committee to reach agreement – preferably by consensus – on an Approval decision (Approval Granted, Approval Postponed, or Approval Denied). Once the decision has been made, a committee informs a candidate of its decision.

Recommendation of Candidates by ELCA or ELCIC Seminaries

During the final year of candidacy, every candidate studying at or affiliated with an ELCA or ELCIC (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) seminary must receive a recommendation from the faculty of the seminary of enrollment (Form D). At the point of a faculty recommendation for Approval, a faculty makes an assessment as to whether a candidate is ready to serve in a rostered ministry of the ELCA. The recommendation of an ELCA or ELCIC seminary faculty (Form D) is a required component for a Candidacy Committee in making an Approval decision.

The Faculty Interview

In preparation for a seminary faculty recommendation of a candidate (Form D), some members of the faculty will meet personally with a candidate in order to review the program of study and assess a candidate's readiness for rostered ministry. There are a number of ways to conduct such a review. Usually a candidate's faculty advisor participates in the review. At some seminaries a single interview serves both as an internship debriefing and an Approval recommendation interview. The interview focuses on a candidate's spiritual, vocational, theological, intellectual, professional, and personal development during seminary study. By the end of the interview, the faculty panel will be prepared to state to the entire faculty whether or not a candidate meets the basic constitutional standards for rostered ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including:

- Commitment to and faith in the Triune God;
- Acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
- Willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church, including public support for its wider ministries;
- Academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships; and
- Commitment to lead a life worthy of the gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example of faithful service and holy living.

After review and action by the entire faculty, the faculty interview panel or one member of it prepares a written evaluation of a candidate (Form D), gains faculty approval for the wording, and submits it to the seminary, the appropriate Candidacy Committee, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

The faculty recommendation does not replace or duplicate the formal Approval interview with a Candidacy Committee; however, it offers a critical and essential perspective grounded in a comprehensive engagement with a candidate over a lengthy period of time. The faculty

recommendation reflects primarily on a candidate's seminary experience – both academic and practical – with the goal of assessing a candidate's readiness for rostered ministry. The Approval interview with a Candidacy Committee, on the other hand, focuses on the Approval Essay and the candidate's readiness for rostered ministry.

The Faculty Recommendation

The full faculty of an ELCA/ELCIC seminary will make one of three recommendations concerning a candidate:

1. Approval Granted
2. Approval Postponed
3. Approval Denied

Individual faculty members may abstain in cases where they are not well acquainted with a candidate. The decision should normally be by a two-thirds majority. When the vote is less than two-thirds but still a majority, the outcome should be noted in the report to a Candidacy Committee.

A recommendation by the faculty of a seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is necessary in order for a Candidacy Committee to Approve a candidate for rostered ministry. A seminary faculty and a Candidacy Committee, however, may sometimes come to different conclusions regarding the Approval of a candidate. In such cases, a Candidacy Committee may, after careful deliberation and further consultation with the seminary through the dean, finally deny Approval to a candidate who has been recommended by a seminary faculty of this church.

When a seminary faculty recommends Approval Denied, the seminary will inform not only the Candidacy Committee but also the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit of the decision. A Candidacy Committee will regard a faculty recommendation for Approval Denied with the utmost seriousness.

When a Candidacy Committee receives a recommendation from a seminary faculty for Approval Postponed or Approval Denied, it will consult directly with representatives of the appropriate seminary faculty before the Approval interview in order to understand the factors informing the faculty recommendation. A Candidacy Committee may also invite a member of the faculty to be present at the Approval interview and participate in the committee's deliberations. Expenses for the participation of the faculty member will be the responsibility of the seminary. A representative of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit must also be present at a Candidacy Committee meeting when candidates who have been denied a positive faculty recommendation are being considered for Approval.

In instances where there has not been adequate or conclusive consultation between a seminary faculty, a Candidacy Committee, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, a Candidacy Committee will normally postpone Approval until such consultation can occur and any misunderstandings are resolved. After all partners have been included in the discussion of a candidate, a Candidacy Committee makes the final decision regarding Approval.

The Evaluative Report (Form D)

In completing the faculty recommendation for Approval (Form D), a seminary prepares two sections:

1. a written evaluation of a candidate from the faculty that must be reviewed and may be amended by the academic dean, the candidate's faculty advisor, and other members of the faculty but must be approved by the whole faculty;
2. the Report of Internship compiled by seminary staff responsible for internship based on evaluations submitted by the intern, the internship supervisor, the internship committee, and the faculty debriefing.

Both reports and the formal recommendation concerning Approval are part of the completed report (Form D).

The seminary sends the faculty recommendation (Form D) to both the Candidacy Committee and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The faculty may attach additional explanatory comments to assist a Candidacy Committee in the Approval decision. In such commentary, the faculty needs to be as explicit and concrete as possible. The faculty, for example, might address specific areas of continuing education and formation that in its opinion need to be identified for a candidate and become focal points for First Call Theological Education (FCTE). If any new information emerges after the completion of Form D that might alter or affect the seminary faculty recommendation, the seminary will communicate such additional information to both the Candidacy Committee and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Candidates at Non-ELCA/ELCIC Seminaries

Candidates who have attended non-ELCA/ELCIC seminaries are not exempt from the requirement of a recommendation from an ELCA/ELCIC faculty. Such candidates are also required to be affiliated with an ELCA/ELCIC seminary and normally spend one year in residence at an ELCA/ELCIC seminary. As a result, most candidates will be known well enough by an ELCA/ELCIC faculty for them to make an informed recommendation. In instances where such a relationship has not been established, or where a candidate is not in residence on the campus of an ELCA/ELCIC seminary for a year of preparation, it is the responsibility of the candidate to meet with an ELCA/ELCIC seminary faculty and provide whatever information the faculty needs to make a meaningful recommendation. Candidates from non-ELCA/ELCIC seminaries may provide additional references from the faculty of the seminary they attended to both the ELCA/ELCIC seminary faculty and the appropriate Candidacy Committee.

The Approval Decision

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America depends on the wisdom and discernment of a Candidacy Committee in determining who will serve as rostered ministers. Such responsibility relies first and foremost upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit and calls for the utmost seriousness and humility on the part of those who serve on a Candidacy Committee.

Before an Approval interview, a Candidacy Committee must receive all required material, including the faculty recommendation (Form D), a final CPE report, a final internship or field experience report, and the Approval Essay. In the case of fourth-year internships, it is recommended that internship be completed prior to the Approval interview. This normally means

fourth-year interns participate in the churchwide assignment of candidates later in the final year of candidacy. In some cases, the final internship report may be prepared after a minimum of nine months, following consultation with and agreement by the seminary of affiliation and a Candidacy Committee. At the conclusion of the Approval interview, a Candidacy Committee may grant Approval to a candidate.

At the time of Approval, there are three possible actions a Candidacy Committee may take:

- **Approval Granted** confirms readiness for rostered ministry.
- **Approval Postponed** indicates certain issues or conditions need to be resolved prior to a candidate's being considered again for Approval. In this case, a committee provides clear directions to a candidate concerning specific developmental goals and concerns that need to be addressed and a date when a candidate may return to the committee. A candidate should be encouraged to provide a written response stating his or her understanding of the concerns and how he/she intends to address them.
- **Approval Denied** means that candidacy is ended. A committee will state clearly to a candidate in writing its reasons for its discernment. A committee will want to make certain the candidacy process has been faithfully followed and provide appropriate pastoral care with a candidate. Such a discernment is also an opportunity for a Candidacy Committee to spend additional time with a candidate in discerning appropriate avenues for service and enabling a candidate to leave the candidacy process with a renewed sense of value, giftedness, and possible direction as a person of faith in pursuing and expressing her or his understanding of vocation.

Reporting Approval Decisions (Form E)

A Candidacy Committee reports its Approval decision using Form E to a candidate, a candidate's ELCA or ELCIC seminary, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The reporting of an Approval decision follows the annual schedule for churchwide assignments established by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Following Approval, a candidate remains under the care and guidance of a Candidacy Committee until he or she receives and accepts a call. For whatever reason, when a candidate does not receive a call soon after Approval and the completion of academic work, the period of uncertainty and perceived delay may be especially stressful. It is important, therefore, for a Candidacy Committee to continue to support and care for candidates during such times of transition.

Withdrawal of Approval

A Candidacy Committee may withdraw a candidate's Approval by action of the full Candidacy Committee at any time prior to a candidate's receipt and acceptance of a letter of call. Such action may be taken when the committee determines a candidate is no longer qualified to serve in rostered ministry. Reasons for such action may be related to

1. conduct that is inappropriate for the standards and expectations of this church or
2. a change in a candidate's personal life that disqualifies a candidate.

In situations where a candidate has already been assigned to a synod for first call, a Candidacy Committee may act to withdraw Approval only after consultation with the bishop of the synod of assignment. A Candidacy Committee taking such action will report its decision to the bishop of

the synod of assignment, the candidate's seminary, and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Such action ends candidacy.

Reapplication

A minimum of one year must pass before a person who was denied Approval or had Approval withdrawn may reapply for candidacy. Consultation with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit is required to determine the appropriate point of reentry into the candidacy process.

Assignment

This church calls and sends rostered ministers where they are needed for leadership in the life of the church and its participation in God's mission in the world. The ELCA is committed to the effective, fair, and appropriate placement of rostered leaders for mission and ministry; therefore all approved candidates need to go through the ELCA assignment process before being considered for call. The assignment of candidates is a complex matter dependent upon the leading of the Holy Spirit and seeking to integrate and correlate the needs of the whole church with the gifts and situations of candidates.

Following Approval, assignment to regions and synods occurs at Churchwide Assignment Consultations arranged by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. These consultations occur at various times each year for approved candidates, who are assigned to a region and synod for first call. Assignment dates and relevant deadlines are available on the ELCA website. Candidate Assignment paperwork is posted in advance of the churchwide assignment consultation for all bishops.

Form ABR and a Rostered Leader Profile (RLP) must be on file with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit by the published deadline in order for a candidate to be included in the assignment process. All forms must be submitted electronically in a timely manner.

Those who participate in the Churchwide Assignment Consultation engage in prayer and thoughtful conversation when making assignment decisions. Relevant information about assignments is available on the ELCA Web site in "A Guide to the ELCA Assignment Process."

Some ministry contexts warrant a more immediate response to extraordinary missional needs of this church. At the request of a synodical bishop, an administrative assignment may be made when authorized and approved through a procedure established by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

Renewal and Re-approval

Renewal (three years)

An Approved candidate who has been assigned to a region and synod of this church is approved for one year. If a candidate has not received and accepted a letter of call within one year after Approval, a Candidacy Committee must determine whether it will renew the Approval decision for that candidate. An interview is not required for such a decision but may be requested by the committee if needed. The renewal decision, like the original Approval decision, is effective for one year and may be made twice. A request for renewal should be made in writing by the

Approved candidate. The decision should be communicated to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Unless reassigned, a candidate remains assigned to the synod of original assignment.

Re-approval

If three years have elapsed without the receipt and acceptance of a letter of call, a candidate, must make a request for re-approval. The re-approval process normally includes the following components:

- Preparation of the current Approval Essay;
- A Theological Review Panel (TRP) recommendation (required if more than five years have elapsed since the original Approval). The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit appoints the Theological Review Panel, normally at the ELC/ELCIC seminary where the candidate studied or was affiliated;
- A psychological evaluation; and
- An Approval interview.

Re-approval is valid for one year and can be renewed twice. Entering a re-approval process also includes participating in the churchwide assignment process. If re-approval is granted, a Candidacy Committee must submit a new Approval form (Form E) electronically to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

A candidate will provide the required information for assignment as determined by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in a timely manner according to the schedule for assignment.

Appendix A: Summary of Candidacy

Summary of the ELCA Candidacy Process



[Trinity Icon](#), by [Andrei Rublev](#) (15th Century Russian)

Holy

April 9-12, 2015
Candidacy Manual

Vocational Discernment and the ELCA Candidacy Process

As the Christian Church participates in God's mission in the world, there is a renewed awareness that God is making all things new. As both the Church and its contexts for ministry change, the leadership needs of the Church also change. New categories of leadership are emerging and will likely continue to emerge for the foreseeable future.

The ELCA candidacy process is meant to be a welcoming and joyful time for people discerning how to serve through the church. It is a formalized, yet personally and relationally focused, journey that assists people in discernment for church leadership, whether they ultimately become rostered, or serve in lay roles throughout the church in varieties of ways. Discernment is a life-long process which continually assesses how God may be calling a person into a unique ministry. It is not only a means to determine who might serve as a rostered leader in a Word and Sacrament or Word and Service ministry, as well as who might serve in a variety of other lay leadership roles in the church or in the world. The candidacy process will succeed for a person when he or she graciously discovers, through the nurturance of mentors, congregations, and others how and where to serve according to the Spirit's leading.

ELCA seminaries are vital partners in the candidacy process. Some people enter the formal candidacy process prior to or alongside their enrollment in a seminary. Others may choose to attend seminary as a means of discerning whether a church occupation feels right to them. Some people may even participate in theological education as a means of merely enriching their current roles as lay leaders in the church. All such explorations are appropriate and beneficial for the Church and God's mission in the world.

For those interested in formally entering the candidacy process, through congregational involvement, mentoring, working with a Candidacy Committee, and engaging in theological education, a person will arrive at a sense of the kind

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of leader God is calling her or him to be. The Summary of the ELCA candidacy process that follows has been created to guide people step by step through the process. A more complete document called *The ELCA Candidacy Manual* serves as a guide for seminaries and Candidacy Committees as they work with and accompany people in their discernment through the candidacy process.

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Summary of the ELCA Candidacy Process

Pre-Entrance

Pre-entrance is a period of discernment that precedes Entrance into the candidacy process. It can assist people in reflecting on aspects of their lives that might confirm a call to rostered (that is, ordained or Word and Service) ministry or other kinds of leadership in the ELCA.

Some aspects worthy of consideration are

- A person's understanding of vocation,
- One's spirituality and prayer life,
- A person's formative life experiences,
- The relationship one has with a community of faith,
- A person's significant life influences, including family of origin, and
- One's ability to articulate what God is calling a person to pursue vocationally.

A call to leadership can come in many ways and can lead in many directions. Pre-entrance is an informal pathway – not a step in candidacy per se - that leads people toward a clearer understanding of the path God may be calling a person to pursue, whether that might be ordained ministry, Word and Service ministry, or some other form of church leadership.

Entrance

Entrance is the step in candidacy in which a person begins to work with a synodical Candidacy Committee. When a Candidacy Committee grants Entrance, that means the committee is welcoming and accepting an applicant into candidacy. At this stage, as an applicant assesses his or her own sense of call, the committee also assesses an applicant's readiness for various kinds of

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leadership. An Entrance decision normally assumes an applicant is considering some type of rostered leadership in the ELCA.

In preparation for candidacy, there are a number of steps involved which can further assist an applicant's discernment.

Components relating to the Entrance process:

- The applicant's home congregation completes a registration form based on active ELCA membership for a minimum of one year.
- The applicant completes a Candidacy Application form and writes an Entrance Essay.
- The applicant participates in a psychological evaluation.
- The Candidacy Committee requests a background check for each applicant.
- The Candidacy Committee conducts an Entrance interview with the applicant.
- The applicant completes a Personal Health Assessment.
- The applicant prepares a financial worksheet.
- Letter of Reference from the ELCA worshipping community where you are currently participating.
- Copies of all post-secondary education transcripts as well as all continuing education certificates.

Normally, once a Candidacy Committee grants an applicant Entrance, he or she will select a seminary and apply for admission. In some cases, an applicant may apply for Entrance after being enrolled in an ELCA or another seminary. For candidates attending non-ELCA seminaries, an affiliation with an ELCA seminary will normally occur soon after Entrance.

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Following Entrance all candidates develop a covenant for the rest of the candidacy process in consultation with the appropriate ELCA seminary and the Candidacy Committee.

The primary benefit of such a covenant is to strengthen partnership among a candidate, a seminary, and a Candidacy Committee by establishing mutually determined timelines and a guide for the remainder of a candidate's discernment and preparation for rostered leadership.

Endorsement

Endorsement is a second major point of discernment for both a candidate and a Candidacy Committee. At this point discernment focuses on the type of rostered leadership for which a candidate is best suited and a candidate's readiness to complete candidacy successfully. In this phase of the process, collaboration and communication between a Candidacy Committee and the appropriate seminary faculty are critical. The discernment process may lead to the Candidacy Committee's granting official Endorsement to a candidate. This means that the Candidacy Committee recognizes and affirms a candidate's readiness to complete the candidacy process. Endorsement also affirms a candidate's demonstration of appropriate gifts and characteristics for a specific roster in the ELCA.

Components relating to Endorsement:

- A candidate prepares an Endorsement Essay.
- A candidate submits a CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) evaluation to the Candidacy Committee.
- The appropriate seminary provides a transcript to the Candidacy Committee.

Approval

The final step in the candidacy process is the granting of Approval. At this stage a Candidacy Committee, the seminary of enrollment (or affiliation), and a candidate discern together a readiness for service as a rostered leader in the ELCA following the successful completion of all academic and candidacy requirements.

Components for Approval:

- A candidate submits an Approval Essay to the seminary faculty and the Candidacy Committee.
- The seminary faculty prepares a recommendation for Approval (form D) and submits it to the Candidacy Committee.
- An internship evaluation report (for those seeking ordination) or an evaluation of supervised field experience (for Word and Service candidates)
- A candidate's seminary transcripts

April 9-12, 2015

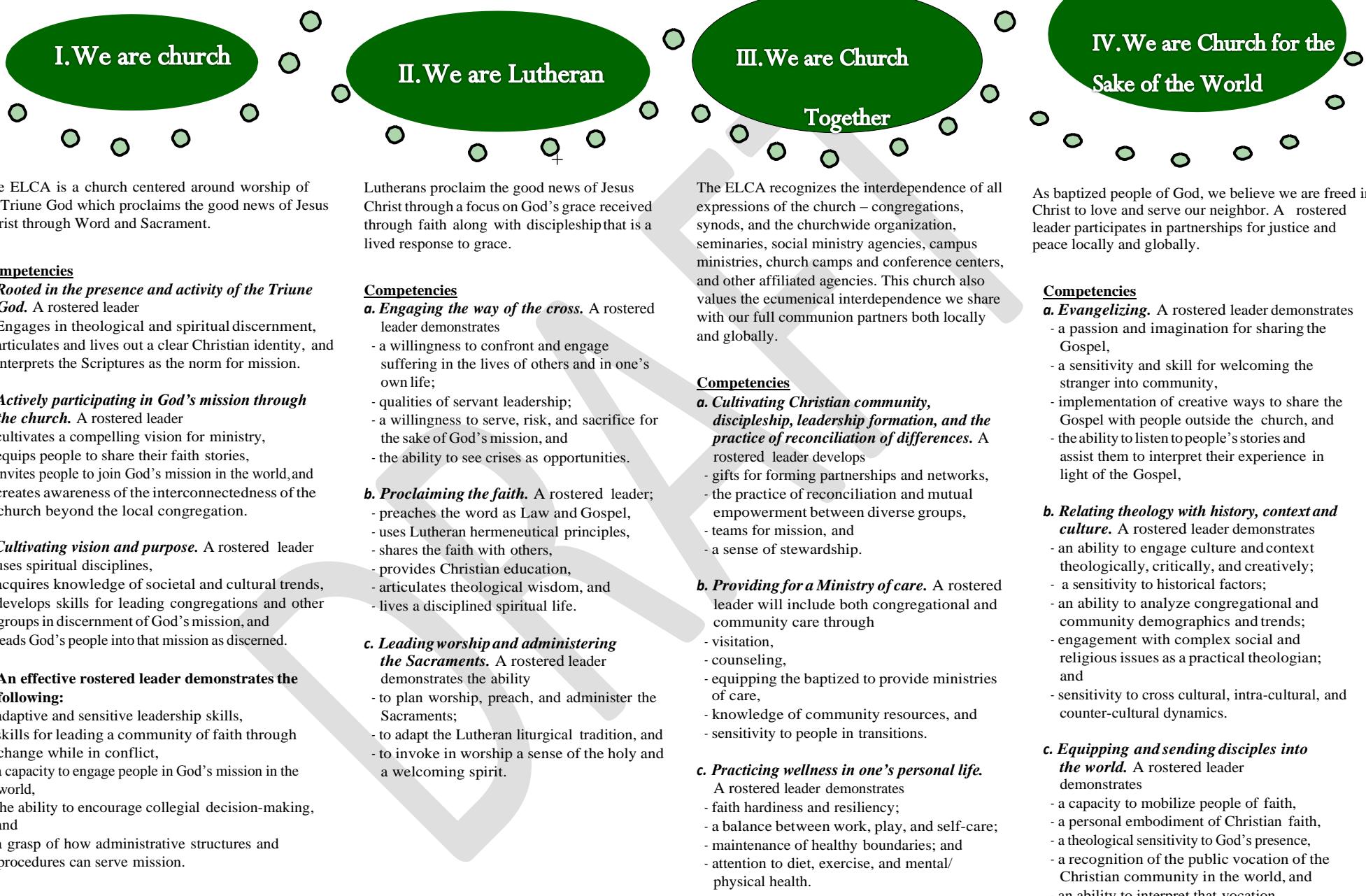
Candidacy Manual

When a Candidacy Committee grants Approval, it is acknowledging on behalf of the ELCA that a candidate is qualified and competent to serve under call in a specific rostered ministry.

Once a candidate has been granted Approval for rostered leadership, she or he will enter the churchwide assignment process. Approved candidates first receive assignment to a region of the ELCA. Then the bishops in the region of assignment assign a candidate to a particular synod within that region. The Bishop and assistants within each synod then work with a candidate to identify congregations for consideration of a first call. The synod bishop provides names of first call candidates to suitable congregations.

Commentary on the icon of the Holy Trinity: Contemplation of the Holy Trinity as a relational, sending God is central to our faith and therefore guides the church in the discernment that is integral to the candidacy process. The Church invites all who engage in any aspect of the candidacy process – applicants, Candidacy Committee members, seminary faculty, congregations, campus ministries, candidates, and others – to center on God throughout the process and to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Competencies of a ROSTERED Leader



Appendix B: Guidelines for Discernment

Journey of Discernment

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2, NRSV).

A journey of discernment designed specifically for the ELCA candidacy process focuses on the formation of healthy habits and practices for a lifelong process of discernment. An applicant's journey of discernment is not an additional decision point in the candidacy process. Rather, it is a continuum encompassing the entire life span of an applicant – before, during, and following candidacy. Consequently, a Candidacy Committee should not expect applicants at Entrance (see Chapter 3) to have answers to all the questions that will be addressed during their seminary formation process and their continued discernment of call throughout the candidacy process.

God works in the life of every person. Every Christian has a baptismal call to ongoing discernment of God's activity in the world, in the Church, and in one's life. The primary purpose for emphasizing a phase of discernment prior to candidacy - normally with a pastor or mentor - is to assist applicants in reflecting upon all aspects of their lives that might confirm a call to rostered ministry. Some aspects worthy of consideration include an understanding of baptismal vocation, spirituality and prayer life, critical life experiences, relationship with the community of faith, significant life influences, and family of origin (see Appendix B for a detailed discernment guide). Such preliminary discernment can help applicants clarify the interrelationship between internal and external dimensions of a call. It can also enable them to articulate some definite insights about what God is calling him or her to consider vocationally. The ultimate outcome of such discernment will be a decision whether or not to apply for candidacy. Even if the individual discerns God is calling him or her to another expression of baptismal vocation, this time of discernment will have been a valuable use of the church's resources.

Once a person begins candidacy, there will be further discernment. At its best, the candidacy process – both through a Candidacy Committee and on a seminary campus – provides a way for persons of faith to arrive at a deeper understanding of the Christian faith and the various ways in which God calls a person into ministry through the church and in the world, as a rostered leader or as a lay person. The goal of all such discernment is to walk with a person of faith in such a way that he or she comes to a firm sense of what God is inviting in his or her life. Whatever the final outcome might be, the process will have been faithful to its objective of accompanying people of faith in discernment, if the individual takes ownership of his or her discernment outcome and completes or exits the process with a positive sense that the direction so discerned is a good fit for his or her gifts and interests.

Several theological understandings of the journey of discernment undergird lifelong habits and practices:

1. Discernment is an ongoing process that begins at different points in a person's life, continues over a lifetime, and is revisited periodically. This is true both for applicants who enter into candidacy and for those who choose to pursue opportunities for service other than rostered ministry in the ELCA.
2. Discernment of readiness for candidacy originates in the context of how the Church understands the vocation of every Christian. Some are called to a ministry of Word and Sacrament or to a ministry of Word and Service; however, many Christians are called to other avenues of service that are better suited to their gifts and interests. All paths are valuable and necessary for God's mission through the Church in the world.
3. Discernment of readiness for candidacy includes a communal component that is part of belonging to a community of faith. Such discernment is both internal (personal) and external (corporate). Both the internal and external dimensions complement each other.

What follows are suggested ways to structure and guide preliminary discernment with potential applicants for candidacy, along with recommended resources. It is not intended that every model and every resource will be utilized with every individual. The needs of the individual and the circumstances of the individual's context will determine applicable approaches.

Since discernment of call is a continuum and not a step in candidacy, usually a Candidacy Committee will not work directly with individuals during this phase. Instead, this preliminary discernment will normally occur in the individual's current context, e.g. home congregation, campus ministry, or a Lutheran outdoor ministry setting. A person may select a discernment mentor who will assist them during this period. A mentor can be the individual's pastor, a lay leader in the individual's congregation, a campus minister, a camp director, a college or seminary faculty person, or a spiritual director.

The characteristics of persons who might serve as discernment mentors include the following:

- a. Evidence of ongoing spiritual growth and maturity in his or her own life;
- b. Embodiment of personal holistic stewardship and well-being as illustrated in the Wholeness Wheel;
- c. A love for the Church;
- d. An ability to listen deeply and actively reflect with others;
- e. An ability and willingness to pray with the individual, both in person and when apart, as a regular practice;
- f. An ability to think critically and ask difficult questions;
- g. A commitment to a process of discernment with an individual.

Discernment mentors can benefit from a focused orientation and preparation on how to use the discussion guide and other tools provided in this manual (See Appendix B: Topics for Preliminary Discernment). To facilitate the discernment process, a synod may select a discernment team of two or three persons who will help identify and train mentors. Synods will want to be flexible in applying the guidelines for discernment and adapting them to the specifics of the individual's situation, in order to honor and respect the particular needs and uniqueness of each person.

1. Call

The Lutheran understanding of call is threefold. There is an internal call, in which an individual senses God's leading to consider rostered ministry. There is also an external call, in which the church discerns along with the individual his or her appropriateness for such service. Finally, following completion of candidacy, the call is confirmed by a specific ministry setting in which the individual will serve.

Much of the focus of this preliminary discernment will be on the journey of call. Among other possible conversations, attention might specifically address the following:

- One's faith story, especially reflecting on where God has been active;
- Understanding of the baptismal call;
- Understanding of the wider church and how one's individual call to service is related to and representative of the whole church;
- Exploration of possibilities and preparation for bi-vocational ministry.

Possible lines of inquiry:

1. Share your faith story, especially times when you were aware of God's call in your life.
2. Who is the Triune God in your life?
3. How do you understand your baptism and its connection to your sense of vocation?
4. How do you understand the relationship between your personal sense of call (internal call) and the call of the whole church (external call)?
5. What other vocations have you experienced or considered? How might you envision those in tandem with your anticipated ministry?

Tools and Related Resources:

- Background papers on the theology of vocation and ecclesiology
- Background paper on Call to Word and Sacrament and Call to Word and Service
- Suggested readings for discussion: Gustav Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*
Sue Setzer and Walter Bouman, *What Shall I Say?*

Timothy Wengert, *Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops: Public Ministry for the Reformation and Today* (Fortress, 2008)

William C. Placher, ed. *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* (Eerdman, 2005).

- Spiritual direction. One noteworthy resource for discernment is spiritual direction. Probably the most desirable approach for the discernment described in this manual is personal spiritual direction with a trained practitioner, who is mature in the spiritual life and in a good position to be helpful to an applicant. Spiritual direction can draw from a variety of traditions and approaches, many of which are not specifically Lutheran. In cases where either a seminary or a Candidacy Committee recommends spiritual direction to applicants, it is helpful for the partner who is recommending this to have firsthand knowledge of the expertise and experience of any persons recommended for referral. Normally spiritual direction occurs on a frequency mutually determined between the directee and the spiritual director and continues over a period of several months to several years. The focus of conversations in personal spiritual direction is the prayer life and spiritual sensitivity of the person seeking direction in a climate of confidentiality and transparency on the part of both director and directee. Some reliable sources for more

information about spiritual direction in general and contact information for locating individuals who offer it are the following:

1. The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. Website: shalem.org.
2. The Academy for Spiritual Formation. Website: academy.upperroom.org.
3. Spiritual Directors International. Website: sdiworld.org.
4. Both synod offices and ELCA seminaries are additional sources for identifying persons who offer spiritual direction.

2. Current Life Situation

Many aspects of an individual's life can have an impact on his or her ability to prepare for and serve in rostered ministry. Some topics to discuss during discernment are the following:

- Reflection on one's family situation, how this journey will impact other family members, and gauging support from family;
- Realistic assessment of one's financial situation and a plan for paying for seminary education;
- Consideration of how one's health may enhance or hinder ministry;
- The likelihood of geographic relocation for theological education and first call.

Possible lines of inquiry:

1. Think concretely and specifically about how a possible call will impact others in your life, such as parents, spouse, children, or significant other. How are you addressing their concerns and needs in relation to your anticipated future life directions?
2. After completing a financial assessment, what do you identify as your financial strengths and challenges? What plans are you developing to cover the costs of further education?
3. What health issues do you need to address to sustain a healthy lifestyle throughout candidacy and ministry?

Tools and Related Resources:

- Health assessment (see Appendix)
- A Money autobiography such as the one developed by Dr. Marty Stevens at Gettysburg Theological Seminary and published in *How Much is Enough?* (available through Region 9 ELCA, 4201 N. Main St., Columbia, SC 29203).
- A financial assessment instrument (see Appendix)
- Wholeness Wheel (see page), which gives a visual overview of all facets of one's life that need to be considered in a time of ongoing discernment.

3. Life Experience

No matter what our age, all of us bring past experiences into any new venture. It is important to have an understanding of how our experience impacts us both positively and negatively. Some areas of specific focus might include:

- Educational background;
- Transferable skills from work and volunteer positions;

- Cross cultural experiences and travel;
- Self-awareness of gifts and growing edges;
- Formative experiences and influences.

Possible lines of inquiry:

1. How has your educational experience prepared and shaped you for theological education? How has your educational background informed your sense of call?
2. What skills from your previous work or volunteer experiences have prepared you for missional leadership?
3. What kinds of cross cultural experiences (such as travel or ethnic immersion) might inform your sense of ministry? In what ways might such experiences make a difference in how you approach ministry and mission?
4. What persons or experiences have had the greatest impact on your life? How have they shaped you spiritually, vocationally, and personally?

Tools and Related Resources:

- Spiritual direction
- Wholeness Wheel (see page)
- Suggested reading: Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*

4. Leadership Models

The role of rostered ministers continues to change and develop. Individuals may have limited experience with a variety of leadership models. During the discernment period it will be important for the individual to explore and reflect upon the following:

- Understanding of the church's need for missional leadership;
- Various models for missional leadership;
- One's own leadership skills and style.

Possible lines of inquiry:

1. What persons or leaders stand out for you as models for ministry? What qualities in these persons do you most wish to emulate? Why?
2. What is your understanding of missional leadership? Why is this important for the church in our time? What specific gifts or barriers for missional leadership do you recognize in yourself?
3. What is the relationship between missional leadership and servant leadership in your approach to ministry?

Tools and Related Resources:

- Suggested readings for discussion:
Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*
Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*
Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*
Craig Nessan, *Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation*. 2nd edition (Fortress, 2010)

- A resource for developing and sustaining spiritual practices, such as Marjorie Thompson, *Soul Feast*
- A spiritual gifts inventory, such as the one available on the ELCA website (www.elca.org)
- A tool for determining leadership style, such as

5. Choice of Seminary

There are a variety of seminaries and degree programs for those preparing for rostered ministries. Preliminary discernment can be an important time for exploring options and developing a plan for preparation. Some topics for consideration and reflection might include:

- Seminaries which offer a particular curricular focus that matches your ministry interests;
- Resources at each seminary that might enhance your formation as a rostered leader;
- The ethos of various seminaries. Where would you fit?
- A realistic plan and timeline for the curricular options under consideration.

Possible lines of inquiry:

1. What areas of ministry particularly excite you?
2. What are you seeking in a seminary community?
3. What do you consider to be the deciding factors in your choice of a seminary?
4. What resources are you utilizing to make a decision about where you might attend seminary?
5. What is your anticipated timeline for entering and completing seminary studies?
6. Given your understanding of the church's need for servant leaders with a sensitivity to God's mission in the world, what do you consider to be the most important formative elements in your preparation for rostered ministry?

Tools and Related Resources:

- Summary of ELCA seminaries with descriptions of curriculum and context
- Readings in Bible, theology, worship, sacraments, etc.
- List of regional coordinators
- Expectations of the Lutheran year in candidacy (see pages)
- Philip G. Camp, *Finding Your Way: A Guide to Seminary Life and Beyond*

Appendix C: Personal Health Assessment

ELCA CANDIDACY PROCESS APPLICANT'S PERSONAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

In the ELCA candidacy is a process that seeks to shape and form the whole person for a life of rostered ministry. Because rostered ministry is lived out within community, it includes both a rostered leader and the lives impacted directly and indirectly by such ministry. For candidates and rostered leaders to take their physical well-being seriously is an issue of stewardship. Throughout the candidacy process, a Candidacy Committee will reference this self-assessment to initiate conversation with you about your physical well-being.

Please complete the following personal assessment and return it to the synod office as instructed in your application materials. This assessment will be included in your Entrance materials and shared with the Candidacy Committee. As the committee and you discern your readiness for Entrance into the candidacy process, this information will be referenced in your Entrance Interview. You may bring a copy to the interview.

1. Do you have a medical provider? ____ yes ____ no
2. Do you know the date of your last medical examination? ____ yes ____ no
3. Are immunizations current? ____ yes ____ no
4. Do you know your blood pressure? ____ yes ____ no; If yes, is it in a healthy range for you (generally 140/90 or less)? ____ yes ____ no
5. Do you know your blood sugar level? ____ yes ____ no; If yes, is your blood sugar level in a healthy range for you? ____ yes ____ no
6. Do you know your cholesterol levels? ____ yes ____ no; If yes, is your cholesterol level in a healthy range for you? ____ yes ____ no
7. Do you know your Body Mass Index (BMI) ____ yes ____ no; If yes, is your BMI less than 30? ____ yes ____ no
8. Do you take prescription drugs? ____ yes ____ no
9. Do you take your medications at least 80% or more of the time? ____ yes ____ no
10. Do you know why the medications have been prescribed for you? ____ yes ____ no
11. Do you smoke? ____ yes ____ no; If yes, how much do you smoke daily?

12. If you smoke, have you considered quitting smoking? ____ yes ____ no
13. Do you drink alcohol? ____ yes ____ no; If yes, number of alcoholic beverages per week _____
14. Has anyone in a relationship with you ever expressed concern about your alcohol consumption? ____ yes ____ no; If yes, have you considered taking steps to curb or stop drinking alcohol? ____ yes ____ no
15. Do you use street drugs or medicines that are not prescribed for you? ____ yes ____ no; If yes, have you considered taking steps to curb or stop taking these drugs? ____ yes ____ no
16. Do you know what amount and types of exercise are appropriate for you to either establish or maintain good physical and emotional health? ____ yes ____ no
17. Do you regularly exercise in accord with those recommendations? ____ yes ____ no

18. Do you average at least seven hours of sleep each night? _____ yes _____ no
19. What areas of your physical well-being would benefit from changes in your lifestyle?

20. What is your plan to address this?

21. How do you plan to hold yourself accountable?

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Appendix D: Guidelines for Psychological Consultants

Psychological Consultants

1. A psychological consultant is expected to
 - a. Be registered as an approved psychological consultant with the Director for Candidacy;
 - b. Conduct a psychological evaluation consistent with the theological purposes and goals of the ELCA candidacy process;
 - c. Be sensitive to issues of race, language, gender, age, and ethnicity and utilize appropriate tools for evaluation;
 - d. Provide a Candidacy Committee with recommendations regarding an applicant's current psychological/emotional state and specific issues for further attention or conversation;
 - e. Provide an applicant with an assessment of personal strengths and areas for growth, including a candid evaluation of psychological/emotional health; and
 - f. Use at a minimum the assessment instruments recommended by the ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission unit.

2. The Interview and Assessment

A psychological consultant conducts a comprehensive assessment with an applicant, including testing instruments and a personal interview. The evaluation shall be conducted in keeping with accepted standards for psychological evaluations.

Every assessment should evaluate an applicant's ego strength, self-awareness, self-concept, physical health, health history of the family, relational systems issues, interpersonal skills, personal and professional priorities/values, emotional intelligence, psychological health, personal qualities (including potential for leadership), as well as any perceived deficiencies that might disqualify or impede a person from beginning candidacy. Clinicians are invited to recommend to synods other psychological and/or vocational instruments that may be especially appropriate for the ELCA candidacy process. They may also use additional assessment tools requested by a Candidacy Committee. At a minimum, psychological consultants will use the following instruments:

- a. Personality Instruments
 - 1) Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2 or the MMPI-2-RF);
 - 2) Another personality measure of the consultant's choice, such as the California Personality Inventory (revised) Meyer-Salovy Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), The Sixteen Personality Factor, Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI), Profiles of Ministry, or any other valid and commonly used instrument;
- b. Vocational Inventories, such as the Strong Vocational Interest Inventory (or another valid and commonly used vocational inventory);
- c. IQ and Cognitive Functioning assessments, such as the Shipley-Hartford Institute of Living Scale, Concept Mastery Test (Terman), or Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised, which should be administered only if a psychological consultant doubts an applicant's intellectual capacity for graduate-level work;

- d. Culturally-sensitive and/or alternative language instruments and professional resources as appropriate, e.g., the Spanish language version of the MBTI, and/or consultation with a culturally-sensitive psychologist. Where major language or cultural barriers exist, a Candidacy Committee may contact the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for further guidance and assistance.

Because a psychological evaluation is critically important for both an applicant and a Candidacy Committee, an applicant should not feel rushed during the testing and interview process. As noted earlier, it is especially important that a psychological consultant explain fully the evaluation results that will be summarized in a written report, especially any areas for further growth or development.

After sharing the results of an evaluation with an applicant, a psychological consultant provides a written summary and secures an informed written release of information for both the Candidacy Committee and the ELCA seminary where the applicant has applied for admission. The report will then be sent to the Candidacy Committee for use in the Entrance decision and to the ELCA seminary named on the release of information form. The report becomes part of the confidential candidacy files maintained by the seminary and by the Candidacy Committee. An additional written release of information from an applicant should be obtained before the report can be shared beyond the Candidacy Committee and the seminary of admission.

A psychological consultant may make recommendations for counseling, treatment, or other services. Such recommendations should be thoroughly and sensitively discussed with an applicant during the evaluation feedback session. The Candidacy Committee has the responsibility to decide whether or not the recommended counseling/therapy should be completed prior to granting an Entrance decision. If a Candidacy Committee recommends counseling/therapy, it should **not** be with the consultant who provided the evaluation.

3. Reporting to a Candidacy Committee

In the summary report the psychological consultant provides to an applicant and a Candidacy Committee, the following information is helpful:

- a. Personal identity/level of self-awareness and self-concept
- b. Quality of past and present family relationships
- c. Sense of vision or imaginative ability
- d. Intellectual capacity
- e. Integrity
- f. Emotional maturity and coping ability/durability
- g. Motivation for religious service
- h. Empathy and affective expression
- i. Interpersonal relationship skills
- j. Any history of misconduct related to employment
- k. Any history of deviant and pathological maladaptation
- l. Any history of medical and psychiatric illness
- m. Any history of substance abuse or addictions
- n. Flexibility
- o. Leadership style

- p. Assets and liabilities relating to leadership roles in the ELCA, as described in the documents of this church provided to the psychological consultant
- q. Personal and professional values/priorities.

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Appendix E: Candidacy Formation Covenant

Candidate's Name: _____

Candidate's Contact Information:

Mailing address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Synod of Candidacy: _____

Date of Candidate's Entrance Decision: _____

Candidacy Committee Relator: _____

Seminary Where the Candidate is Enrolled: _____

Seminary Program/Track: _____

Seminary Advisor: _____

Mailing address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Anticipated Timeline of Candidate's Seminary Program:

Anticipated CPE Site/Program and Dates/Duration:

Anticipated Contextual Learning and/or Field Experience Site/Program:

Contextual Learning and/or Field Experience Supervisor(s):

Mailing address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Anticipated Timing of Candidate's Endorsement and Approval Interviews:

Endorsement:

Approval:

Special Considerations:

Appendix F:
Pre-Endorsement Checklist for Candidates at
Non-ELCA Seminaries

Student: _____

Seminary of attendance: _____

ELCA seminary of affiliation*: _____

Degree: _____ **From:** _____

ACADEMIC PLAN:

1. What are your plans for completing your seminary degree requirements? When do you expect to graduate?

2. What is your timeline for completing the Lutheran core courses?

3. What is your plan for fulfilling the ELCA seminary residency requirement?

4. How has your identity as a Lutheran Christian been strengthened or challenged as you have studied at an ecumenical seminary? In what ways has it been a blessing?

5. When do you plan to do your internship?

Candidate Signature

ELCA Seminary Representative

Regional Coordinator

Synod Candidacy Representative

***Contact the dean at your ELCA seminary of affiliation as soon as possible after Entrance to begin the affiliation process.**

Appendix G: Guidelines for Internship

The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit has established standards and guidelines for internship. Each seminary, in turn, creates policies and procedures through which the standards are implemented.

- 1) Internship sites and supervisors are approved by both an ELCA seminary in consultation with the synodical bishop where the site is located and by the appropriate Candidacy Committee.
- 2) An approved internship will consist of a minimum of 2,000 documented contact hours in an approved site.
- 3) An internship supervisor will meet with an intern on a regular basis and document the meetings. An internship supervisor may be on-site or off-site.
- 4) An internship committee selected from members of the ministry site will meet regularly with the intern during the internship.
- 5) An intern will have opportunities to experience the full scope of pastoral duties, including worship leadership, regular preaching, teaching the faith, relationships across the spectrum of ages, pastoral visitation, administration, and, as much as possible, participation in life-marker events like baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals.
- 6) Both the supervisor and the internship committee will submit regular reports to the seminary and the synod Candidacy Committee.
- 7) The internship site and the seminary will agree upon remuneration, including housing and health, to be provided for the intern.

Responsibilities of ELCA Seminaries

1. Provide adequate policies, procedures, resources, support, and faculty staffing to maintain an internship program consistent with the expectations of the ELCA;
2. Place eligible students on internship in accordance with the expectations of the ELCA and the policies and procedures of the seminary;
3. Distribute the seminary's policies and procedures concerning internships;
4. Maintain effective communication with synodical bishops concerning settings and supervisors and with synodical Candidacy Committees regarding internship candidates prior to placement;
5. In partnership with the churchwide office, provide common programs to orient and train new supervisors and to further the development of experienced supervisors;
6. Maintain effective processes for placement and orientation prior to internship, as well as reflection following internship;
7. Receive and review written supervisor's reports at least twice during an internship;
8. Confer with synodical Candidacy Committees as necessary and provide summary evaluations (Form D) at the conclusion of internship prior to Approval Interviews;
9. Provide guidance and support during the internship in a variety of ways, including site visits; and
10. When necessary, terminate an internship after appropriate consultation.

Responsibilities of Synods

The synodical bishop (or designee) shall

1. Identify and encourage congregations and pastors to consider applying for an internship through an ELCA seminary;
2. Maintain effective communication with seminary field education offices relative to settings and potential supervisors;
3. Provide opportunities for ELCA interns in the territory of the synod to participate in the programs and functions of the ELCA and the synod; and
4. Offer necessary support for the Horizon Internship program, including adequate synodical funding.

The synodical Candidacy Committee shall:

1. Advise candidates at non-ELCA/ELCIC seminaries to affiliate with an ELCA seminary during the first year of their academic program in order to meet prerequisites for an eventual ELCA internship;
2. At Endorsement, convey any Candidacy Committee recommendations regarding internship, including international Horizon or specialized ministry sites, to candidates and the appropriate internship directors by means of the Endorsement Decision Form; and
3. Receive written evaluations regarding candidates' internship experiences prior to Approval interviews with the Candidacy Committee.

Interns

Interns are candidates who are enrolled in or affiliated with an ELCA seminary and are approved for internship placement by that seminary in consultation with their Candidacy Committee to serve in a sustained supervised ministry experience.

ELCA seminaries place interns in approved settings. To assist in that placement, candidates will consult with the appropriate Candidacy Committee and the seminary internship director. Interns will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the policies and practices of the ELCA.

Criteria and Standards for Candidates for Internship

1. Apply for internship through the internship office of the appropriate ELCA seminary or, if attending a non- ELCA seminary, through the ELCA seminary of affiliation;
2. In consultation with the synodical Candidacy Committee and seminary faculty, develop broad learning goals for the internship to be used in considering placement;
3. Once placement has been made, develop specific and agreed upon learning goals with the supervisor and internship committee.
4. Develop and maintain sound and effective relationships with the supervisor, other staff, the internship committee, and members of the congregation;
5. Maintain appropriate contacts with the synodical bishop, the Candidacy Committee, and the seminary. While on internship, interns submit reports and evaluations as requested in a timely manner;
6. Engage in personal prayer, study, and theological reflection and discussion on issues related to ministry and be accountable to either a Spiritual Director or the internship supervisor;

7. Attend internship cluster meetings, conference meetings, and synodical events and also participate in appropriate community groups and activities;
8. Become familiar with the policy, programs, curricula, and official ELCA documents and statements; and
9. Inform the seminary internship director in a timely manner of any concerns or difficulties that develop during the internship.

Supervisors

A supervisor is normally an ordained ELCA pastor who has served a minimum of three years in a parish and at least one year in the internship setting. Supervisors are expected to be committed to internship as an educational component in the preparation of candidates for ordained ministry. The seminary which receives an application for an internship approves a pastor as a supervisor in consultation with the synodical bishop and field education colleagues.

Supervising pastors serve as effective models and guides for interns with regard to faith, spiritual discipline, personal habits, public ministry, and participation in the wider church. They provide supervised opportunities for interns to participate in all dimensions of pastoral ministry. All supervisors participate in supervisory training as provided by ELCA seminaries for new and experienced supervisors.

Criteria and Standards for Supervisors

1. Share with and appropriately involve an intern in all aspects of ministry.
2. Assist in and share accountability with an intern to achieve mutually agreed upon learning goals, preferably through a collaborative model of ministry.
3. Reflect on pastoral ministry and the intern's work and well-being through weekly supervisory sessions.
4. Guide an intern in developing responsible and effective partnership in ministry with laity.
5. Know and support the polity, policies, and positions of the ELCA, including leadership in sacramental practices.
6. Participate in the life of the synod and provide opportunities for an intern to experience and participate in synodical programs and events, as well as in appropriate local ecumenical, interfaith, and community organizations and activities.
7. Participate in continuing education.
8. Support the internship committee and facilitate its functioning.
9. Attend internship cluster meetings regularly.
10. Cooperate with the seminary regarding policies and practices contained in each seminary's internship manual.
11. Provide written reports and evaluations to the seminary at least twice during the internship that includes perspectives on discerning growth and progress in the ministry of an intern as well as pertinent concerns.
12. Participate in the placement process as requested by the seminary.

Settings

Settings provide opportunities for an intern to be broadly engaged in appropriate practices of ministry, including occasions unique to each setting. Such opportunities are an expression of the

setting's commitment to internship as an educational component in the candidate's preparation. All internship sites, including Horizon internship sites, will meet the following expectations and standards.

Criteria and Standards for Internship Settings:

1. Internship settings are normally open to any ELCA candidate.
2. After consultation with the synodical bishop, an ELCA seminary chooses and periodically evaluates each internship setting.
3. Normally internship sites are congregations.
4. There need to be written policies for sexual ethics, sick leave, and lifelong learning.
5. Sites apply to only one ELCA seminary.
6. Sites will ensure that the necessary resources (e.g. financial, supervisory, etc.) are available.
7. Sites will be committed to internship as an educational component in the preparation of candidates for the ordained ministry.
8. Sites will provide opportunities for an intern to be broadly engaged in appropriate ministerial activities.
9. Sites will provide adequate support to an intern (and family), including forming a committee of lay members to provide both the intern and the supervisor feedback and evaluation.
10. In keeping with the policies of the ELCA, interns will not preside at baptisms, except in the case of an emergency, nor will an intern preside at the Eucharist without authorization from the synodical bishop and then only in extraordinary circumstances.
11. An internship site will model awareness of and connectedness with the ELCA as a whole with ongoing supportive relationships not limited to, but including, financial benevolences.

Appendix H: Candidacy Guidelines for the Word and Service Rosters

Candidates preparing for rostered ELCA Word and Service Ministry as Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers will follow the standards and academic requirements outlined for each roster in this appendix. A task force appointed by the ELCA Church Council will bring a recommendation to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly for the unification of the 3 existing lay rosters (Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, and Diaconal Ministers).into one new Word and Service roster If approved by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, the new standards and academic requirements for the unified Word and Service roster will be assigned to the candidacy team in the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit.

Associate in Ministry

Associates in Ministry are called to provide leadership and support for the ministries of the whole people of God. Associates in Ministry are lay people who serve on an officially recognized Word and service roster in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Associates in Ministry work in partnership with laity, pastors, bishops, diaconal ministers, and deaconesses to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church as they carry out responsibilities in congregations, agencies, or institutions of or related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Through this service Associates in Ministry provide care and nurture of the people of God, equipping them in the Christian faith.

Associates in Ministry are prepared for service through a course of study that includes theological education and are guided by the synod or multi-synodical Candidacy Committee according to the procedures established by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. Once approved, Associates in Ministry are eligible for a call and serve under a letter of call issued by an expression of this church: congregation, synod council, or ELCA Church Council. Having accepted the first call, Associates in Ministry are commissioned and received onto the roster of the ELCA through a Service of Commissioning. An approved and commissioned Associate in Ministry has met all standards for service as established by the ELCA and enters into a relationship of mutual accountability with the calling body and the synodical and churchwide expressions of this church as set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. (ELCA 7.50 ff)

Steps in Candidacy

Persons seeking commissioning as Associates in Ministry in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are expected to participate fully in all steps of the Candidacy Process: Entrance, Endorsement, and Approval. The candidate has a responsibility to fulfill all of the requirements and expectations of the Candidacy Committee.

Entrance begins a process of discernment that explores an individual's potential for rostered ministry and readiness to begin the process of theological study and candidacy in the ELCA. One year of active membership in an ELCA congregation is required prior to Entrance. The Entrance Process includes Candidacy Application form and Entrance Information Form, ELCA Congregational Registration, Initial Interview, Screening, including a Psychological Evaluation, a Background Check, and an Entrance Interview. A positive Entrance Decision must be received before an applicant continues in the process of preparation and formation.

Endorsement encourages and affirms those who clearly demonstrate gifts and qualities for a specific form of ministry in the ELCA as well as identifies areas for growth and development. The candidate prepares an Endorsement Essay and participates in an Endorsement Interview conducted by the Candidacy Committee. The Candidacy Committee will identify the appropriate time for Endorsement in consultation with the candidate. Typical timing would be at the mid-point of the Candidacy Process. For candidates attending an ELCA seminary, the faculty advisor is included in the Endorsement Interview.

Because candidates not attending an ELCA seminary may not have the same awareness of time lines, the Candidacy Committee should seek to give these candidates direct notification about the posting of the assignment and the deadline for submitting the essay.

Candidates who have already completed the majority of the educational requirements prior to application and who receive a strong Entrance Decision may be exempt from the Endorsement step by decision of the Candidacy Committee.

Approval occurs when the candidate articulates the call to ministry and demonstrates readiness to assume a leadership role as a rostered minister in the ELCA. The Approval Interview is scheduled near completion of all academic and practical criteria as affirmation of a call to public ministry. If the candidate is a student at an ELCA seminary, a faculty recommendation is to be provided. An Approval Essay is prepared by the candidate, who participates in the Approval Interview with the Candidacy Committee. Committees are responsible for distribution of the essay questions to the candidate. A positive decision by the committee is necessary for the candidate to participate in the churchwide assignment process and to be available for commissioning and first call.

Standards

Persons approved, commissioned, and rostered as associates in ministry of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following Basic Standards established in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (ELCA 7.52.11):

1. Commitment to Christ;

2. Acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
3. Willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
4. Academic and practical qualification for the position, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
5. Commitment to lead a life worthy of the gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
6. Receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
7. Membership in a congregation of this church

The ELCA expects that associate in ministry candidates will demonstrate the following:

1. Knowledge of the Bible, church history, the history and doctrinal teachings of the Lutheran church, and the organization and operating principles of the ELCA;
2. Ability to articulate one's sense of calling as a baptized Christian and as an associate in ministry;
3. Willingness to share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry and to assist in leading in the church's mission to proclaim God's love through word and deed;
4. Encouragement to identify other persons who will prepare for the ministry of the gospel;
5. Ability to work in partnership to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church;
6. A healthy self-awareness and willingness to engage in regular habits for physical fitness;
7. Commitment to living in accordance with the *Vision and Expectations for Word and Service Rosters in the ELCA*;
8. Competence in the area of one's field of specialization; and
9. At least one year of satisfactory relationship with the appropriate Candidacy Committee.

Academic and Practical Criteria for Commissioning

In preparation for commissioning as an associate in ministry, a candidate is required to engage in a comprehensive program of preparation, which includes a bachelor's degree, foundational theological education, field experience, and spiritual formation.

Degree Requirement

A bachelor's degree or a graduate degree in a field appropriate to the designated field of specialization is required. If the degree is in an unrelated field of study, significant work or competency in the field of specialization must be demonstrated. In some special cases a person not holding a bachelor's degree may be considered for candidacy under the provisions described in "Waiver of Academic Requirement."

Theological Education

Basic foundational coursework in theological education shall include a minimum of 20 semester credit hours (or an equivalent), including at least one course in each of the following areas:

1. Biblical Studies – Old Testament
2. Biblical Studies – New Testament
3. Lutheran Theology and Confessional Writings
4. Introductory Systematic Theology
5. Lutheran Church History (including North American context)

Additional courses may include Practical Theology appropriate to the specialization, e.g., religious education, pastoral care and counseling, youth ministry, worship, hymnody, etc., but should not replace foundational courses.

All theological education must be completed through courses taken at an accredited college or seminary approved by the Candidacy Committee or through a course of study approved by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit including courses through an ELCA program such as Fisher's Net/SELECT (see p. 52) The basic theological education requirement shall not be met by equivalency or through continuing education courses.

Spiritual and Vocational Formation

All candidates for commissioned service are expected to follow a regular pattern of worship, prayer, Bible study, and disciplined faith practices that sustains and supports formal work in theological education and contextual learning. While such formation may follow a variety of patterns, a candidate is expected to engage in practices that are communal in scope, draw on the hearty traditions of the Christian life, and model an example of Christian living for others.

At the time of entrance into the Candidacy Process, a candidate will be asked to share a plan for how his or her faith life will be sustained and nurtured while in the Candidacy Process. Such a plan may include practices such as the use of a trained spiritual director, participation in a group discipleship experience, retreats, personal devotions and daily prayer, and regular participation in worship in a seminary setting and a congregation. Plans for offering service to others, personal stewardship, vocational discernment, and healthy self-care will also be discussed.

Throughout the Candidacy Process the Candidacy Committee will inquire about the candidate's ongoing practices and habits and will offer encouragement for lively engagement with such facets of Christian living.

Health and Wellness

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America envisions a church in which those preparing for and serving in rostered leadership positions, as well as their spouses and families, will be encouraged, supported, and motivated to grow in their faith hardiness, which reflects their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, interpersonal, financial and vocational health and well-being.

Healthy leaders enhance their own lives and the lives of others. To be prepared for the rigor of

public ministry and mission, candidates need to demonstrate and continue to develop healthy leadership qualities. Leaders in this church who practice self-care and attend to the balance of all aspects of their health enhance the church's faithful witness in the world. Candidates are expected to address any health concerns with their Candidacy Committee. Intentional efforts to improve all aspects of wellness will be most effective when supported by families, congregations, synod, seminary, and community.

Specialization

The ELCA has identified a need to provide for a variety of ministries in congregations and other settings where theologically trained leaders serve. While the forms of ministry might be different, there are common areas of specialization, focus, and need throughout this church. A call might include many varied responsibilities, but a rostered lay leader is expected to focus on at least one area of specialization in the candidacy process.

Associates in Ministry are expected to have demonstrated ability and experience within one or more areas of specialization. The list below provides categories in which leaders may have strength or demonstrated competency. The list is not exhaustive but rather descriptive of a variety of areas in which an Associate in Ministry might develop expertise or interest.

Administration
Campus Ministry
Chaplaincy
Christian Education
Community Organizing
Counseling/Social Work
Early Childhood Administration
Evangelism/Mission
Interim Ministry
Ministry in Daily Life

Music and Worship
Outdoor Ministry/Camping
Parish Nurse/Health
Public Policy/Advocacy
Senior Ministries
Spiritual Formation/Direction
Teaching
Volunteer Coordination
Worship Leadership/Preaching
Youth and Family

Leaders are to be certified, trained, or otherwise demonstrate competence in a specific profession with the appropriate and necessary education and practical preparation. Expertise in a specialization will be demonstrated through the following:

1. Undergraduate degree in field of specialization, or a major/concentration with a particular focus, or equivalent academic credentials, or
2. Professional licensure or certification, whenever normative or required, or, in some cases, significant recognized work experience.

A candidate declares the area of specialization by the time of candidacy Endorsement, which must be reviewed and confirmed by the Candidacy Committee.

For those seeking professional certification in ministries of chaplaincy, counseling, and clinical

education, ecclesiastical specialized pastoral care endorsement is normative and expected. This ecclesiastical endorsement is pursued through the churchwide office near the time of assignment and call.

It is the responsibility of the Candidacy Committee to evaluate a candidate's readiness to serve as an Associate in Ministry. While a minimum of one area of specialization is expected, a candidate may be called to serve in a position with a broad position description. The committee must consider formation in theological education, spirituality, contextual education, and overall readiness that will provide the church with competent leaders for mission.

Supervised Field Experience

A satisfactorily completed supervised field experience with specialization may be done through an internship, practicum, employment, or other setting. The normal duration of the supervised field experience is one year with a minimum of 600 supervised hours. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) may be included as appropriate. (See Guidelines for Field Experience.)

Commissioning and First Call

A candidate is approved for call by the Candidacy Committee upon successful completion of all requirements and agreement with the *Vision and Expectations* of this church. Associate in Ministry candidates participate in the churchwide assignment process. The service of commissioning is arranged and conducted under the direction and oversight of the bishop of the synod where the first call is received.

Reinstatement

The process for reinstatement to the rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is explained in Chapter 1 pp. 24 - 27.

Fisher's Net>Select Courses for Associate in Ministry Candidates

The Fisher's Net>Select program offers theological education delivered via video and printed material. With approval of the Candidacy Committee, a candidate preparing for service as an associate in ministry in the ELCA who is unable to attend a seminary or college may complete some of the theological education requirements through Fisher's Net>Select. Normally the courses are arranged and scheduled locally and involve a small group of people who take the course together.

The courses are produced under the direction of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit and have been approved for use by associate in ministry candidates. While they are not accepted

for academic credit at a college or seminary, these courses fulfill the requirements for commissioning in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Fisher's Net>Select will issue a Certificate of Completion to those who successfully complete a course.

The process for receiving a certificate of completion through Fisher's Net>Select is as follows:

1. The candidate arranges to take the course with other students (these may be other associates in ministry or candidates, pastors, lay persons, etc).
2. At the conclusion of the course, the candidate prepares a reflection paper of 10 to 12 pages in length. Suggestions for writing the paper are given in the Fisher's Net>Select catalog.
3. The paper will be evaluated in one of the following ways:
 - a. The synod Candidacy Committee may designate a person to read and approve the paper. This reader need not be a member of the committee but should be qualified to provide theological and biblical critique. When the essay has been approved, the reader should notify the Fisher's Net>Select office indicating that the candidate has successfully completed the course and request that a certificate of successful completion be issued, or,
 - b. The paper may be sent directly to the Director of Fisher's Net>Select, who will read the paper. If the essay is approved, a certificate of completion will be sent. Fisher's Net>Select charges a nominal fee for reading each paper.

The synod Candidacy Committee, in conversation with the candidate, is fully responsible for determining how many courses and which courses a candidate may use to satisfy the theological education requirement for approval as an associate in ministry.

To explore Fisher's Net>Select options: www.elca.org/select

Waiver of Academic Requirements

Persons interested in serving as an associate in ministry who have not completed the necessary academic requirement of a bachelor's degree may in some cases request a waiver from this requirement. This exception is reserved for those persons who for reasons of prior experience and/or personal circumstances may not find it appropriate or possible to complete the bachelor's degree requirement. Such persons may apply for consideration upon evaluation of gifts for ministry, the needs of this church, and the demonstrated abilities of the individual. Prior experience in the specialization is a primary criteria for consideration in all cases. Age is not the primary criteria for consideration under this provision. A minimum of an associate degree or significant post-secondary education is expected for consideration of a waiver.

A positive Entrance Decision is required prior to a request for waiver. All requests for a waiver will be reviewed and evaluated by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, with a recommendation made to the synod Candidacy Committee. The evaluation is based on

experience in non-degree studies, in demonstrated work performance comparable to that expected of a person holding a bachelor's degree, and other information included in the request. This provision for equivalency applies only to the bachelor's degree requirement and is not applicable to the theological education requirements.

The procedure to be followed by those seeking consideration for waiver is as follows:

- I. Complete all Entrance requirements and receive a positive Entrance Decision from the synod Candidacy Committee.
- II. Submit a written request and rationale to the synod Candidacy Committee for review.
Based upon this request and all materials submitted, the Candidacy Committee reviews the request for content and clarity and determines whether the candidate should proceed under this provision.
- III. The Candidacy Committee requests a review and recommendation by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. This request includes the following material:
 - A. A letter from the Candidacy Committee that includes the action of the Committee to forward this request, rationale for their request, and confirmation of a positive Entrance Decision.
 - B. A copy of the Candidacy Application form, including the Entrance Essay.
 - C. A copy of a written rationale from the candidate that clearly states reasons for the equivalency request, based on experience, training, and competency;
 - D. A detailed listing of the candidate's work experience:
 1. Employing organization, city, position, and years in the position;
 2. Description of the range of responsibilities in each position;
 3. On-the-job training, seminars, and continuing education taken to build and contribute to competencies, including the type and length of training;
 - E. Supervisory and project management roles carried out in each position including the number of persons and the range of tasks for those supervised;
 - F. Description of independent or team work experiences.
 - G. A description of relevant volunteer experience and training. Adult volunteer experience can demonstrate equivalency skills, interpersonal skills, and organizational skills.
Include a description of the organization, responsibilities, the numbers and types of relationships with those reported to and those coordinated, and the length of time served.
 1. Describe the purpose of this effort, the number of persons involved, and your role. Provide appropriate detail of the effort's development over the period of time in which you were involved.
 2. Describe any training and guidance provided to volunteers that also may be relevant here.
 3. Serving as a mentor for another can demonstrate factors relevant to equivalency. Describe any mentoring role, results, and outcomes.
 - H. A detailed listing of all education completed including related continuing education. All available transcripts or certificates should be submitted, including:
 1. College, community college, business or trade school, apprenticeships;
 2. Military training and service, including the scope of responsibilities and time periods for this service;
 3. On-the-job training, significant work-related seminars, and courses,

particularly those that led to increased responsibilities and/or a new position.

- I. A current position description, if in the employment of a church or church-related institution;
- J. Three letters of recommendation from those well acquainted with the candidate's background and work. Letters of recommendation should be more than character references and should include knowledge and illustration of the person's demonstrated ability. References should include the candidate's pastor, a congregational leader familiar with the applicant's demonstrated leadership ability and gifts for ministry, and a person with competence and knowledge consistent with the candidate's area of specialization. No relatives should provide a reference.
- IV. The request is reviewed and a recommendation from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit is sent to the Candidacy Committee and copied to the candidate.
- V. The final decision regarding equivalency or alternative study is made by the Candidacy Committee. Following a decision regarding equivalency or alternative study eligibility, the Candidacy Committee oversees the designated course of study to complete equivalency and appropriate supervised field experience.

Field Experience

Experience and involvement in a context for ministry is essential to preparation for service as an associate in ministry. Experiential learning in the action-reflection model whereby one's practice of ministry is combined with supervised reflection and evaluation of that ministry is essential to formation for ministry. Supervised field experience seeks to facilitate the integration of academic study in the area of specialization and theological education with the practice of ministry. It is also designed to encourage the development of a ministerial identity of one who will serve in the public ministry of this church in an interdependent relationship with clergy and laity.

Supervised field experience may begin after the candidate has been granted a positive Endorsement Decision. Planning a field experience proposal can begin prior to Endorsement in consultation with the Candidacy Committee and the academic study or following the completion of all academic work. The synodical Candidacy Committee will work with the candidate in arranging and overseeing the field experience for candidates who have completed their academic work and for those already in service.

1. Objectives

- a. To provide actual experience in the candidate's area of specialization, thereby enabling the candidate to develop increasing competence as a leader in the public ministry of this church.
- b. To offer an opportunity for self-evaluation and spiritual nurture under the guidance of a mentor.
- c. To offer an opportunity for evaluation by others, including the mentor, the onsite field supervisor, and an advisory committee from the congregation or group being

served.

- d. To provide a learning context that allows the candidate to experience many aspects of congregational, institutional, or agency life, including participation in the governing and programmatic structures such as council, board of directors, committees, and staff meetings.
- e. To provide opportunity for the candidate to participate in at least one project in an area of specialization or focus from beginning to completion, including planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- f. To assist the candidate in developing regular habits and patterns for theological reflection, spiritual formation, and healthy self-care.
- g. To provide to the synod Candidacy Committee an assessment regarding the candidate's growth, professional development, and skills in the area of ministry specialization.

2. Tracks/Options for Field Experience

Associates in ministry candidates enter the Candidacy Process from a variety of contexts. Some are undergraduates, some graduate students enrolled in seminary, and some are persons already in service in a ministry setting who may or may not have completed their academic requirements. Some have many years of service in this church either as volunteers or paid staff, while others have no work experience.

In recognition of this diversity, Candidacy Committees, colleges, and seminaries will need to exercise creativity and flexibility in approving or arranging field experiences appropriate for the particular needs of the individual. The normal length of a field experience shall be one year, which may be interpreted as 6-12 months with a minimum of 600 contracted supervised hours. Three basic tracks or options have been identified.

A. Candidates Who are Enrolled in Academic Degree Programs

Academic institutions may provide field experience such as:

1. a full-time internship for 6-12 months;
2. a combination CPE and field experience arrangement;
3. a part-time position (10-20 hours per week) during the academic year completed concurrently over a one-or two-year period;
4. part-time work or practicum during the school year combined with full-time summer position; or
5. an approved student-teaching assignment for Christian Day School teachers.

The determination of how the field experience is structured will be based on such factors as age, previous work experience, academic setting, graduate or undergraduate status, etc. Work may be stipend. When stipend, the remuneration should be similar to that granted M.Div interns. A stipend is strongly encouraged for work over 15 hours per week. Where structured field experience is part of the academic preparation arranged by

a college or seminary, it is necessary for the candidate to arrange to have evaluation reports sent to the synodical Candidacy Committee. A common report form is provided by the Vocation and Education unit through the Candidacy Committees.

B. Candidates Who Have Completed Academic Work

The Candidacy Committee will consult with a candidate to arrange for field experience and receive evaluations.

If not already employed in a church-related setting, the candidate will work with the Candidacy Committee in arranging an appropriate field experience. Arrangements should include an appropriate stipend whenever possible. Consultation with the bishop is encouraged in identifying a location where ministry and supervision needs might be met.

If already employed in a church-related setting, the candidate may, with the approval of the Candidacy Committee, arrange to carry out the supervised field experience in the place of employment. This second option requires that attention be given to assisting the candidate and the congregation or agency as they process the changing role of an established leader becoming a called and commissioned associate in ministry and the implications of this change for both parties.

C. Candidates with Three or More Consecutive Years Experience in a Church-Related Work Position

Waiver or partial waiver of the Supervised Field Experience may be considered by the Candidacy Committee for candidates who have been in service in church-related employment three consecutive years or longer.

The candidates shall provide a written request and rationale for this equivalency or waiver and document how the goals and objectives for supervised field experience have already been met. The candidate shall also provide three letters of recommendation from those well acquainted with the candidate's work. In a congregational setting, these persons should be the pastor, a congregational leader either elected or with leadership responsibility related to the area of specialty, and a person with competence and knowledge consistent with the candidate's area of ministry.

The Candidacy Committee will review this material and in consultation with the candidate and Congregational and Synodical Mission unit staff, determine whether additional contextual learning goals need to be addressed. It is the decision of the Candidacy

Committee to grant or deny the request.

In all cases, the candidate shall be required to work with his or her congregational leadership support committee, if currently in a position, or with the synod Candidacy Committee, if seeking a position, in reflecting together on issues of changing ministry identify as he or she moves from the role of established leader to that of a called commissioned associate in ministry.

3. Components of the Field Experience

A. Context

The context will be a setting that represents the anticipated focus of a candidate's future ministry: parish work, parish education, youth ministry, music, etc. If an administrative or teaching position, then a Lutheran elementary, high school or early childhood education center will be the context. If counseling or specialized pastoral care, it will be in an appropriate agency or institution and will include at least one unit of CPE. Highly specialized settings are only approved when a candidate demonstrates significant experience in a general ministry setting.

B. Supervising/Mentoring/Advising

A quality field experience for associate in ministry candidates requires over-all supervision on-site, mentoring, training specific to the area of specialty, support, and nurture.

Associates in ministry in the ELCA typically serve in multiple-staff ministries and normally work with a supervisor. Most often the person who supervises the over all ministry is theologically trained, with responsibility for oversight in the local situation. It is important, then, that the supervised field experience provide training and attention to team-ministry development as well as the development of individual leadership gifts and skills.

Three equally important roles and functions have been identified in order to facilitate the goals and objectives for supervised field experience. Normally this means the involvement of three parties in addition to the candidate. In some situations the role/function of field supervisor and that of mentor can be combined and carried out by one person.

- 1. The On-Site Field Supervisor** will provide administrative structure to the overall experience including a written description of responsibilities, consultation for mutual reflection of supervisory issues, and periodic review and evaluation. The on-site field supervisor must be a rostered leader of the ECA. When

responsibility is given to an associate in ministry or diaconal minister, it is that person's responsibility to include the pastor in the process.

2. The Mentor is a person from the same area of specialization of focus as the candidate. The mentor shall have at least three years of experience in the Candidate's area of specialization. If not onsite, the mentor will be identified by the Candidacy Committee or academic institution in consultation with the candidate and must be available for at least monthly meetings with the candidate.

The mentor is responsible for working with the candidate in identifying learning goals, objectives, and activities specific to the area of specialty. The mentor will reflect with the candidate on issues related to effective ministry as well as patterns for spiritual formation and healthy self-care. It is hoped that the mentor can model a relationship that would be sought out by the candidate once commissioned and in service.

3. An Advisory Committee shall be appointed in all settings. This committee should include persons who will have regular exposure to and familiarity with the candidate's work, including leaders and participants in programs. In situations where the candidate is already in service, this function may be provided by the Leadership Support or Mutual Ministry Committee.

C. Learning Agreement

The field experience is a time when gifts, aptitudes, and skills for ministry can be developed and tested under supervision and within a helpful and supportive setting. Each field experience needs to have a focus and specific learning goals. An acknowledged focus and written learning agreement contribute to the value of the total experience and build a partnership among the candidate, the supervisors, the congregation, the college or seminary, and the synod. Candidates in academic programs are encouraged to work initially with the faculty advisors in developing learning goals. Those who are not in an academic program should consult with the Candidacy Committee. These goals are presented to the committee and supervisor for final development and approval.

Each area of ministry specialization requires goals and activities specific to the area of focus. It is also important that each associate in ministry sees the specialty area within the context of the overall mission and ministry of the congregation or agency. Candidates should gain experience in working with individuals and with groups, with opportunities to develop the specific skills required, such as teaching, counseling, program development, leadership training, musical performance, visitation, administration or committee work. It is desirable and encouraged that as one preparing for public ministry, the associate in ministry gain experience in worship leadership by serving as an assisting minister in the liturgy, whatever the area of focus.

A critical area of development for all associates in ministry is developing team-ministry skills to work effectively with councils, committees, and staff teams. It is recommended that whenever possible the candidate participate in retreats with staff, council, or committees and take advantage of workshops offered in building team ministry. It is also desirable and recommended that the candidate have opportunities and receive financial assistance to participate in synodical and regional events such as leadership conferences and synod assemblies.

D. Evaluation

The candidate writes a self-evaluation and the supervision partners each write an evaluation of the candidate at the mid-way point and at the conclusion of the field experience. (The chairperson of the Advisory Committee represents the committee.) The evaluation provides information (which is used in assessing successful completion of the requirement) to the academic institution when the candidate is a student and to the Candidacy Committee. A record that describes all experience and involvements can be used in reflection and evaluation sessions with the supervisor/mentor.

4. Field Experience Responsibilities

A. The Candidate has responsibility to:

1. work cooperatively with the academic institution (college or seminary) and/or the Candidacy Committee in arranging for an appropriate field experience;
2. establish an effective working relationship with all members of the supervisory team;
3. participate in writing the learning agreement;
4. reflect theologically upon experiences gained;
5. cultivate a personal devotional life and self-care; and
6. engage in the evaluative process of field experience and prepare the required written reports.

B. The Academic Institution and the Candidacy Committee (when the candidate is not a student) as the responsibility to;

1. work cooperatively with the candidate in arranging an appropriate field experience, including the identification and approval of a supervisor and a mentor;
2. participate in preparing the learning agreement;
3. negotiate a stipend when appropriate;
4. assist in determining whether the field experience should continue in the event of any change or conflict in the supervisory relationship; and
5. receive evaluation reports and determine the successful completion of the requirement.

C. The **Supervisor/Mentor/Advisory Committee** has the responsibility to:

1. participate in writing the learning agreement;
2. provide regularly scheduled opportunities to discuss and reflect on the candidate's growth and development in light of the learning goals established;
3. listen to the candidate's concerns as well as achievements and provide support as well as constructive suggestions for growth and learning; and
4. provide written evaluation reports to the candidate, the academic institution, and the Candidacy Committee.

Guidelines for the DeaconessCommunity

Introduction

The modern deacon/deaconess movement around the world is an outgrowth of the revival of the New Testament diaconate that began in Germany during the 19th century. The movement came to America in that century and had an impact on many of the ELCA's predecessor church bodies. The ELCA Deaconess Community is one of two Lutheran deaconess communities in North America coming from this heritage who continue to actively serve today. The other is the independent Lutheran Deaconess Association (LDA), headquartered in Valparaiso, Indiana; women of the LDA may be rostered in the ELCA as Associates in Ministry or as Diaconal Ministers.

“The Deaconess Community has been formed in order that skilled and committed women acting in community may complement the ministry of Word and Sacrament as well as the ministry of the whole people of God. This ministry is exercised within the context of the church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel, to relate the Gospel to human need in every situation, and to extend the ministry of the Gospel to all the world.” (Bylaws of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, 3.1)

The Deaconess Community’s Mission statement is: “Compelled by the love of Christ, and sustained by community, we devote our lives to proclaiming the Gospel through ministries of mercy and servant leadership.”

The Deaconess Community vision: “Empowered by the Holy Spirit for public ministry, we passionately seek to: embody our mission, be a Christ-centered community of women, and witness to the Church and the world.”

Deaconesses are approved through the ELCA synod Candidacy Process in partnership with the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission of the Deaconess Community of the

ELCA. They are consecrated for service upon receipt and acceptance of a letter of call.

The Deaconess Community holds its organization through the ELCA, and it also serves the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Its predecessor body in the Lutheran Church in America was one organization serving both countries. A deaconess serves under a call from a congregation, synod, or churchwide agency (ELCA or ELCIC); she may serve in a non-church agency or a non-stipendiary position if issued a call to do so by a congregation or her synod under the guidelines of the ELCA or the ELCIC.

Steps in Candidacy

Candidacy for women seeking to serve in the Deaconess Community includes full participation in her Synodical Candidacy Process and in the candidacy process of the Deaconess Community. The synodical steps, in order of completion, begin with Entrance, continue through Endorsement, and culminate with Approval. The Deaconess Community process parallels this but uses Investiture as the intermediate step. Traditionally, investiture was the point at which the candidate was entitled to wear the optional garb of the Deaconess Community. It is now the point at which a candidate becomes a full member of the Community with all its rights and responsibilities.

Entrance includes Discernment, Candidacy Application form, Congregational Registration, Initial Interview, and Screening, including a Psychological Evaluation and a Background Check through the synod Candidacy Committee. Deaconess candidates must also complete the application packet provided by the Deaconess Community and participate in an interview with the Deaconess Community Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission.

The synod Candidacy Committee must receive a positive recommendation from the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission of the Deaconess Community prior to giving a positive Entrance Decision to a deaconess candidate. The synod Candidacy Committee may not give Entrance as a deaconess candidate to anyone denied by the Community. The synodical Candidacy Committee may, however, choose to postpone or deny a woman recommended by the Community. A positive Entrance Decision qualifies a deaconess candidate to begin theological study.

Endorsement/Investiture: A candidate is encouraged to go through **Endorsement** with her synod Candidacy Committee. The Deaconess Community makes the decision to **invest** her, which parallels synodical endorsement. Approval for investiture is a decision made by the Board of the Deaconess Community upon recommendation of its Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission. The two Candidacy Committees work in an atmosphere of mutual respect out of a desire to support the call to diaconia and concern for the candidate.

At this time the candidate publicly participates in the service of mutual affirmation known as Investiture, which admits her to the privileges and responsibilities of the Deaconess Community, ELCA.

Investiture is normally required prior to a deaconess' internship. Internship is supervised by an onsite supervisor and local committee, supported by the Deaconess Community's Director of Congregational and Synodical Mission. All internship reports and CPE reports will be copied to both Candidacy Committees by the candidate.

Approval for Consecration and First Call: This step is scheduled upon completion of all academic requirements and practical experience requirements (see below). The Approval Essay assignment distributed by the ELCA will be completed by the candidate prior to meeting with both committees. Copies of the essay are to be sent to both the synod and the Deaconess Community by the candidate.

Neither the synod Candidacy Committee nor the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission of the Deaconess Community may grant approval for consecration and first call to a candidate who has been denied by the other. Both may postpone or deny a candidate approved by the other.

When the Committees come to differing decisions, they must enter into a consultative process until unanimity is reached. The synod Candidacy Committee makes its decision for Approval; the Board of Directors of the Deaconess Community upon recommendation from the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission makes its decision for Approval.

Standards for Members of The Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

A deaconess must meet the Basic Standards for all rostered ministries as found in ELCA *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* Chapter 7. In addition the Deaconess Community maintains the following standards for admission and continuance in the Community.

A deaconess is a woman who:

1. Is an active communing member of a congregation of the ELCA or the ELCIC
2. Affirms that she is called by God to ministry in the diaconate through the Deaconess Community and has sought and received confirmation of that call by this church;
3. Is academically and professionally prepared to function within her chosen occupation;
4. Is prepared theologically to express and reflect upon this church's understanding of:
 - a. The Gospel
 - b. The ministry of the church as expressed in the historic Lutheran Confessions

- c. The mission, purpose and uniqueness of the diaconal call;
- 5. Who has been examined for such theological competence in her vocation, occupation and personal life; and who participates periodically in a formal period of reflection upon these themes;
- 6. Is committed to the continual strengthening of her relationship to and theological understanding of the Triune God through such means as prayer, study of the Holy Scriptures, personal devotional life, and the corporate celebration of Word and Sacrament;
- 7. Is unashamedly willing to relate and witness to the mission and message of Christ, not only in her occupation but in her total life;
- 8. Pledges to meet the established standards for Deaconess Community membership spiritually, personally, corporately, financially, and in matters of time;
- 9. Participates in continuing education and periodic evaluation in accordance with the highest recognized standards of her profession and/or occupation; and
- 10. Has a healthy self-awareness and seeks to maintain a balanced life and spiritual, 11. Vocational, interpersonal, intellectual, physical, and emotional wellness.

Academic and Practical Criteria for Consecration

Basic Education Requirements

A candidate for the Deaconess Community is required to meet certain educational requirements as established by the ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit in consultation with the Deaconess Community:

- 1. She must be prepared to meet the academic and professional standards for her chosen vocation or specialization, e.g. nurse, social worker, chaplain, parish deaconess, etc. and any licensing or certification requirements for the state or province in which she will serve. Candidates usually will earn a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent related to her field of service.
- 2. She must complete a course of theological studies as detailed in section 2 below which will prepare her to express and reflect on this church's understanding of the Gospel, the ministry of the church as expressed in the historic Lutheran Confessions, the mission, purpose, and uniqueness of the Deaconess Community as one of the ecumenical diaconal organizations, and her own responsibility within and in relation to this total context.
- 3. A unit of Clinical Pastoral Education or other supervised pastoral education is required for all deaconess candidates.
- 4. An internship, usually of one year, is required.

Theological Education Requirements

- 1. Deaconess candidates preparing to serve in a congregation of the ELCA must earn a

master's degree in theological studies (M.A.R., M.R.E., M.A., M.T.S., etc.) and may include a major or specialization in her field of ministry. Such candidates shall confer with the Deaconess Community regarding the selection of an appropriate seminary and the curriculum requirements of the Community (see b. below).

2. The deaconess candidate preparing for ministry in which a seminary degree is not required will complete a course of theological studies planned in consultation with the community's Director of Congregational and Synodical Mission. This may include courses in the following areas: Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Ethics, Lutheran Confessions, Pastoral Care and Counseling, Systematic Theology, Worship & Liturgy, Field Education. The Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission of the Deaconess Community is responsible for monitoring this course of study and will report successful completion to the synodical Candidacy Committee.

Specialization

The ELCA has identified a need to provide for a variety of ministries in congregations and other settings where theologically trained leaders serve. While the forms of ministry might be different, there are common areas of specialization, focus, and need throughout this church. A call might include many varied responsibilities, but a rostered leader is expected to focus on at least one area of specialization in the Candidacy Process.

Deaconesses are expected to have demonstrated ability and experience within one or more areas of specialization. The list below provides categories in which leaders may have strength or demonstrated competency. The list is not exhaustive but rather descriptive of a variety of areas in which a deaconess might develop expertise or interest.

Administration
Campus Ministry
Chaplaincy
Christian Education
Community Organizing
Counseling/Social Work
Early Childhood Administration
Evangelism/mission
Interim ministry
Ministry in Daily Life

Music and Worship
Outdoor Ministry/Camping
Parish Nurse/Health
Public Policy/Advocacy
Senior Ministries
Spiritual Formation/Direction
Teaching
Volunteer Coordination
Worship Leadership/Preaching
Youth and Family

Leaders are to be certified, trained, or otherwise competent in a specific profession with the appropriate and necessary education and practical preparation. Expertise in a specialization will be demonstrated through the following:

1. Undergraduate degree in field of specialization, or a major/concentration with a particular focus, or equivalent academic credentials, or
2. Professional licensure or certification, whenever normative or required, or, in some cases, significant recognized work experience.

A candidate declares the area of specialization (which must be reviewed and confirmed by the Committee of Congregational and Synodical Mission) by the time of Investiture.

For those seeking professional certification in ministries of chaplaincy, counseling, and clinical education, ecclesiastical specialized pastoral care endorsement is normative and expected. This ecclesiastical endorsement is pursued through the churchwide office near the time of assignment and call.

It is the responsibility of the Committee of Congregational and Synodical Mission together with the synod Candidacy Committee to evaluate a candidate's readiness to serve as a deaconess. While a minimum of one area of specialization is expected, a candidate may be called to serve in a position with a broad position description. The committees must consider formation in theological education, spirituality, contextual education, and overall readiness so that the church is provided with competent leaders for mission.

Deaconess Candidate Formation

The purpose of the Deaconess Candidate Formation is to enable the candidate to grow in the understanding of her call into diaconia and into the Deaconess Community. The candidate is required to participate in formational events with the following objectives:

1. Discern, through her experience, through interactions, through prayer and confirmation that her call is *diaconal*, and is also to life within the Deaconess Community;
2. Deepen her relationship with God through prayer, theological preparation, spiritual direction, and community life;
3. Understand the history of the diaconate from biblical times to the present; and
4. interpret *diaconia* to others.

The Deaconess Community offers a variety of opportunities for candidates to explore both the Community and herself, from a variety of viewpoints. Retreats, attendance at annual Deaconess Community assemblies, mentoring, and other integrative events are opportunities for each woman to grow in relationship with the Community and her call.

Health and Wellness

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America envisions a church in which those preparing for and serving in rostered leadership positions and their spouses and families will be encouraged, supported, and motivated to grow in their faith hardiness, which reflects their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, interpersonal, and vocational health and well-being.

Healthy leaders enhance their lives and the lives of others. To be prepared for the rigor of public ministry and mission, candidates need to demonstrate and continue to develop healthy leadership qualities. Leaders in this church who practice self-care and attend to the balance of all aspects of their health enhance the church's faithful witness in the world. Candidates are

expected to address any health concerns with their Candidacy Committees. Intentional efforts to improve all aspects of wellness will be most effective when supported by families, congregations, synod, seminary, and Community.

Spiritual and Vocational Formation

All candidates for consecrated service are expected to follow a regular pattern of worship, prayer, Bible study, and disciplined faith practices that sustains and supports formal work in theological education and contextual learning. While such formation may follow a variety of patterns, a candidate is expected to engage in practices that are communal in scope, draw on the hearty traditions of the Christian life, and model an example of Christian living for others.

At the time of entrance into the Candidacy Process, a candidate will be asked to share a plan for how her faith life will be sustained and nurtured while in the Candidacy Process. Such a plan may include practices such as the use of a trained spiritual director, participation in a group discipleship experience, retreats, personal devotions and daily prayer, and regular participation in worship in a communal setting or a congregation. Plans for offering service to others, personal stewardship, vocational discernment, and healthy self-care will also be discussed. Throughout the Candidacy Process the Candidacy Committees will inquire about the candidate's ongoing practices and habits and will offer encouragement for lively engagement with such facets of Christian living.

Investiture

Upon completion of preparatory requirements and endorsement by the Board of Directors of the Deaconess Community, each entranced candidate publicly participates in a service of mutual affirmation known as Investiture, which during the remainder of her candidacy admits her to the privileges and responsibilities of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA. A decision for Investiture by the Board of the Directors of the Deaconess Community shall be reported to the synodical Candidacy Committee.

Internship

1. Having completed her theological education requirements and following Investiture, the deaconess candidate normally participates in a one-year internship, which has a two-fold purpose:
 - a. To use and improve professional skills; and
 - b. To begin to function in her role as a deaconess.
2. The deaconess candidate participates in her own internship placement, which is developed through consultation with the Director of Congregational and Synodical Mission of the Deaconess Community, bishops whose synods are seeking internship placements, and seminary faculty or contextual education staff, if she is attending seminary. The candidate submits to the Director of Congregational and Synodical Mission, for the approval of the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission, a written plan for the internship, prior to its implementation.

3. In preparation for internship the deaconess candidate is provided with a copy of the current Internship Manual for the Deaconess Community. Within two weeks of beginning the internship, she prepares, in consultation with the Director of Congregational and Synodical Mission and the on-site supervisor an internship contract/covenant, to be approved by the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission.
4. The Director of Congregational and Synodical Mission reviews the internship evaluations and monthly reports. Final internship reports shall be sent to the synod Candidacy Committee and the Committee on Congregational and Synodical Mission.

Consecration and First Call

A deaconess candidate is approved for consecration on successful completion of all requirements, agreement with the *Vision and Expectations* of this church, and a positive Approval Decision by the synod Candidacy Committee and the Board of Directors of the Deaconess Community.

Deaconess candidates may participate in the Churchwide Assignment Consultation scheduled two times each year; however, usually deaconess candidates are assigned to a synod through administrative assignment.

The bishop of first call and the deaconess candidate will inform the directing deaconess of the receipt and acceptance of a letter of call. The Directing Deaconess will relay this information to the Board of Directors of the Deaconess Community and will assist the bishop in arranging and conducting a service of consecration that includes the Directing Deaconess or her appointee.

Reinstatement

The process for reinstatement to the rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is explained in Chapter 1 page 25.

Candidacy for Diaconal Ministere

Diaconal Ministry is a form of rostered leadership ministry that helps enable the ELCA to effectively fulfill its mission of service in the world. Diaconal Ministers are called by this church to positions that exemplify the servant life and seek to equip and motivate others to live it.

Diaconal ministers shall seek in a variety of ways to empower, equip, and support the baptized

people of God in the ministry of Jesus Christ and the mission of God in the world. Diaconal ministers are marked by these characteristics and shall:

1. Be Rooted in the Word of God

Diaconal ministers are committed to Christ, and called to be spokespersons for the gospel, the apostolic faith, and the theological emphasis of this church to God's world.

2. Be Trained to Carry Out a Particular Service

Diaconal ministers carry out a public ministry of service and witness. With demonstrated competence and expertise in a particular discipline, diaconal ministers may serve both within and outside of congregational settings, in each case bearing responsibility for making the linkages between church and world. Programmatic ministries within congregational settings should be marked by extension of the witness and service of the Church into the wider community.

3. Be Committed and Prepared to Equip the Baptized for Ministry in the World and in the Church

Diaconal ministers along with other rostered leaders are called to lead and equip the baptized for ministry. Diaconal ministers support the ministry of the baptized through appropriate programmatic ministries and by working with the laity in discerning and encouraging their gifts for ministry.

4. Give Particular Attention to Ministries at the Boundaries Between the Church and World

Diaconal ministers carry public responsibility to speak for the needs of God's world to the church as well as taking God's saving gospel to the world through the actions of God's people both individually and collectively.

5. Exemplify the Life of Christ-like Service Addressing All Forms of Human Need

The call to diaconal ministry is a lifelong commitment that supports and complements the ministry of Word and Sacrament, focusing on ministry to the whole person. This "diaconal bias" provides the lens and vision for developing the diaconal mission of the church carried out among and through its members.

6. Be Grounded in Community

Diaconal ministers need the support and shared vision of a community of leaders committed to a common calling. This grounding in a diaconal community serves as the reminder to seek to build community in all ministry settings.

Steps in Candidacy

Persons seeking consecration as diaconal ministers in the ELCA are expected to participate fully in all steps of the Candidacy Process: Entrance, Endorsement, and Approval. The candidate has a responsibility to fulfill all of the expectations and requirements of the Candidacy Process.

Entrance begins a process of discernment that explores an individual's potential for rostered ministry and readiness to begin preparation through theological study and candidacy in the ELCA. One year as an active member in an ELCA congregation is required prior to entrance. The Entrance Process includes Candidacy Application form, Congregational Registration, Initial Interview, and Screening, including a Psychological Evaluation. The synod Candidacy Committee must make a positive Entrance Decision before an applicant continues in the process of formation and preparation. A positive Entrance Decision is required to attend the Diaconal Ministry Formation Event and to begin field experience. A Background Check is to be completed prior to any field placement.

In consultation with the Candidacy Committee, application is made to a seminary. Affiliation with an ELCA seminary is required for any candidate who is not attending an ELCA seminary as part of the Candidacy Entrance Process. The candidate receives consultation and guidance regarding the requirements for diaconal ministry (see Theological Education section).

Endorsement encourages and affirms those who clearly demonstrate gifts and qualities for a specific form of ministry in the ELCA as well as identifies areas for growth and development. Endorsement for a diaconal ministry candidate is considered at an appropriate time during the Candidacy Process. At least one full semester/quarter of graduate theological study and the completion of the formation event are required before Endorsement. The candidate submits the Endorsement Essay to the synod Candidacy Committee and the seminary. The Candidacy Committee arranges for the Endorsement Interview and makes a decision. Once endorsed, the candidate may begin the diaconal ministry field experience requirement. A proposal for the project component should be submitted at the time of Endorsement.

Approval occurs when the candidate articulates the call to ministry and demonstrates readiness to assume a leadership role as a rostered minister in the ELCA. The Approval Interview comes near the satisfactory completion of all academic and practical requirements as affirmation of a call to public ministry. An Approval Essay, available from the seminary or the synod, is prepared and submitted to the Candidacy Committee. A faculty recommendation is submitted. The Candidacy Committee arranges for the Approval Interview. A positive Approval Decision by the committee must be made in order for the candidate to be available for assignment, consecration, and first call.

Standards

Persons approved, consecrated, and rostered as diaconal ministers of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following Basic Standards established in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA 7.52.11.)*:

1. Commitment to Christ;
2. Acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
3. Willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;

4. Academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities
5. And competence in interpersonal relationships;
6. Commitment to lead a life worthy of the gospel of Christ and in so doing to be
7. An example in faithful service and holy living;
8. Receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
9. Membership in a congregation of this church.

Diaconal ministers must be fully prepared to meet the following criteria:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the Word of God;
2. A Lutheran understanding of the gospel;
3. Knowledge and understanding of the Lutheran Confessions;
4. Theological reflection on issues of faith and life;
5. Personal spiritual formation and ministry identity;
6. Communication and planning skills necessary for effective witness, both verbally and in action;
7. Specific training and skill in an identified area of service;
8. Willingness to share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry and assist in leading the church's mission to proclaim God's love through word and deed;
9. Encouragement to identify other persons who will prepare for the ministry of the gospel; and
10. Ability to work in partnership and serve the mission and ministry needs of this church.

Academic and Practical Criteria for Consecration

In preparation for consecration as a diaconal minister of this church, a candidate is required to engage in a comprehensive program of preparation, which includes theological education, training in area of specialization, formation for ministry, and field experience, including a diaconal ministry project.

I. Theological Education

Candidates must complete a theological degree at the master's level. All ELCA seminaries can provide such a degree as well as the basic Lutheran studies required for diaconal ministry service. Each seminary will advise its own students regarding core curriculum and field education requirements. The core curriculum for diaconal ministry includes:

- A. Old Testament Foundation
- B. New Testament Foundation
- C. Church History Foundation
- D. Church Doctrine Foundation/Systematic Theology
- E. Ethics
- F. Lutheran Confessions
- G. Church in Society

Candidates not attending ELCA seminaries must affiliate with one of four ELCA

seminaries: Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Wartburg Seminary, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, or Luther Seminary to receive consultation and guidance regarding core curriculum recommendations, Lutheran studies requirements, and supervision and coordination of field experience and project proposals.

The seminary also provides a faculty recommendation near the time of approval. An affiliation fee is paid to the ELCA seminary for these services. Application for admission is made only if academic courses are required.

II. Spiritual and Vocational Formation

All candidates for consecrated service are expected to follow a regular pattern of worship, prayer, Bible study, and disciplined faith practices that sustains and supports formal work in theological education and contextual learning. While such formation may follow a variety of patterns, a candidate is expected to engage in practices that are communal in scope, draw on the hearty traditions of the Christian life, and model an example of Christian living for others.

At the time of entrance into the Candidacy Process, a candidate will be asked to share a plan for how his or her faith life will be sustained and nurtured while in the Candidacy Process. Such a plan may include practices such as the use of a trained spiritual director, participation in a group discipleship experience, retreats, personal devotions and daily prayer, and regular participation in worship in a seminary setting and a congregation. Plans for offering service to others, personal stewardship, vocational discernment, and healthy self-care will also be discussed.

Throughout the Candidacy Process the Candidacy Committee will inquire about the candidate's ongoing practices and habits and will offer encouragement for lively engagement with such facets of Christian living.

A. Diaconal Ministry Formation Event

A positive Entrance Decision from the synod Candidacy Committee is required prior to participation in the Formation Event. Candidates must participate in the Formation Event before they can be considered for Endorsement.

Purpose: Normally the Formation Event precedes seminary study and provides a diaconal perspective for shaping a course of study and field experience Candidates will:

1. Study and explore the biblical, theological, historical, and ecumenical roots and expressions of diaconal ministry;
2. Examine current diaconal approaches and models for ministry in a variety of settings through study and field trips;
3. Gain deeper understandings of Lutheran theology as it relates to all forms of ministry, call, and ecclesiology;
4. Develop spiritual insights and disciplines for active ministry through worship,

- prayer, and group processes designed for spiritual formation, development of community, and mutual vision for diaconal ministry;
5. Explore areas for specialization and become oriented to standards, requirements, and procedures for ecclesiastical endorsements and professional certifications or licensure.

Requirements: All applicants to the Diaconal Ministry Formation Event must:

1. Complete the Candidacy Application Process;
2. Receive a positive Entrance Decision;
3. Submit Formation Event Application and essay;
4. Submit registration fee;
5. Complete all assigned readings prior to formation event;
6. Be in residence throughout the entire formation event; and
7. Have a completed background check on file.

Academic credit may be requested by the student prior to or at the time of registration and will be awarded upon successful completion of the Formation Event and other requirements established by the seminary.

B. Spiritual Direction

Candidates are expected to seek to develop, in a relationship of spiritual direction, regular habits and patterns for spiritual nurture, spiritual discipline, and healthy self-care.

Candidates must arrange for 40 hours of supervised spiritual direction, of which 10 hours must be contact hours. The candidate submits a report form to the Candidacy Committee when the 40 hours are completed.

III. Health and Wellness

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America envisions a church in which those preparing for and serving in rostered leadership positions and their spouses and families will be encouraged, supported, and motivated to grow in their faith hardiness, which reflects their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, interpersonal, financial and vocational health and well-being.

Healthy leaders enhance their own lives and the lives of others. To be prepared for the rigor of public ministry and mission, candidates need to demonstrate and continue to develop healthy leadership qualities. Leaders in this church who practice self-care and attend to the balance of all aspects of their health enhance this church's faithful witness in the world. Candidates are expected to address any health concerns with their Candidacy Committee. Intentional efforts to improve all aspects of wellness will be most effective when supported by families, congregations, synod, seminary, and community.

IV. Specialization

The ELCA has identified a need to provide for a variety of ministries in congregations and other settings where theologically trained leaders serve. While the forms of ministry might be different, there are common areas of specialization, focus, and need throughout this church. A call might include many varied responsibilities, but a rostered lay leader is expected to focus on at least one area of specialization in the Candidacy Process.

Diaconal ministers are expected to have demonstrated ability and experience within one or more areas of specialization. The list below provides categories in which leaders may have strength or demonstrated competency. The list is not exhaustive but rather descriptive of a variety of areas in which a diaconal minister might develop expertise or interest.

Administration
Campus Ministry
Chaplaincy
Christian Education
Community Organizing
Counseling/Social Work
Early Childhood Administration
Interim Ministry
Lay Evangelism/Mission
Ministry in Daily Life

Music and Worship
Outdoor Ministry/Camping
Parish Nurse/Health
Public Policy/Advocacy
Senior Ministries
Spiritual Formation/Direction
Teaching
Volunteer Coordination
Worship Leadership/Preaching
Youth and Family

Leaders are to be certified, trained, or otherwise competent in a specific profession with the appropriate and necessary education and practical preparation. Expertise in a specialization will be demonstrated through one or more of the following:

1. Undergraduate or graduate degree in field of specialization, or a major/concentration with a particular focus, or equivalent academic credentials, or
2. Professional licensure or certification, whenever normative or required, or, in some cases, significant recognized work experience.

A candidate declares the area of specialization by the time of Candidacy Endorsement. A written explanation of the particular diaconal focus of this specialization is also submitted to the Candidacy Committee, which reviews and confirms the specialization.

For those seeking professional certification in ministries of chaplaincy, counseling, and clinical education, ecclesiastical specialized pastoral care endorsement is normative and expected. This ecclesiastical endorsement is pursued through the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit near the time of assignment and call.

It is the responsibility of the Candidacy Committee to evaluate a candidate's readiness to serve as a diaconal minister. While a minimum of one area of specialization is expected, a

candidate may be called to serve in a position with a broad position description. The committee must consider formation in theological education, spirituality, contextual education, and overall readiness that will provide this church with competent leaders for mission.

V. Field Experience

Field work plays a vital role in the preparation and formation of diaconal ministry candidates. Diaconal ministry takes place at the boundaries where church and society interface.

Regardless of the particular ministry setting in which they serve, diaconal ministers will be expected to understand the dynamic relationships within and between congregational and societal systems and to provide leadership in connecting these systems. The placements for field work will reflect the range of diaconal purpose and should be appropriate and specific to its unique characteristics as a ministry of Word and service.

A. Standards for Field Experience

1. 700 hours of supervised training at the church-societal interface. (Particular areas of specialization may require additional supervised clinical training in accredited programs.) A minimum of 200 hours must be a diaconal ministry project in a field experience congregation.
2. Ability to articulate and demonstrate a vision and understanding of a particular ministry of Word and service as rooted in the Word of God and as a witness to the gospel.
3. Demonstrated skills in analyzing systemic relationships within and between congregations, societal structures, and institutions, and developing strategies or providing ministry at the interface of church and world.
4. Demonstrated competence in planning and implementation of a diaconal ministry project designed to engage with a congregation regarding its ministry in the world. This project will demonstrate an understanding of Lutheran theology and Christian vocation.

B. Field Experience Placement

The field experience requirements should be planned to give the candidate supervised experience in three integral areas of preparation for diaconal ministry: understanding and working with a congregation in relationship to the larger community, gaining expertise in an area of specialization, and reflecting theologically and spiritually on the relationship between these two areas. Various work and field experiences may be arranged sequentially and cumulatively to achieve the required 700 hours. A minimum of 200 hours will be devoted to the diaconal ministry project in a congregation. Candidates completing the project concurrent with seminary study may wish to explore the possibility of an independent study in relationship to their project.

Candidates work with the seminary's office of contextual education so that appropriate field experiences can be arranged. The ELCA seminary granting a candidate's degree is

responsible for supervision of the field experience. Supervision of the field experience for students at non-ELCA seminaries is provided through the ELCA seminary of affiliation.

C. Candidates Who Are Enrolled in Academic Degree Programs

Seminaries may structure the diaconal ministry field experience in a variety of ways and include more than one setting. The determination of how the field work is structured will be based on such factors as age, previous work experience, the field work/teaching parish/ministry in context opportunities of the particular seminary, etc. For example, the field work component may include:

1. A full-time (30-40 hours per week) field experience in a congregation or other setting (4-6 months);
2. A part-time position (10-20 hours per week) during the academic year completed over a one- to two-year period;
3. Part-time work during the school year combined with full-time summer position; or
4. A combination CPE and field work arrangement (a unit of CPE may count for up to 300 hours).

D. Candidates Who Have Completed Their Academic Degree Program

The candidate seeks the guidance of the ELCA Center for Diaconal Ministry Preparation at the Lutheran School of Theology at Gettysburg, in consultation with the candidate's Candidacy Committee, to arrange an appropriate field experience.

If already employed in a diaconal ministry setting, the candidate may, with the guidance of the ELCA Center for Diaconal Ministry Preparation, in consultation with the candidate's Candidacy Committee, arrange to complete supervised field work in that place, once a positive Endorsement Decision has been made.

Candidates who hold a degree from an ELCA seminary may seek the guidance of that seminary's contextual education office for field education placement and supervision, in consultation with the ELCA Center for Diaconal Ministry Preparation and the Candidacy Committee.

E. The Diaconal Ministry Project

The purpose of the project is to provide the candidate an opportunity to develop a vision for engaging the field experience congregation in ministry at the interface of societal need and Christian service. Through the planning, execution, and evaluation of the project, the candidate will demonstrate competency in the areas of:

1. The candidate's specialization;
2. An understanding of Lutheran theology and Christian vocation; and
3. The ability to translate these by engaging the field experience congregation in a particular ministry of the baptized in the world.

The project is to take place in consultation with the project director (appointed by the seminary) and a supervisor. Included in the 200 hours will be direct supervision, reflection, meetings with the Congregational liaison committee, and planning and execution of the project.

F. Guided Reflection and Supervision

Several important roles and functions facilitate the goals for specialized field experiences. Specialized field experiences are those where the candidate is working in the area of specialization and concurrently assigned to work with a congregation.

1. **Project Director.** The project director, who is assigned by the seminary, will participate in the development of the field work learning agreement and project proposal. The project director will provide guided theological reflection on the candidate's field work experience. The project director will provide a written evaluation for the candidate, which is to be submitted to the seminary field education office and the synod Candidacy Committee. At the time of the candidate's approval, the project director's evaluation will be incorporated in the Seminary Recommendation Form (**Form D**).
2. **Supervisor at the specialized site/place of employment.** The on-site supervisor, who is assigned by the seminary, will provide administrative structure to the overall experience, including a written description of responsibilities, consultation for mutual reflection of supervisory issues, and periodic review and written final evaluation of the candidate's competence in the designated area of specialization. It is the candidate's responsibility to see that a copy of this evaluation is submitted to the seminary field education office and to the synod Candidacy Committee. In some cases, the on-site supervisor may serve as the project director.
3. **Congregational Component.** While field experience may take place in a variety of settings, the diaconal ministry project must include a congregational component. A pastor of the congregation designates a congregational liaison committee to assist the candidate in planning and implementing the diaconal ministry project. The committee is composed of three to five persons, including a rostered staff member and lay members with a particular interest in diaconal ministry and in the candidate's area of specialization.

The committee will serve as a resource to the candidate for understanding the congregational system and its societal context. The committee will also provide assistance in identifying an appropriate project and participate with the candidate in reflection on and evaluation of the project.

Before beginning a project, the candidate will submit a one-page project proposal to the pastor and congregational liaison committee for consideration and discussion. When the project itself has been carried out and the candidate has written his or her

project paper, the liaison committee will review the project paper and prepare an evaluative commentary to be attached to the project director's evaluation.

4. **The Project Paper.** Upon completion of the project, a written paper is to be prepared, which includes the following:
 - a. Description/analysis of the assigned congregation context
 - b. Description/analysis of the project's purpose and goals
 - c. Reflection on the theological, biblical, historical, and mission underpinnings of the project's goals
 - d. Detailed description of the project and plans for implementation
 - e. Description of how the candidate guided the congregation's implementation of the project
 - f. Evaluation of the project and its implementation, including strengths and weaknesses
 - g. Reflection on the relationship of the project to the candidate's spiritual development

Following a written evaluation and response to the paper by the project director, the project paper is to be submitted to the appropriate field education office. A copy of the paper should be sent to the Center for Diaconal Ministry Preparation at Gettysburg and to the synod Candidacy Committee.

Consecration and First Call

A diaconal ministry candidate is approved for consecration by the Candidacy Committee upon successful completion of all requirements, and agreement with *Vision and Expectations*. All candidates participate in the Churchwide Assignment Consultation. The order of service for consecration is arranged and conducted under the direction and oversight of the bishop of the synod where the first call is received and accepted (www.elca.org/dcm/worship/liturgies).

Reinstatement

The process for reinstatement to the rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is explained in Chapter 1 above, page 25

DRAFT

Gender-based violence message documents and discussion

I am writing about next steps regarding the gender-based violence message at the upcoming meeting of Church Council.

We have received only a handful of specific suggestions for tweaking of the proposed message that you received for review on February 16, 2015. However, general discussion of the message at the Conference of Bishops indicated need for more significant work than refining a few passages. While the comments there affirmed much of the content and approach, diverse concerns were raised around important matters that need additional attention, such as the voice of the message or the topic of forgiveness.

The adoption of a social message rests with the Church Council but as staff our recommendation to Program and Services is to suggest an extension that honors these concerns for additional work.

If Program and Services decides to recommend such an extension, we as staff would find it helpful to hear your comments both of affirmation and concern so that our subsequent work can take these into account. We hope that there would be discussion in Program and Services and also some brief time for comment in the plenary session with the full Church Council.

Toward this end, two documents have been uploaded that may refresh your thoughts in preparation for comment. The first is the proposed message. The second needs a bit of explanation. We would value your comment on both.

We found it useful at the Conference of Bishops to share a mock-up of what an independent Basic Sketch would look like. As you may recall, the proposed message contains both a Basic Sketch and a Comprehensive Explanation, or if you will, a “small catechism” and a “large catechism.” (This two-step approach has been our response to feedback that called for the social message to be, at the same time, brief and straight-forward, and yet provide a full explanation of the complex causes and elements in gender-based violence.) While both “catechisms” would be in the message, our intention is that the Basic Sketch could circulate independently and serve as a kind of summary. Its existence would allow ease of use with appropriate audiences. The Conference found it helpful to see how this would look and we think you will as well.

If you have any questions or concerns about these matters that you would find helpful to have addressed before Church Council, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Pr. Roger Willer, on behalf of the Theological Discernment Team
Director for Theological Ethics
Roger.willer@elca.org
773-380-2823

A note to Church Council:

Please know that whenever the ELCA Social Message on Gender-based Violence is adopted we anticipate providing a “suite” of resources to help members engage these urgent concerns.

The Brief Sketch, beginning on the next page, would be posted along with the full message. In the message it serves as the “thumbnail” version of the Comprehensive Explanation, which provides the full story. But it is intended to circulate separately. (Headers and an intro paragraph have been added here that are not found in the proposed message.)

Also, as indicated on lines 672-676 of the message, the churchwide organization is directed to prepare a confirmation-age one page “curriculum” supplement within 5 months and an adult study guide within a year.

Some pastoral and congregational resources already exist as part of the “suite” and would be publicized. These are available through the Justice for Women program, in both Spanish and English. The Justice for Women program has received a grant from the In Faith Community Foundation to update these current resources according to the content of the social message, once it is approved.

You can find them at <http://www.elca.org/Resources/Justice-for-Women>.

These resources include:

- *a guidebook for rostered leaders in the ELCA and ELCIC in ministering with people suffering from abuse (“Ministry with the Abused”),*
- *two different bulletin inserts (one for October, which is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and one that is more general),*
- *suggestions for worship and devotion, and*
- *hotline posters with spaces for local numbers to be inserted.*

Other resources also could be developed as need indicates.

*Though agonizing, we must listen to people's stories** to begin to understand:*

Voices in the news

My husband controlled all the money and always told me I was worthless. I had no way to leave.

My fiancé punched me in the face in a hotel elevator and dragged me out. It was caught on video.

Because I was gay, a group of men severely beat me and then hung me on a country barbed-wire fence to die.

A man broke into our house at night and raped me in bed.

I am old, but my young-adult daughter beats me if I won't strip in front of her friends.

*** These are descriptive summaries of actual events.*

Basic sketch¹

This Basic Sketch of the ELCA Social Message on Gender-based Violence is taken word for word from the first section of the message. It provides a "thumbnail" of every point found there. (The entire message is available at www.elca.org/socialmessages)

Gender-based violence is a global crisis; many people are suffering. This church's response is at once pastoral, practical, and analytical at the same time. The basis of all responses is telling the truth. Through survivors' stories, the truth is told. By naming the problems, the truth is told. Understanding problems leads to action that serves people who are suffering.

What is gender-based violence?

Gender-based violence is power-based physical, sexual, emotional or other personal harm directed at people due to gender. Any woman or man can be a victim or perpetrator, but the vast majority of perpetrators are male. It is estimated that at least 40 million women and girls in the United States and nearly three-fourths of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and gender non-conforming have been targets of some form of violence related to gender, sexuality and intimacy. (See Appendix of the message for statistics.)

While this message is focused on the United States, gender-based violence has international connections. Women, girls and those who do not conform to strict gender and sexual roles for men and women across the globe live with the memory and/or the fear of gender-based violence.

What does God's love mean in light of gender-based violence?

God's love is known in Jesus Christ, who is God with and for us in life, death and resurrection. Through divine commands, God expresses love that calls humanity to love God above all else and to love all of creation, including our

¹ Citations and sources for assertions in the Basic Sketch are found in the Comprehensive Explanation beginning on page 6 of the ELCA Social Message on Gender-based Violence.

Voices of ELCA members**

A week after my hysterectomy, my husband dragged me off the couch by my hair and screamed, "Get off your ass and get to work!" Then he kicked me in the abdomen. I bled profusely while our daughters hid in their closet.

A trusted peer and friend sexually assaulted me at a Lutheran youth event. My mentor had little response. Nothing was ever resolved.

I tried to counsel an abusive husband and abused wife. During a session, he pulled a gun and killed her and himself.

When I was a teen, my pastor made me feel special. He coerced me into a long-term sexual relationship with him.

Four or five men gang-raped me after I marched in a Gay Pride parade. The only one who stopped was a pastor going by on his bike. He covered my naked body with his jacket.

I attended a Lutheran college and was date-raped as a sophomore. I reported it to my dorm head, but it was hushed up and never investigated.

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neighbor. The Fifth Commandment tells us God expects humans not to kill each other. Martin Luther explains that this is about the complete well-being of our neighbors. "In short, God wants to have everyone defended, delivered and protected from the wickedness and violence of others" (Large Catechism, 411).² Gender-based violence is sinful, and it happens in this church as well as in the rest of society.

If gender-based violence is sinful, how has the church sinned?

Therefore, Christians are called to confess both as individuals and as a body. Far too often, far too many of us have failed God and our neighbors regarding gender-based violence. We have done so by remaining silent, by not responding, and by denying the broad and multiple realities of the problem. Our communities and institutions also often have failed to respond or failed to provide adequate policies for protection and accountability. We are thankful for God's promised forgiveness and pray that such confession might turn us to work that better conforms this church to the life-giving ways of God.

What makes gender-based violence possible?

The sources and contexts of gender-based violence are many and run deep. The choice to do violence is a personal responsibility, and each act is rooted in power and control. At the same time, every choice and act is sourced by and interrelated with the more obscure sin in the system of patriarchy.

The definition of patriarchy as a social system is not a description of every person, social relationship or Christian congregation. It is, instead, a description of interrelated social relations, habits, laws, ideas and beliefs in which *everyone* participates in varying measures. A patriarchal system is male-dominated, male-identified and male-centered, but all people participate in some measure.

Though there has been much social progress toward gender equity, patriarchy remains dominant and is kept in place through tools of power and control. One of those is gender-based violence. The connection between patriarchy and gender-based violence must be made

² Large Catechism. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 411.

clear in order to bring about change in the social and religious factors that contribute significantly to the violence.

The social factors that influence and aggravate gender-based violence include racism and the fear of and hatred for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or who do not conform to strict gender roles. Other harmful factors include media portrayals of women and girls, economic dynamics and the culture's complicity with commercial sexual exploitation. This church recognizes and affirms the proliferation of laws pertaining to gender-based violence in the last 50 years, but research reveals a continued gender bias in the law and the legal system.

How does Christianity contribute to gender-based violence?

By teaching certain beliefs, Christianity – along with other religions – has historically supported the social factors just named or encouraged harmful personal actions. Often it still does. Practically speaking, people of faith, far too often, have responded to gender-based violence with silence, denial and resistance. Far too often people of faith have blamed the victim or failed to demand accountability for perpetrators. Far too often leaders and institutions have remained ill-equipped to respond well, including through policies that are inadequate or inaccessible.

The faith community also participates in perpetuating gender-based violence whenever it holds to certain ways of thinking and speaking that reinforce it. For example, some people interpret Scripture as defending a static God-ordained gender and sex hierarchy that supports the value of submission and encourages suffering “like Jesus did.” The ELCA can address the harmful ways Scripture and its interpretation contribute to gender-based violence by stressing the Lutheran emphasis that Scripture, most fundamentally, reveals Jesus Christ to humanity.

At the same time, this church has the opportunity to attend to its own theology. The point is to address what is harmful. Lutherans, for example, need to reckon with forms of Lutheran theology related to the cross, suffering and forgiveness that direct victims and survivors to unjustly endure it or to offer "cheap" forgiveness.

How does faith help the church to respond to gender-based violence?

Christians know we live by God's grace, which influences our being and action right now. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God's grace is active in us to see the neighbor's need and to challenge the social and religious forces that may preserve the way things are. Through the means of grace, baptism and the Eucharist, we are knit together through Christ, who is active in our very bodies. Faith frees us to take the risks of the cross when we love and serve those who suffer from gender-based violence.

What should we do?

This is a time in the life of this church when we need to respond to God's call to tend to the needs of neighbors. The call should be answered through prayer and action that challenge personal choices, the patriarchal system, and social factors that create and foster gender-based violence in this society, or globally. The call should be answered through attention to religious factors and to improving responses. This call requires different kinds of efforts from congregations, leaders, synods, the churchwide organization, and church-related social ministries and educational institutions. Yet the overall challenge is to ensure care, create accountability, provide education and encourage advocacy. Guidance toward these efforts can be found in brief lists beginning on page 22 of the full message.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, this church is called to make new and renewed commitments to denounce and resist violence, create safe communities, and work toward reconciliation and healing.

How might this church speak pastorally to people suffering from gender-based violence?

Words a survivor may say to other survivors:

We are created, loved and redeemed by God through Christ. Our bodies, hearts and minds are beloved by a gracious God who, the Bible tells us, creates each person in God's image (Genesis 1:27). God weeps with us because we have been hurt and betrayed. God fiercely opposes gender-based violence because those who commit it have treated us as their objects. They have heinously violated our bodies, hearts and minds. Such violation is not right.

Sometimes it seems as if faith is only about our hearts and minds, but faith also has to do with our bodies. One of our church's pastors writes: "Bodies which have been assaulted and abused are loved by Christ, anticipated in his death, redeemed through his incarnation and resurrection, and will be healed and restored in God's own time. The body remains precious despite the injury done to it."³ Our violated bodies are known by Jesus who was also exposed, tormented and wounded. He also cried out to ask why God had forsaken him in his deepest moments of need and fear (Mark 15:34). Our flesh is beloved, and God promises restoration and healing.

Words from this church to those who commit gender-based violence:

God grieves deeply when you use the gifts of strength, thought and action to inflict gender-based violence on another person. Your actions wound those you hurt, as well as God and God's creation. The power you seek is evil, but God calls you to the true life and richness found in kindness, compassion and mercy. You may yourself be a survivor of gender-based violence or other violence, but hold fast to what is good (Romans 12:9-21). God calls you to repent, seek forgiveness and amend your life with the help of others.

³ Joy A. Schroeder, "Sexual Abuse and a Theology of Embodiment: Incarnating Healing," in *The Long Journey Home*, ed. Andrew J. Schmutz (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 193.

Words from this church to bystanders:

All of society is affected by gender-based violence. It results in fear, loathing, broken relationships and trauma. God calls each of us to seek the well-being of our neighbors. Each one of us has the responsibility to make a difference to prevent and respond. This means each of us needs to be prepared “to have everyone defended, delivered, and protected from the wickedness and violence of others.”⁴

Words from this church to survivors:

God says no to such violence. God condemns what someone has done to hurt you and to have power over you. The hurt inflicted is not your fault. God does not expect you to suffer through any abuse or violence. God’s love gives life. The Bible tells us that nothing shall separate you from grace and healing in Jesus Christ, not even the one(s) who hurt you (Romans 8:35). We are here to accompany you.

The promise of the resurrection life in Christ is not just about the future – what will happen when you die. It is for your healing right now. God seeks to heal your body, psyche, emotions and spirit – your whole being. Healing is possible because God’s power and presence bring new life again and again. This power is promised in the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. The Spirit's presence promises to gather, unite and heal all of us as the body of Christ. Together.

⁴ Martin Luther, *Large Catechism, Book of Concord*, 411.

1 A social message on Gender-based Violence

2 *[For consideration by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America during its
3 meeting April, 2015]*

4 **Content**

5 A basic sketch, including pastoral words

6 Comprehensive explanation

7 1. The problem

8 2. Where does this church begin? With a confession of faith and of sin

9 3. Analysis: Personal choices and systemic and social factors

10 4. Analysis: The role of religion

11 5 The ELCA's calling

12 6 Social witness

13 7. Conclusion

14 Glossary of selected terms

15 Appendix: Global and national statistics

16 With this social message the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

17 (ELCA) speaks to both church and society. There is a call here to care wisely for people suffering from

18 gender-based violence. There is a call to understand and address the problems by listening, confession,

19 analysis and action. The goal is to create safe communities and work toward reconciliation and healing.

20 This message intertwines personal words and stories, description and analysis, and guidance for
21 ministry and mission; it also engages different audiences. This message has two entry points. The first is a
22 basic sketch that concludes with pastoral words to individuals. The second provides a comprehensive
23 explanation.

25 **Basic sketch¹**

26 Gender-based violence is power-based physical, sexual, emotional or other personal harm

27 directed at people due to gender. Any woman or man can be a victim or perpetrator, but the vast majority
28 of perpetrators are male. It is estimated that at least 40 million women and girls in the United States and
29 nearly three-fourths of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and gender non-conforming have been
30 targets of some form of violence related to gender, sexuality and intimacy. (See Appendix for statistics.)

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32 connections. Women, girls and those who do not conform to strict gender and sexual roles for men and
33 women across the globe live with the memory and/or the fear of gender-based violence.

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36 Through divine commands, God expresses love that calls humanity to love God above all else and to love
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38 each other. Martin Luther explains that this is about the complete well-being of our neighbors. "In short,
39 God wants to have everyone defended, delivered and protected from the wickedness and violence of
40 others" (Large Catechism, 411).² Gender-based violence is sinful, and it happens in this church as well as
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42 Therefore, Christians are called to confess both as individuals and as a body. Far too often, far too
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67 kept in place through tools of power and control. One of those is gender-based violence. The connection
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101 harmful. Lutherans, for example, need to reckon with forms of Lutheran theology related to the cross,
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103 forgiveness.

104 This is a time in the life of this church when we need to respond to God's call. The call should be
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111 brief lists beginning on page 22 of this message.

112 By the power of the Holy Spirit, this church is called to make new and renewed commitments to
113 denounce and resist violence, create safe communities, and work toward reconciliation and healing. May
114 such words as the following characterize this church's response:

115

116 *Words a survivor may say to other survivors:*

117 We are created, loved and redeemed by God through Christ. Our bodies, hearts and minds are
118 beloved by a gracious God who, the Bible tells us, creates each person in God's image (Genesis 1:27).
119 God weeps with us because we have been hurt and betrayed. God fiercely opposes gender-based violence
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121 hearts and minds. Such violation is not right.

122 Sometimes it seems as if faith is only about our hearts and minds, but faith also has to do with our
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130 *Words from this church to those who commit gender-based violence:*

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133 power you seek is evil, but God calls you to the true life and richness found in kindness, compassion and
134 mercy. You may yourself be a survivor of gender-based violence or other violence, but hold fast to what
135 is good (Romans 12:9-21). God calls you to repent, seek forgiveness and amend your life with the help of
136 others.

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138 *Words from this church to bystanders:*

139 All of society is affected by gender-based violence. It results in fear, loathing, broken
140 relationships and trauma. God calls each of us to seek the well-being of our neighbors. Each one of us has
141 the responsibility to make a difference to prevent and respond. This means each of us needs to be
142 prepared “to have everyone defended, delivered, and protected from the wickedness and violence of
143 others.”⁴

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149 healing in Jesus Christ, not even the one(s) who hurt you (Romans 8:35). We are here to accompany you.

150 The promise of the resurrection life in Christ is not just about the future – what will happen when
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152 whole being. Healing is possible because God’s power and presence bring new life again and again. This
153 power is promised in the preaching of the gospel and the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.
154 The Spirit’s presence promises to gather, unite and heal all of us as the body of Christ. Together.

155

Comprehensive explanation

1. The problem

156

157 Gender-based violence is physical, sexual or emotional harm directed at a person in order to
158 create or maintain power and control.⁵ This power and control is linked to gender, sex and sexuality. For
159 instance, some people hurt other people because of ***biological characteristics***, [font in bold and italics
160 indicates a word in the glossary] because of perceived or self-identified ***gender*** or sexual orientation, or
161 because of their difference from social or religious definitions of masculinity and femininity.

⁴ Martin Luther, *Large Catechism, Book of Concord*, 411.

⁵ The ELCA has addressed other aspects of violence in God’s world in several social teaching documents. As an illustration, see “A social message on Community Violence” (Chicago: ELCA, 1994), which can be accessed at www.elca.org/socialmessages.

163 Gender-based
164 violence expresses power
165 through coercion and
166 threat of another's well-
167 being. The person
168 committing the violence
169 violates someone's
170 physical, psychological
171 and/or spiritual integrity.
172 Gender-based violence
173 occurs in a multitude of
174 forms and may be
175 experienced at any point
176 in a person's life.

177 The scope of
178 gender-based violence is
179 overwhelming. People of
180 all classes and of all
181 ethnicities in all nations

182 suffer violence inflicted on them by others for gender-based reasons. Gender-based violence happens in
183 both private and public situations.

184 It occurs in families, other social relations, the church, the state, education, and in society more
185 broadly. It affects people of every age and of every gender. It creates not only personal suffering but also
186 national losses – of peaceful communities, medical care costs and economic productivity.

187 While many different people, including men and boys, are affected by gender-based violence,
188 women and girls⁶ are especially targeted. Nationally, 25 percent of women over the age of 18 have
189 experienced sexual or physical violence at the hands of a current or former intimate partner. Globally the
190 percentage rises to 30 percent.⁷

191 Although telling the truth is difficult, it must be recognized that the majority of gender-based
192 violence in the United States is perpetrated by men. Among gender- and sexuality-based hate crimes, one
193 study identified White men as the largest racial/ethnic group of perpetrators.⁸

Types of gender-based violence

Gender-based violence can include sexual and other physical assault, including murder; rape; sexual harassment (sometimes named as bullying); sexual, physical and verbal abuse (by clergy, coaches, teachers, superiors, strangers, family members, caregivers or friends); stalking; intimate relationship violence, regardless of gender, including employment, housing, educational intimidation and obstruction, rape and murder; elder abuse or child abuse; sex-specific torture; reproductive coercion; female genital mutilation; early and forced marriage; honor crimes; "mail-order" brides; dowry violence; practices used to decrease the number of girl babies, such as prenatal sex selection, infanticide or child neglect; sex tourism; forced prostitution; human trafficking for sex; pornography; and violence during armed conflict, including rape, enslavement, torture and murder.

⁶ "Women and girls" is here used as an inclusive term.

⁷ For statistics as of the writing of this message, see Appendix.

⁸ See Appendix for further information.

194 The threat of violence shapes and constrains female lives, as illustrated by the vulnerability of
195 girls. Of the 18.2 percent of women who have survived rape or attempted rape, 12.3 percent of those were
196 younger than age 12 when they were first raped, and 29.9 percent were between the ages of 11 and 17.
197 Girls ages 16-19 are four times more likely than the general population to be the victims⁹ of rape,
198 attempted rape or sexual assault.¹⁰

199 Worldwide, women, girls and those who are **gender non-conforming** live with the memory
200 and/or the fear of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence. Three-fourths of people who are
201 gay, lesbian, bisexual and gender non-conforming have been targets of some form of violence related to
202 gender, sexuality and intimacy.¹¹ What is universal about this violence is that gender is a central
203 motivating factor, even while it may not be the only one.

204 Every act or threat of gender-based violence, every perpetrator, and every survivor is influenced
205 by **intersections** of identities and systems of privilege and oppression. Intersections of race and ethnicity,
206 age, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity increase the likelihood of violence. In the United
207 States, for example, some women of color experience higher rates of intimate partner violence and rape
208 than all women together.¹²

209 There is increasing awareness of sexual and physical violence against men and boys, particularly
210 in sports teams, prisons, hospitals, and in churches and schools.¹³ Though much less pervasive, women,
211 girls and gender non-conforming people also may carry out gender-based violence; for example, intimate
212 partner violence can be against men by women. Gender-based violence also includes intimate partner
213 violence within same-gender relationships as well as some forms of elder abuse.

214 Gender-based violence of any kind is wrong. The core problem is rooted in the ways people
215 create and misuse power over others.

⁹ The literature refers to both victims and survivors. This document uses both terms. The term *victim* stresses that someone has hurt someone else by exercising their power; the term *survivor* indicates the reality for many people after violence.

¹⁰ For statistics as of the writing of this message, see Appendix.

¹¹ To-date there is not enough research in the United States to be able to express the actual number of gay, lesbian, bisexual and gender non-conforming targets, but an estimated percentage is available, given current research.

¹² See Appendix for statistics as of publication.

¹³ See, e.g., Lara Stemple and Ilan H. Meyer, "The Sexual Victimization of Men in America: New Data Challenge Old Assumptions," *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 6 (June 2014): e19-e26. This research focuses on male victimization in institutions such as mental health and criminal justice. There is also growing public knowledge of male victimization by clergy, coaches, teachers, caregivers and peers (such as through sexual harassment and hazing). Notable in this research is that when men and boys are in situations in which they are vulnerable to the power of others over them, it can lead to physical and emotional harm to them. Age, race and class can be contributory factors in situations of vulnerability. For greater insight into violence against gender non-conforming men, see Jaime M. Grant, Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, with Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011), 3.

216 **2. Where does this church begin? With a confession of faith and of sin**

217
218 **Confession of faith: We turn to God.**

219 God's beloved creatures suffer gender-based violence at the hands of each other. Such violence
220 violates human dignity, divides humanity and abuses power. The pain and suffering of people confronts
221 this church as a body and as individual members. Where do we turn and what do we do to end such
222 terrible violence?

223 We turn simultaneously to God and to neighbor. While reaching to care for people suffering
224 from violence, we remember that our faith resides in the triune God. God's grace through Jesus Christ
225 binds the Christian church to God and the body of Christ one to another. We confess that Jesus Christ is
226 Lord and Savior.

227 The church lives at the cross when taking the necessary risks to proclaim faith in Christ and to
228 resist and transform the roots of gender-based violence. This church remains steadfast by seeking to
229 renounce the sin of gender-based violence and in setting clear boundaries against evil. In so doing, the
230 ELCA lives out its calling as the body of Christ, which may well *bear* the suffering flesh of Christ – that
231 is, bear the suffering flesh of victims and survivors.

232 Within the Lutheran tradition, there are a number of theological emphases with implications for
233 understanding, addressing and preventing these problems. Lutherans emphasize that we simultaneously
234 live under the law while we live because of the gospel.

235 When this church thinks and acts together about gender-based violence, it does so in light of
236 God's relationship with creation. That relationship is expressed through the civil use of the law to order
237 society. God's law is expressed summarily as a baseline for the common good in the Ten Commandments.

238 The Fifth Commandment, for instance, teaches that we should "neither endanger nor harm the
239 lives of our neighbor, but instead help and support them."¹⁴ The Sixth Commandment teaches that
240 sexuality is to be conducted in ways that are "pure and decent" to honor one's spouse.¹⁵ The violent
241 exercise of gender-based power breaks one or both commandments in seriously harming another person's
242 well-being, whether physical, emotional, psychological, social or spiritual. The commandments refute the
243 belief that any human being has the authority to make someone else into an object, especially through
244 violence.

245 At the same time Christians know we live by God's grace, which has implications for our being
246 and action right now. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God's grace is active in us to see the neighbor's
247 need and to de-center the social and religious forces that may preserve the way things are.

¹⁴ Small Catechism. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 352.

¹⁵ Small Catechism, Kolb & Wengert, 353.

248 The biblical theme of the incarnation teaches that God shares fully in human life. In particular, on
249 the cross Jesus Christ shares fully in our deepest need and vulnerability. Jesus was betrayed, laid low, and
250 his very being was ripped apart; his whole body suffered from the evil of violence. Whoever is likewise
251 laid low, made into non-being, and ripped apart by gender-based violence is fully known by God. God is
252 there, in the depths of suffering.

253 Yet the Bible also proclaims there is a future determined by the risen Christ as ruler of God's
254 realm of peace and **justice**. This means that the marked body of the risen Christ is drawn toward healing
255 and transformation. To confess Christ means that the church as the body of Christ knows and sees itself as
256 the violated body, as the body that is marked in the flesh, together. Not them, us. We are marked. God
257 draws us into this future now through word and sacrament. Through these means of grace, God binds us
258 with God and each other. Sacraments are enacted Word, God's communal acts that are the very meaning
259 and root of our relationships.

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

263 In sharing bread and wine, Christ becomes part of our bodies. And through the work of the Holy
264 Spirit, we experience the body of Christ as relational – “one inseparable body and flesh.”¹⁶ Through Holy
265 Communion we participate in “all the unjust suffering of the innocent, with which the world is
266 everywhere filled to overflowing.”¹⁷

267 Through the means of grace, we are knit together in our vulnerabilities through Christ, who is
268 active in our real bodies. This church and its members are, therefore, free first to confess our failures and
269 then free to begin anew to understand, to care, to educate and to take action. This church is free to take the
270 risks of the cross when we love and serve others.

271

272 Confession of sin: We realize our sin.

273 As part of the church catholic, the ELCA confesses its sin. We are in a body that has victims,
274 perpetrators and bystanders. We do not simply rescue or care for people outside of this church. We
275 participate in the forces of sin and are called to confess that we often have failed to recognize our own
276 participation in gender-based violence, as individuals and as a church.

277 To sin is to want to be like God (Genesis 3:5). When humans try to take on God's power, we
278 distort divine power into individual and communal acts that take away life, rather than give life. Gender-

¹⁶ “Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 6-8,” *Luther’s Works* 23:149.

¹⁷ “Word and Sacrament I,” *Luther’s Works* 35:54.

279 based violence is one form of individual and corporate sin in which we are bound. We cannot free
280 ourselves.

281 The confession of both our individual sin and our corporate sin allows the truth to be told and
282 orients our efforts to address all aspects of gender-based violence (1 John 1:5-9). The church confesses
283 together.¹⁸

284 Far too often, far too many of us have failed God and others:

- 285 • by not responding to victims and survivors of gender-based violence with care and
286 wisdom;
- 287 • by not doing what is necessary to prevent gender-based violence;
- 288 • by visiting gender-based violence on another person in ways small or great;
- 289 • by failing to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions;
- 290 • by remaining silent or oblivious;
- 291 • by denying the broad and multiple sources of the problem;
- 292 • by actively or passively contributing to the ways that religious ideas, people and
293 institutions have encouraged or permitted gender-based violence; and
- 294 • by corporately living too comfortably in the web of interwoven forces that deny or
295 reinforce gender-based violence in church and society.

296 This church also looks with thanksgiving to God through Christ as the source of salvation and the
297 hope for our lives. Confession is not the end but a beginning. We in this church who confess give thanks
298 for the promise of forgiveness and the opportunity to amend our ways.

299 We pray that such confession would turn us by the power of the Holy Spirit to new paths that
300 completely alter our understanding of and our response to gender-based violence. We pray for
301 forgiveness, even as we proclaim God's forgiveness to everyone. We pray that such confession might turn
302 us to work that better conforms this church to the life-giving ways of God.

303 **3. Analysis: Personal choices and systemic and social factors**

305 Faithful work against gender-based violence requires a deep understanding of the pervasive,
306 multiple and complex personal, social and religious dynamics of the problems. Thorough analysis helps
307 us to care well for our neighbors.

¹⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes the call to communal confession very well: "It is not enough for individuals to repent and be justified. ... [T]he church must likewise repent and be justified. The community that is from God to God, that bears within itself eternal meaning, endures in God's sight and does not melt into the fate of the many. It is willed and created and has become culpable; it must seek repentance, believe in and experience justification and sanctification, and experience judgment and grace at the limits of time." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 119.

308 Gender-based violence is a global problem and continues unabated; it happens everywhere. The
309 United States is part of this global problem. What happens in this church and in this country is
310 interconnected to manifestations of gender-based violence around the world. As a Lutheran body in the
311 United States, this message primarily addresses the U.S. context in which we have immediate call and
312 responsibility.

313 While focused nationally, however, this message does acknowledge the global character of the
314 problem and the importance of working worldwide to address it. The ELCA celebrates the relationships
315 of ongoing accompaniment concerning gender-based violence with global partners and companions. It is
316 through shared service, advocacy, theological dialogue, and ecumenical and inter-faith relations that it
317 becomes possible to care wisely for people's immediate needs and to address the sources and contexts of
318 gender-based violence.¹⁹

319 The sources and contexts of gender-based violence are complex and multiple. Speaking most
320 broadly, this church recognizes that sin is the fundamental source of gender-based violence. Sin is
321 expressed through gender-based violence. The sin is simultaneously a personal responsibility and
322 systemic and social.

323 Acts of gender-based violence always involve sinful individual choices. What an individual
324 chooses to do is often influenced by personal factors. For example, alcohol consumption or drug use does
325 not cause gender-based violence, but some studies indicate that it can increase the severity of injury.²⁰ A
326 person's experiences, such as familial abuse or post-traumatic stress syndrome, may increase the
327 likelihood of gender-based violence.²¹ These factors are important to take into account when seeking to
328 hold perpetrators accountable or to help them change.

329 How human beings think and act, however, is closely intertwined with systemic and social forces,
330 including the dynamics of power and control. While each act of gender-based violence may be an
331 individual's action, it is always shaped by power dynamics and social factors. Undergirding all gender-
332 based violence is the sinful exercise of power that seeks to subordinate another person and coercively

¹⁹ The work of The Lutheran World Federation is one example of the global efforts in which the ELCA participates. See, e.g., "Churches Say 'No!' to Violence Against Women" (Geneva, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 2002),

www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Churches%20Say%20No%20to%20Violence%20against%20Women.pdf, and Elaine Neuenfeldt, ed., "Lutheran World Federation Gender Justice Policy" (Geneva, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 2013), www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-lwf-gender-justice-policy, which is implemented through all realms of The Lutheran World Federation service, advocacy and dialogue. The ELCA participates in such work in several ways, e.g. The Lutheran Office for World Community.

²⁰ Brecklin, L.R. "The role of perpetrator alcohol use in the injury outcomes of intimate assaults." *Journal of Family Violence* 17 (2002): 185-197.

²¹ See, e.g., P. Tjaden and N. Thoennes, *Extent, nature and consequences of intimate partner violence: findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000), 72.

333 control them. This exercise of power may occur for a brief moment or may be a long-term pattern. The
334 power dynamic is possible in every relationship. Everyone is, therefore, potentially affected by gender-
335 based violence.

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

340 A patriarchal social system is male-dominated, male-identified and male-centered; it operates
341 with a high value on control of women and people who do not conform to dominant social patterns.
342 Though there has been much social progress toward gender equity in the United States, patriarchy is still
343 the dominant *social system* in the United States and within Christianity.

344 The definition of patriarchy as a social system is not a description of every person, social
345 relationship, Christian congregation, etc. It is, instead, a description of a complex array of social
346 relations, habits, laws, ideas and beliefs in which *everyone* participates in varying measures.²² A
347 patriarchal social system both relies upon and results in significant male dominance and female
348 subordination.

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

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

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

²² A patriarchal social system is *dominated* by the voice and authority of men. In such a social system, what is most highly valued is *identified* as male-oriented. A patriarchal social system is *centered* on males; the world is portrayed with men as the main actors in life and reflects their ideas and values. To maintain male priority in a social system, all “others,” including women, gender non-conforming people and non-dominant men must be and are socially de-valued or diminished or controlled. One implication of a patriarchal social system is that the people who are “good” are the ones who endure gender-based violence and remain silent about it, do not challenge male privilege, and do not transgress binary gender boundaries. See Allan A. Johnson, *The Gender Knot*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2005) and *Privilege, Power, and Difference* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006).

361 Years of activism, research and scholarship demonstrate, however, that these alone cannot
362 address the depth and tacit approval of this society's gender-based violence.²³ Gender-based violence
363 must come to be understood in the context of the patriarchy in which individual choices or beliefs and
364 multiple social factors operate.

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

368

369 *Racism: Racism increases the likelihood of gender-based violence and decreases the likelihood of
370 justice.*

371 Racism is an inherently evil force that has shaped not only the history of the United States and the
372 world, but also individual lives and the social fabric of the present. Racism is rooted in the sinful idea that
373 skin color determines the social value and ability of people.²⁴ In the United States, racism profoundly
374 affects gender-based violence in at least two important ways.

375 First, women of color are more often targeted by men both outside of and within their
376 communities. Multi-ethnic women and American Indian and Alaskan Native women are far more often
377 the targets of gender-based violence than all women together.²⁵ The legacy of White privilege shapes the
378 way bodies are viewed and treated, causing inordinate suffering for millions of women of color who are
379 overwhelmingly targeted.

380 Second, racism may affect how victims and survivors of color think about turning to the U.S.
381 legal system for justice. In a marginalized community, the risks to expose each other to the U.S. legal
382 system may be high.²⁶ A survivor in the same racial or ethnic community as the perpetrator, especially an
383 immigrant community, may, therefore, be less inclined to press charges. This situation may account for

²³ See Elizabeth M. Schneider, *Battered Women & Feminist Lawmaking* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 20-56. Advancement of international human rights – women's rights as human rights – is important in the creation of global change based on universal claims. Working to end gender-based violence and other gender-based discrimination through human rights arguments and standards can provide empowerment for people's legal consciousness, sense of identity, psychological health and political and moral agency. Addressing gender-based violence depends in part on human rights-based arguments. Nevertheless, human rights assertions alone cannot create the conditions to weaken the prevalence and intensity of gender-based violence. Rather, lessening gender-based violence depends upon changes in social and religious consciousness; thus, part of this church's work is to address the ways we see and think about God, the world and ourselves. If there is no social and religious change, people who are harmed by gender-based violence will only be able to continue to ask for mercy and protection in a world that sees and thinks about them as deserving the violence.

²⁴ See *Freed in Christ: Race Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: ELCA, 1993), 4.

²⁵ See Appendix for statistics as of publication.

²⁶ See *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* (Chicago: ELCA, 2013), for a discussion of risks such as dramatically higher incarceration rates, effect on employment prospects and others, 13.

384 the fact that women of color are less likely to report intimate partner violence than the average rate of
385 reporting for all women nationally.²⁷

386

387 *Media portrayals: Females are objects of desire, control and violence and are made to seem*
388 *“naturally” subordinate to men.*

389 “Public imagery of women is the text for all the other forms of violence [based on gender],” notes
390 one expert.²⁸ There is a steady message in this society that women are subordinate to men communicated
391 through advertising, news and magazines, gaming, music, movies and television.

392 As “entertainment,” many video games, TV shows, movies and music commonly incorporate
393 images of violence against women or girls as central elements in their story-lines. Viewers of mainstream
394 media are exposed repeatedly to subtle or not-so-subtle messages that women and girls are largely sexual
395 objects, or deserve and enjoy pain and humiliation, or are so irrational that they need to be dominated.²⁹
396 This fosters stereotypes learned at an early age and legitimates the “everydayness” of gender-based
397 violence.

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

402

403 *Commercial sexual exploitation: Females are targeted as objects of sexual and sexualized*
404 *violence.*

405 The ELCA defines commercial exploitation as organized, for-profit sexual exploitation. It
406 includes audio or video sex, prostitution, human trafficking, pornography, stripping and related activities
407 that express deep desires for power over and fear of women.³⁰ Approximately 80 percent of all victims of
408 human trafficking are women and girls. Pornography demeans and devalues people as thoroughly
409 objectified, typically through violence.³¹ Most often, the objects of pornography, even when a male is in
410 the scene, are female.³²

²⁷ See “Statistics on Violence Against API Women,” *Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence*, accessed Sept. 4, 2014, <http://www.apividv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php>.

²⁸ Cooper-White, 66.

²⁹ See, for example, the film *Miss Representation*.

³⁰ See “ELCA Social Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation,” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2001), 1-3. See also ELCA study resources on human trafficking. www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Justice-for-Women

³¹ See Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence against Women and the Church’s Response*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 64-65.

³² See Cooper-White, 78. According to Cooper-White, exceptions are gay male pornography.

411

412 *Fears of sexualities and bodies: Fear of and hatred for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual*
413 *and/or gender non-conforming is connected to patriarchy because both assume the superiority of the*
414 *heterosexual male and strict gender roles for men and women.*

415 Although often not recognized, violence against anyone who does not act according to
416 predominant gender and sexual expectations is also a form of gender-based violence. For example,
417 violence against gay men because they are gay is gender-based violence. So is violence against
418 transgender people because they are transgender. The lives of anyone who does not conform to socially
419 dominant gender and sexual expectations are shaped by the memory of, or fear of, violence.

420

421 *Economic factors: Gender-based violence can threaten and destroy survivors' economic security*
422 *and/or be a means for perpetrators to make money at their expense.*

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

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

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

440

441 *Laws and the legal system: Despite significant progress, gender-based bias in the law and its*
442 *enforcement still foster a culture of gender-based violence.*

443 This church recognizes and affirms the proliferation of laws pertaining to gender-based violence
444 in the last 50 years. For example, it is now illegal to sexually harass a co-worker, to rape a spouse, and to

445 abuse a spouse. It is good that there is increased realization that people should not have to experience
446 gender-based violence in various forms.

447 Research reveals, nevertheless, continued gender bias in the law and the legal system. For
448 example, in many jurisdictions a substantial proportion of intimate partner defendants are given deferred
449 prosecution or dispositions that do not involve findings of guilt. A trio of studies found, however, that at
450 least 25 percent of the defendants that received deferred sentences will re-abuse or re-offend.³³

451 A recent study also found that only approximately *half* of sexual assault cases that resulted in an
452 arrest were ever prosecuted. Prosecution was more frequent when the victim was viewed by the
453 prosecutor as “blameless.” It was less frequent where the victim was viewed as having engaged in “risk-
454 taking behavior” or where the person’s “reputation or character were questioned.”³⁴

455 Rape is, however, not solely a crime by men against women. Although until 2011 rape was
456 defined exclusively as a crime against a female involving the use of physical force by the Federal Bureau
457 of Investigation, the FBI now uses a much more comprehensive definition.³⁵ Despite this advance, the law
458 and the legal system continue to be more consistently biased in cases of gender-based violence against
459 gender non-conforming individuals or people in same-sex relationships. In other words, laws and the legal
460 system do not yet properly ensure the protection of the freedom, autonomy and full participation as
461 citizens necessary for all people.

462 The nature of violence against women in institutions of higher education and in the military
463 further illustrates how multiple factors combine to support gender-based violence.³⁶ In 2009, the U.S.
464 Department of Education found it necessary to write to all colleges to remind them of their obligations
465 under federal law to provide a “prompt, thorough, and impartial” inquiry into allegations of gender-based

³³ See “Practical Implications of Current Domestic Violence Research: For Law Enforcement, Prosecutors and Judges: Chapter 6. Prosecution Responses.” National Institute of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. United States Department of Justice. June 2009, accessed Sept. 17, 2014. www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/199720.pdf.

³⁴ See C. Spohn and D. Holleran. “Prosecuting Sexual Assault: A Comparison of Charging Decisions in Sexual Assault Cases Involving Strangers, Acquaintances, and Intimate Partners.” www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/199720.pdf. Among the author’s observation was that sexual assault prosecutions were most likely when prosecutors believed “the evidence is strong, the suspect is culpable, and the victim is blameless.” “In cases that involved friends, acquaintances, and relatives, prosecutors were significantly less likely to file charges if the victim engaged in risk-taking behavior at the time of the incident or if her reputation or character were questioned.”

³⁵ Prior to December 2011, rape was defined as “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will.” According to the new definition, anyone can be a victim of rape, as it is “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.” See Federal Bureau of Investigation, “UCR Program Changes Definition of Rape: Includes All Victims and Omits Requirement of Physical Force,” accessed Feb. 11, 2015, www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/cjis-link/march-2012/ucr-program-changes-definition-of-rape.

³⁶ www.publicintegrity.org/2010/02/24/4360/lack-consequences-sexual-assault

466 violence. It reminded them of their obligations, consistent with state law, to determine “whether
467 appropriate law enforcement or other authorities should be notified.”³⁷

468 Sexual violence also occurs at a high rate in the U.S. military. The difficulty in redressing and
469 curbing this problem illustrates how challenging it is to change systemic violence.³⁸

470 It is clear that addressing gender-based violence requires careful attention to multiple sources
471 because personal experiences of violence are mutually related. Decreasing gender-based violence will,
472 therefore, require action in many aspects of life, including in social movements, politics, law, education
473 and families. It also requires attention to religion.

474 **4. Analysis: The role of religion**

475 While religion is not the sole contributor to gender-based violence, this church acknowledges
476 how religious factors often contribute extensively. The problems include inadequate practical responses,
477 as well as the use of Scripture, church tradition and theology

478 Far too often people of faith have been silent even when coming upon unspeakable acts. Silence
479 sometimes seems to flow from not seeing what is everywhere. Sometimes it takes the form of oblivion –
480 when we choose to be uninformed – or deliberately turning away.

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

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

489 Different forms of silence, denial and resistance result in failures to care for victim/survivors of
490 gender-based violence. But God calls God's people to care for the neighbor: God calls us to stop, listen,
491 see, name and minister in the midst of ugliness and pain. God calls us to confront honestly the realities for
492 the sake of those whose lives are affected by gender-based violence.

493 When religious people or institutions respond, they must take care to do so wisely. When the
494 response is carried out inadequately, it actually may intensify the problem. Poor religious responses
495 include victim-blaming, failure to demand accountability, and remaining ill-equipped to respond.

³⁷ One in five women is sexually assaulted in college, but colleges often fail to respond appropriately. In a study of data submitted to the Department of Justice by 130 colleges, the Center for Public Integrity found that just 10 to 25 percent of perpetrators were expelled from college, leaving many victims of sexual assault to attend classes or live on the same campus as their rapist. www2.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.html.

³⁸ See the Appendix.

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

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

506 Finally, faulty practical response includes religious institutions with policies that stand in the way
507 of caring for people suffering. Examples are policies that do not make victims the priority of situations,
508 do not allow everyone to name and respond to gender-based violence, are outdated or are inaccessible.

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

512 Historically, church and society both have supported the idea that there is a necessary earthly
513 hierarchy accorded to gender and sex. This pattern serves to reinforce women's lesser status and deprive
514 them of legal and economic rights necessary to make their own decisions and care for themselves and
515 sometimes their children.³⁹ Lutherans need to acknowledge our own history in perpetuating these,
516 including the use of Martin Luther's writing on women and "domestic discipline" or the long church
517 history of blaming victims for violence.⁴⁰

³⁹ Only by 1993 was marital rape declared illegal in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Historically, this slowly formed change is related to the common-law doctrine of "coverture," which stipulated that a free, married woman did not have a separate legal existence from her husband. Married women could not own property in their own names, sign binding contracts, file suit, or, except under specific circumstances, control their earnings; in the event of their husband's death, they were not able to act as guardian to their own children. See "Women, Enterprise & Society: Women and the Law" (manuscript collection), Harvard Business School and President and Fellows of Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass., 2010, web, www.library.hbs.edu/hc/wes/collections/women_law/. Slave women had no legal existence apart from those who claimed to own them: They were traded, used and sometimes forced to have children by those with power over them. See "Women, Enterprise & Society." Early laws and judicial decisions gave "legitimacy" to these concepts by permitting physical "chastisement" by husbands of their wives, permitting marriage to be asserted as a defense to rape, and by denying aid to victims based on their theory that judges should "not interfere with family government in trifling cases." It would take more than 100 years before a state would enact a law criminalizing a physical assault by a husband on his wife. See *Bradley v. State*, 2 Miss. (Walker) 156 (1824) in "History of Battered Women's Movement," *SafeNetwork: California's Domestic Violence Resource*, 1999, www.icadvinc.org/what-is-domestic-violence/history-of-battered-womens-movement/.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Mary Pellauer, "Lutheran Theology Facing Sexual and Domestic Violence," 2nd ed. (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2011), http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Violence_Theology_Booklet.pdf. Pellauer outlines

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

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

526 This church has its own treasures to address the harmful ways Scripture and its interpretation
527 contribute to gender-based violence. At the heart of Lutheran biblical interpretation is Luther's own
528 ardent priority: interpretation of Scripture should reveal God's love to humanity. Interpretation of
529 Scripture should "carry Christ" to the listener or reader.⁴¹

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

536 This church has the opportunity to engage religious communities of faith and the wider society to
537 affirm a biblical understanding that does not explicitly or implicitly support gender-based violence. At the
538 same time, this church has the opportunity to attend to its own theology, seeking to address what is
539 harmful and remaining attentive to the needs of the neighbor.⁴² This church, for example, needs to reckon

Luther's strong writing on the "proper" submission of women to men and his ambivalence on child abuse and wife-beating. Although he exhorts husbands to be peaceable, he writes, "[T]he female sex inclines naturally to what is forbidden to it, to reign, to rule and to judge. From this there come marital discord, blows and beatings." ("Titus, 1527," *Luther's Works* 29:57). See, e.g., Joy A. Schroeder, *Dinah's Lament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007) for a disquieting historical explanation of Christian theological victim-blaming.

⁴¹ The ELCA has an important opportunity to lift up and support reinterpretations of texts that have for centuries been used to keep women and girls in social and religious positions "below" men and boys, such as creation and sin in Genesis and New Testament epistles commonly referred to as the "domestic texts."

⁴² Texts that portray violence against women that the ELCA at-large has not addressed include, for example, Abraham's use of Sarah for his own safety (Genesis 12:10-20); Lot offering his daughters to rapists in order to protect male guests (Genesis 19:1-11); Schechem raping Dinah (Genesis 34:1-19); King David's response to do nothing in order to protect his son Amnon when he rapes his half-sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13); and the second wife who was betrayed by her husband and raped and murdered by a gang of men (Judges 19). Texts that reveal God in diverse ways include Genesis 1:2; Isaiah 49:15; Matthew 23:37; and Luke 15: 1-10.

540 with forms of Lutheran theology related to the cross, suffering and forgiveness that direct people suffering
541 from gender-based violence to unjustly endure it.⁴³

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

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

550 In a similar vein, sometimes the practical effects of a theology of “cheap” forgiveness are
551 problematic. When forgiveness is encouraged in a gender-dependent way – victims should easily and
552 quickly forgive perpetrators – some people are more likely to continue to be hurt. "Cheap" forgiveness
553 runs the risk of re-inflicting trauma. The theological problems include the separation of accountability
554 from forgiveness and the separation of confession and repentance from forgiveness.

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

561 This is a time in the life of the church, then, to command life-affirming understanding and to
562 continue to reckon with how people of faith think about God, relationships with one another, and what it
563 means to be human. This church commits itself to seeking clarity and refinement for that purpose by
564 drawing upon life-giving resources in Lutheran theology *so that every neighbor is served* with love and
565 justice and not harmed. Likewise, this church recognizes that personal choices, systems and social factors
566 that create and foster gender-based violence in this society, and across the globe, must be challenged.

567 5. The ELCA's calling

568 The ELCA believes God is active in the world to bring about love and justice and calls this
569 church to join in that activity. While no one solution will bring an end to gender-based violence, this

⁴³ Careful analysis of the way that religion and culture are intertwined and attention to the effects of religious ideas and beliefs on gender-based violence is key to Christian action. See, e.g., Jimmy Carter, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014). Thus, Christian attention to all doctrine and theology is in order. This includes the doctrine of God, theological anthropology, the doctrines of sin and salvation, christology, ecclesiology, eschatology and ethics.

570 church recognizes and affirms that seeking health and well-being for all of God's people requires a multi-
571 faceted approach.

572 Fundamentally, the ELCA is called to speak and act prophetically to address the root causes and
573 values, structures and results of our patriarchal social system. At the same time, the way forward requires
574 astute ministry for individuals because every act of gender-based violence is unique and specific. The
575 efforts of individuals, congregations and institutions will take different shapes in responding to the
576 individual or to the social order, but the dominant themes must be care, accountability and education
577 alongside advocacy. The primary goals are to denounce and resist violence, create safe communities, and
578 work toward healing and social change.

579 This church, then, should be committed to respond with swift and appropriate *care* and
580 intervention with anyone experiencing gender-based violence. Care requires providing networks of
581 support beyond the initial crisis and access to local expert care-giving and advocacy agencies.
582 Intervention must be conducted wisely and will assume a stance of support rather than blame.

583 Perpetrators of gender-based violence need both pastoral care and help through expert care. The
584 necessity for professional intervention cannot be overemphasized. Pastors and other leaders, however,
585 may assist perpetrators with confession and repentance as appropriate even when this does not require or
586 automatically assure forgiveness from the survivor.

587 Situations of gender-based violence, such as ongoing abuse, are complicated, often volatile and
588 can quickly escalate. This church's best intervention and care will be possible when individuals,
589 congregations and institutions have taken steps to prepare in advance.

590 This church is also called to create, strengthen and use policies and practices with clear
591 *accountability*. Accountability assists in creating justice. Institutional accountability for prevention,
592 safety, and appropriate response should be built in into policies and practices. New and renewed attention
593 to institutional accountability contributes to interrupting acts of violence.

594 Tempered with appropriate expressions of care, people who inflict gender-based violence need to
595 be accountable to the person they harmed, the families of survivors, society, and, sometimes, to the
596 community of faith. The concern for accountability means this church has a role to play in changing the
597 fact that the majority of perpetrators of gender-based violence remain free and in communities.

598 By providing *education*, the ELCA can encourage prevention and wise response to gender-based
599 violence and its sources. Some of this education is practical. It also is faith-based. It should include, for
600 example, probing the roles and characteristics of humanity or ideas about and images of God that have
601 caused harm over the centuries. Life-giving witness to the gospel does not contribute to practices, laws
602 and beliefs that enable gender-based violence.

603 Practical conversation and education exploring the truth about and character of gender-based
604 violence is necessary throughout this church and its church-related institutions. The ELCA has a
605 particular challenge to work among many and varied partners to discern roadblocks and resources within
606 the Lutheran theological and practical traditions through dialogue, study and action.

607 The following recommendations provide an overall guide to the various ways that care,
608 accountability and education can unfold. *This church commends those individuals, communities and*
609 *institutions already engaged in any of these efforts.* At the same time, it is well past time to recognize
610 responsibilities throughout church and society in the face of the multiple sources supporting gender-based
611 violence.

612 As guidance, this social message is a call to take up these responsibilities:

613 *As congregations and other ministry sites to*

- 614 • pray for healing, wisdom, guidance and the courage to face the issues.
- 615 • put in place and enforce congregational policies and practices that promote safe and
616 healthy congregations.
- 617 • provide information for visitors and congregants on access to crisis care and safety plans
618 in ways that maintain confidentiality and safety.
- 619 • provide safe spaces for members or others who experience gender-based violence to tell
620 the truth of what happened to them.
- 621 • provide support for survivors that entail very practical needs: safety; shelter, food and
622 clothing; mental health care; legal counsel; work and transportation; child care; and
623 education.
- 624 • be clear with anyone experiencing gender-based violence that God condemns how they
625 have been hurt.
- 626 • be clear that God calls perpetrators to repentance, accountability and the obligation to
627 make amends; this includes calling church leaders to the same.
- 628 • provide support for perpetrators seeking to repent and change.
- 629 • understand and uphold ELCA “Vision and Expectations” for church leaders.
- 630 • employ liturgy, steadfast prayer and Bible study to counter those forces that legitimate
631 or encourage gender-based violence in any way.
- 632 • engage in education through dialogue, analysis and careful study of the social and
633 religious factors that contribute to gender-based violence.
- 634 • learn about and be prepared to respond to the specific contexts, needs and characteristics
635 of various forms of gender-based violence.

- 636 • learn about social science theories and practices that have proven effective in addressing
637 gender-based violence and dialogue with others.
638 • support and teach healthy relationships, including sexual relationships.
639 • love unceasingly, in the midst of pain, violence and ugliness, as a visible manifestation
640 of the love of Christ for all.

641

642 *As rostered and lay leaders to*

- 643 • be prepared to respond to crises with the help of experts in the fields of gender-based
644 violence through training, education, dialogue and collaboration with local and national
645 partners.
646 • care for people experiencing gender-based violence by believing them and helping them
647 to find the resources they need.
648 • collaborate with local experts in care and advocacy to respond to survivors' needs.
649 • preach about gender-based violence in order to speak the truth and care for others.
650 • provide leadership to foster discussion, education and discernment.

651

652 *As synods to*

- 653 • review and put in place transparent policies and practices that provide for safety,
654 confidentiality and due process for survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.
655 • provide and make public their policies on sexual harassment at public and sponsored
656 meetings and events.
657 • identify a means to make available lists or guides to resources for those responding to
658 gender-based violence.
659 • partner with local experts and agencies to provide services to survivors and education for
660 the community.
661 • support education for congregations and pastors about laws and practices concerning
662 mandatory reporting of domestic and other forms of gender-based violence.
663 • require training and education of their leaders on responding to and preventing all forms
664 of gender-based violence.

665

666 *As a churchwide organization and its ministries to*

- 667 • review its organizational policies and practices to ensure that they provide for the safety,
668 confidentiality and due process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based
669 violence.
- 670 • review ELCA "Vision and Expectations" to ensure the text adequately expresses
671 standards and expectations regarding gender-based violence.
- 672 • provide by September 2015 a concise online resource communicating the core ideas of
673 this message appropriate for a catechism setting, or one like it, for middle school age
674 youth.
- 675 • provide by April 2016 a study guide to this social message that includes resource lists and
676 ministry illustrations.
- 677 • collaborate with leaders in all expressions of this church to encourage discussion and
678 discernment around the ways that theology contributes to gender-based violence.
- 679

680 *As seminaries to*

- 681 • review or put in place policies and practices that ensure safety, confidentiality and due
682 process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.
- 683 • include theological and practical preparation among seminarians that considers the
684 problems and resources found in Scripture and the Lutheran theological tradition.
- 685

686 *As church-related educational institutions to*

- 687 • review or put in place policies and practices that ensure safety, confidentiality and due
688 process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.
- 689 • give appropriate attention to policies intended to curb gender-based violence and to foster
690 appropriate responses that avoid "re-victimization" of those who have suffered gender-
691 based violence on their campuses.
- 692 • review their curriculum to break silence by ensuring that matters regarding gender-based
693 violence are treated fully in courses appropriate to the subject matter.
- 694 • review the possibilities for educational or informational events that encourage awareness
695 among students of the nature of gender-based violence and the means to dialogue.
- 696 • provide for community-based conversations on gender-based violence, its sources and
697 ways to respond.
- 698

699 *As social ministry organizations to*

- 700 • review its organizational policies and practices to ensure that they provide for the safety,
701 confidentiality and due process among clients and staff, who may be both survivors and
702 perpetrators of gender-based violence.
703 • provide care through protection and support of the many needs of survivors for safety and
704 well-being as appropriate to the kind of service offered by the organization.

705 **6. Social witness**

706 Bonded to Jesus Christ, this church announces that the God who justifies expects all people and
707 social institutions to do justice and to foster practices that serve the common good. Such witness is given
708 as Christians live out their callings as citizens or through the ELCA's various institutional efforts as a
709 public church.

710 This church is called to a social witness that is prophetic and includes robust advocacy. That is, it
711 is called to join its voice with and for those whose voices are often silenced in speaking about what is
712 needed to reduce gender-based violence. Such ministry must include advocacy for laws and practices that
713 prevent gender-based violence, provide care for victims and survivors and hold perpetrators accountable.
714 Improved laws and practices are needed at local, state, federal and global levels.

715 In the interplay of the social order, a vast number of organizations and agents need to be
716 challenged toward prevention and reduction of gender-based violence. These include employers and
717 corporations, sporting organizations, educational institutions, the health care system, public and private
718 social caregivers, the judicial system, the military, and members of the media and emerging social media.

719 The required changes will vary according to the particular organization or system. Yet in each
720 case the goals should reflect the development and application of laws and practices that protect, provide
721 care, hold perpetrators accountable, and challenge harmful beliefs. This church, aware of its own
722 complicity, will seek to witness and to urge the pursuit of such goals within the social order, an order that
723 ultimately answers to the God of justice.

724 Toward that end, the ELCA calls upon:

725 *Congregations, church leaders and members to*

- 726 • be local advocates within schools, judicial systems, health care and social services for
727 transparent and appropriate responses to survivors and perpetrators and for measures to
728 decrease the possibilities of gender-based violence.
729 • collaborate with others who advocate for legislation that reduces and prevents gender-
730 based violence and provides services for intervention, protects victims and ensures
731 accountability for perpetrators.
732 • advocate for improved crisis response in their communities through dialogue and
733 partnership with various public services.

- advocate for improvements in social discourse and practice about the intersections of gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation and age.
 - serve as witnesses and advocates for individuals going through legal processes.
 - speak words of both law and gospel that counter religious contributions to gender-based violence.
 - call for accountability from prosecutors, the judicial system, and those in power when they fail to respond, appropriately, to gender-based violence in society or their institutions.

The churchwide organization to

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

Social ministry organizations to

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

7. Conclusion

Bringing an end to gender-based violence requires long-term commitment and diverse efforts.

757 Each survivor needs to be met at the point of their pain; each perpetrator needs to be held accountable for
758 the violence they commit. At the same time, addressing gender-based violence requires particular
759 attention to social and religious contributions, many of them newly in focus.

760 Guided by God, who hears the pleas of people, this church commits itself to listen to the voices of
761 those who have suffered gender-based violence within society and within the ELCA. This church humbly
762 commits itself, by God's grace, to walk new paths that alter past understanding of and inadequate
763 responses to gender-based violence. This church commits itself to stand for changes in the social order
764 that will foster the flourishing of every person's life because all people are made *imago dei* (in God's
765 image, Genesis 1:27). May the triune God turn us to recognize the needs of each and every neighbor.

Glossary

- 767
768
769 **Biological characteristics:** The physical and physiological traits that we often associate with either males
770 or females, but observation and research show that such physical and physiological traits do not
771 exclusively belong to one or the other. These traits include not just genitalia, but also body hair, facial
772 hair, height, muscle mass, body fat, body shape, breast tissue and the size of hands and feet, to name a
773 few. These traits often shape how people are perceived or identify in terms of their gender.
774
- 775 **Gender:** Categories into which cultures/societies separate behaviors and characteristics that are usually
776 considered masculine or feminine. The most common gender identities are *woman* and *man*, but other
777 identities exist and are becoming more widely used and understood.
778
- 779 **Gender non-conforming:** Within this message, we use gender non-conforming to refer to people whose
780 gender identity, gendered way of acting in the world, and biological characteristics do not completely fit
781 within predominantly expected ways of acting as a man or a woman. There are many identities and
782 experiences included under the umbrella of gender non-conforming.
783
- 784 **Intersection:** The way that one form of oppression or privilege can be shaped by and can shape other
785 forms of oppression or privilege. This means that the oppression experienced by a lesbian woman of color
786 will be different than that experienced by an economically impoverished gender non-conforming White
787 person. Factors that can intersect with and thus influence the individual experiences of gender-based
788 oppression include: age, ability, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality/citizenship, social class,
789 economics and religion. Human identities are made up of many intersections.
790
- 791 **Justice:** Generally justice refers to an underlying sense of fairness, right treatment and reciprocity. When
792 someone uses the word s/he may have a particular kind of justice in mind. Some of these include:
793 retributive justice, corrective justice, distributive justice, restorative justice, structural justice, fair or equal
794 treatment under the law, ending oppression based on power differences, or biblical righteousness. In this
795 document, the term justice emphasizes the latter half of these meanings but always with the biblical
796 emphasis on justice as right relationship with God and within community.
797
- 798 **Patriarchy:** The social, institutional, legal, political, educational, economic, religious and interpersonal
799 systems of society that best serve men and the interests of men with status and power. While all people
800 within a patriarchal system participate in it, the system functions with men at the center. This means that,
801 sometimes unconsciously, people participate in systems that control and oppress women, girls, gender
802 non-conforming people, LGBTQ people, and all those who are not normative, heterosexual men.
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Appendix: Global and national statistics

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- Globally, an estimated 30 percent of women who have been in a relationship have experienced sexual or physical violence at the hands of their intimate partner.ⁱ
- Nationally, 25 percent of women over the age of 18 have experienced sexual or physical violence at the hands of a current or former intimate partner.ⁱⁱ
- Nationally, race and ethnicity significantly affect the frequency of intimate partner violence.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Globally, an estimated 38 percent of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.^{iv}
- Nationally, almost 33 percent of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.^v
- Globally, one in five women will be a victim of attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.^{vi}
- Nationally, one in six women will be a victim of attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.^{vii}
- Nationally, 97 percent of rapes committed against adults (both men and women) are committed by men.^{viii}
- Nationally, 60 percent of sexual assaults are not reported to the police, and 97 percent of rapists will never spend a day in jail.^{ix}
- Nationally, 83 percent of girls aged 12 to 16 have experienced some form of sexual harassment in public schools.^x
- Nationally, of those people who express a gender non-conforming identity while in grades K-12, 78 percent are made the victim of harassment, 35 percent are made the victim of physical assault, and 12 percent are made the victim of sexual violence.^{xi}
- Nationally, 25 percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual people have been the victim of rape, and 72 percent have been the victim of other forms of sexual violence.^{xii}
- Nationally, an estimated 20-25 percent of lesbian and gay people experience hate violence within their lifetimes.^{xiii}
- Nationally, of gender- and sexuality-based hate-crime homicides in 2012, 53 percent of victims were transgender women.^{xiv}
- Nationally, of gender- and sexuality-based hate-crime homicides in 2012, 73 percent of victims were people of color.^{xv}
- Nationally, in 2013, White men were more likely than any other racial and ethnic demographic to be perpetrators of gender- and sexuality-based hate violence. Of all men who perpetrate gender- and sexuality-based hate violence, the majority by age were 19 to 29 years old.^{xvi}

ⁱ World Health Organization, “Violence against Women: Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women,” WHO, last modified October 2013, www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/.

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

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

“Statistics on Violence Against API Women,” *APIIDV*, accessed Sept. 4, 2014, www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php.

^{iv} World Health Organization, “Violence Against Women.”

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

^{vi} United Nations, “Ending Violence against Women and Girls,” *Resources for Speakers on Global Issues*, accessed Aug. 28, 2014, www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/endviol/.

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

^{viii} Percentage was calculated from data in Tjaden and Thoennes, *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women*, 47.

^{ix} The 3 percent statistic has been calculated by taking reporting rates into consideration. See, *National Crime Victimization Survey*, Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008-2012, and *Felony Defendants in Large Urban Countries*, Washington, D.C.: Department of Justice, 2002-2006, cited in “Reporting Rates,” *RAINN*, accessed Sept. 5, 2014, www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/reporting-rates.

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

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

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

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

^{xiv} *Ibid.*, 8.

^{xv} *Ibid.*

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

Word and Service Entrance Rite Discernment Team Report

Appointed by the Executive Committee of the ELCA Church Council in January 2014, the Word and Service Entrance Rite Discernment Team has met three times: July 2014, October 2014 and February 2015. As the work of the previously appointed Word and Service Roster Task Force moves forward toward proposals for one unified roster of Word and Service, this more recently appointed discernment team is tasked with giving particular attention to the entrance rite for that unified roster in hope of making a recommendation about this rite for consideration by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

Two entrance rites are currently in use for the three rosters of ministers that would become one roster of Word and Service under current proposals: Associates in Ministry are commissioned; Deaconesses and Diaconal Ministers are consecrated. Consequently, a decision will need to be made about the appropriate entrance rite for the unified roster.

As the writer of the book of Acts might put it (Acts 15:2), there was “no small dissension and debate” about the entrance rite for Diaconal Ministers when that roster was first established by action of the 1993 Churchwide Assembly and, again, when consecration was agreed upon as the entrance rite for this roster in 1995. Similarly, when concrete discussions began around the possibility of establishing one, new, unified roster of Word and Service, the question of its entrance or initiation rite immediately rose to the fore across the church with energetic anxiety and excitement, fear and anticipation.

Thus, the work of this team has been intentionally shaped around discernment rather than debate. Using processes and practices described in the 2013 Report of the Communal Discernment Task Force, as well as other discernment processes and practices, the team has engaged in deep prayerful listening and mutually honoring conversation and study.

At the center of the team’s conversations thus far have been various forms of questions like these:

- What can we learn from the ways the church has ordered and initiated its public ministries historically, liturgically, ecumenically, and globally?
- What are the particular current ecclesial and cultural dynamics and realities that need particular attention as we approach 25 years after the establishment of the roster of Diaconal Ministers?
- What will most faithfully and effectively equip and empower the whole people of God to engage God’s mission in the world?
- What will best serve the gospel, now and into the future?
- What is the Spirit saying to us at this time?

The discernment process of this team thus far has included the following:

- A deep devotional and worship life together.
- Ample time at meetings for both individual reflection and large and small group conversations.
- Ongoing presentations from and conversations with a variety of leaders, focused on each context as well as possible implications arising from these contexts as we engage this discernment, for example:
 - Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (ELCA churchwide context)
 - Don McCoid and Kathryn Lohre (ecumenical full communion partner contexts)
 - Louise Williams (global Lutheran contexts)
 - Jeff Thiemann and other Portico staff (pension, insurance, and related context)
- One to one conversations with members of congregations across the church about their experiences and perceptions of entrance rites for public ministry and the relationship of these rites to leadership and ministry in church and world.
- Exploration of liturgical and historical approaches to entrance rites like consecration and ordination, including in-depth study of rites currently in use.

- Study and discussion of resources and writing on entrance rites for various rosters of public ministers from a variety of perspectives (e.g. contemporary and historical, Lutheran and ecumenical, confessional and theological).
- Study and discussion of documents from and related to the 1993 and 1995 churchwide assemblies and the various task forces at work in those years, including but not limited to:
 - Minutes
 - Background and study documents
 - Papers and presentations
 - Reports and results (including, for example, *Together for Ministry*)
- Conversation and research (outside of team meetings) with current rostered leaders, bishops, members of congregations, ecumenical leaders.
- Regular communication and conversation with the Word and Service Task Force.

This team is not yet prepared to make a recommendation about the entrance rite for one roster of Word and Service. There are, however, some emerging insights that will continue to both inform and raise questions along this path of discernment toward a recommendation regarding this rite.

- There appears to be an energetic, mission-focused upsurge – nationally and globally, among Lutherans and ecumenically – in commitment to lifting up and engaging ministries of service (*diakonia*), both in public, rostered form and among the whole people of God in the world, often articulated in various conversations about the “priesthood of all believers.”
- Lutheran confessional documents and history offer both guidance and freedom in many of the particulars for the ordering of public ministry in service to the proclamation and embodiment of the Word in the church and in the world.
- Entrance rite practices for ministry offices are not uniform across the global Lutheran community. For example, many global Lutheran bodies who are part of the Lutheran World Federation ordain to offices in addition to that of pastor. Others employ rites like consecration or, less common, commissioning for these offices. Even in those global Lutheran bodies that ordain “deacons” (or a similar office), such persons are not given responsibility for presiding over sacraments and very few of these traditions also ordain bishops (some do not even have bishops).
- The ELCA’s full-communion partners are supportive of this discernment process, hoping to learn from us as they also explore how to best engage and support various forms of Word and Service ministry in a changing world, and have expressed continued support of the ELCA and commitment to their relationship with us whatever we decide regarding both the form of Word and Service ministry and its entrance rite.
- The decision about moving to one roster of Word and Service and the decision regarding an entrance rite for this roster will be related, but distinct, decisions for the churchwide assembly that considers them.
- For a variety of reasons, the members and leaders of this church are not currently of one mind about the meanings and implications of rites like ordination and consecration. It is important that we find ways to engage this conversation across the church as broadly and deeply as possible under the umbrella of genuine discernment, characterized by deep listening and honest and mutually-honoring sharing, held together in the Spirit by common commitment to work together in faithful, energetic engagement in God’s mission of hope, healing, and resurrection life in the world.

Mindful of this last point, the discernment team is now in the process of preparing and distributing resources intended to foster and deepen discernment about this entrance rite and related evangelical concerns on the part of the whole church. These materials will focus on forming communities of discernment locally and regionally.

Addendum: On March 13, 2015, the Entrance Rite Discernment Team met by conference call. In this call, the team read and discussed the March 10, 2015 recommendation to the ELCA Church Council from the Conference of Bishops. Conversation focused on the whole document, not only the recommendation to postpone consideration of the entrance rite for a roster of Word and Service. Much of the content of this recommendation from the Conference of Bishops aligns closely with this discernment team's strong sense – alluded to in the paragraph above – that it is crucial to engage as much of the church as possible in education, discussion, and discernment about the rite of entrance to a roster of Word and Service and related issues and concerns about leadership in general before, during, and after the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

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Update on 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017

The 500th anniversary of the Lutheran reformation in 2017 presents a once-in-a-century opportunity for the ELCA. It will be a time when people both in the church and in the larger society will be open to hearing a fresh articulation of the Lutheran witness of life liberated in Jesus Christ. The plan endorsed by the Church Council at its November 2012 meeting continues to guide the work of the churchwide organization in observing this anniversary.

In recent months work has focused on building a network of contact persons and communications platforms, including a website (www.elca500.org), a Facebook page (ELCA Reformation 500) and a Facebook group for sharing information and resources that will support activities by local congregations, synods and other ministries. These communications platforms include links to resources such as the Luther Reading Challenge and LWF activities. Amanda Lauer began day-to-day work on this information-sharing network last November as Communications Manager for the 500th Anniversary.

In coming months we want to raise awareness of two featured events where ELCA members can be inspired and equipped for observing the Reformation in their communities:

- “Called to Be a Living Voice: Vocation, Reformation, Mission” is the theme of the Worship Jubilee 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia, July 19-23. Information can be found at www.LivingVoice2015.org
- “Freed and Renewed in Christ” is the theme of a first-ever Grace Gathering in conjunction with the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans, Louisiana, August 10-13, 2016. An informational flyer is being finalized for distribution to synods.

At the same time, work is continuing on worship and learning resources that will be made available to congregations beginning this summer and continuing into 2016. In addition, several teams are beginning work this spring on a variety of initiatives ranging from theological conferences for a variety of audiences to ongoing ecumenical and inter-faith relationships beyond 2017.

For more information, please use and invite others to use any of the following means for making a connection:

Website: www.elca500.org
Facebook: ELCA Reformation 500
Email: 500@elca.org
Phone: churchwide staff at 800-638-3522
Amanda Lauer (communications), x2594
Marcus Kunz (general), x2602
Heather Dean (Grace Gathering), x2608

Report and Recommendation of the Word and Service Task Force

Background

Since 1993, the ELCA has maintained four public ministry rosters: the roster of ordained pastors of Word and Sacrament and three lay rosters – associates in ministry, deaconesses and diaconal ministers. For each roster, a unique function, set of standards and required preparation has been maintained. The integral role of rostered lay ministry in the ELCA has contributed much to the life and mission of the church in the world.

Beginning in 2007, a series of regional consultations, study and dialogue began to examine the work and ministry of these three lay rosters, and these conversations eventually led the ELCA Church Council to form a “Word and Service Task Force.” Early in its work, the task force began to focus its work on recognizing the essential nature of diaconal service to the mission of the people of God in the ELCA. The task force believes that this calling would be strengthened by the convergence of the three lay rosters of the ELCA into one and by a redefinition of this one new roster.

Based on an interim report from the Word and Service Task Force (hereafter WSTF) delivered in November 2013, the Church Council voted in part:

To affirm the preliminary conclusion of the Word and Service Task Force that this church should move toward creation of a single unified lay roster of Word and Service ministry....

To authorize the Word and Service Task Force to continue its work in order to facilitate the creation of such a unified roster, to develop a process outlining how the existing lay rosters would be closed, and to provide a process for transition of existing associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, and deaconesses into such a new roster, and, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary, to consider and propose possible amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to accomplish its recommendations;

Informed by widespread communication with persons on existing rosters, the WSTF recommended that the question of entrance rite for this new roster be considered by a different group. The Church Council created a separate team, the Entrance Rite Discernment Group, to consider and make recommendations on this matter.

Theology and Practice

In every age, the church has responded to changing contexts and changing needs, through its proclamation of the Gospel, its ministry in the world, and the leaders it has called to serve. The recommendation to establish a single roster of Ministry of Word and Service is thus not only about merging leadership rosters. It is rather a matter of addressing with new urgency the church’s response to the needs of the world in the 21st century.

Christians have always emphasized the need to live faithfully and actively with care for the neighbor, our own individual identity and purpose already having been secured for us by the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ. Diaconal service strengthens this church’s right emphasis on evangelical mission as our personal and social expression of the love of God. Consequently, we seek to live out our catholic faith in service to the neighbor and, with our ever-reforming Lutheran attitude, we are free to do so in whatever ways prove most effective in particular contexts. One way we practice faithful discipleship is by constantly sharpening the shape and emphasizing the content of public diaconal ministry.

In a distinctive manner, the ministry of Word and Service can add a new quality of agility to this church's commitment to God's mission through the church with a renewed vision of the meaning of discipleship and a renewed appreciation of the essential role of diaconal service for all the people of God. A ministry of Word and Service not only aids the ELCA's own members' growth in discipleship, it also expands the presence of this church in the world. Ministers of Word and Service could inspire the imaginations of innumerable ELCA members with a hunger for personal purpose and a passion for public service. Partnerships between ministers of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service open innumerable opportunities for creative and enriched evangelical outreach and mission in the world.

Whatever their particular role or context, those on the new roster of Word and Service would strive to empower, equip and encourage the people of God for their daily baptismal vocation of service to the neighbor and care of creation. Ministers of Word and Service would be distinctive from and work in complementarity with the ministers of Word and Sacrament, and with and for the ministry of all the baptized. The two rostered ministries will work collaboratively to inspire the whole ministry of the church.

We believe that the leadership of the church is a key asset for church renewal. The revised office of Word and Service will strengthen and enrich that leadership for the sake of the Gospel. Achieving the expected benefits from the complementary rosters of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service will require extensive and persistent advocacy for a new vision of ministry leadership that ultimately extends across and through all the baptized people of God.

Our recommendations below, therefore, reflect a belief that a renewed diaconal ministry, designed to stand alongside the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, will enhance this church's ability to better realize its mission today. Such a diaconal ministry is biblically rooted, historically informed, ecumenically related and missionally driven (For a more expansive and formal discussion of the theological rational, see Appendix: *A Theology for One Lutheran Diaconate in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*).

History and Proposed Title: Deacon

The Task Force recommends that the title "Deacon" be given to ELCA ministers of Word and Service. While no title may be universally accepted at the start of this roster in the ELCA, the term deacon is nevertheless perhaps the best single term encompassing biblical, ecumenical and popular understandings of servant leadership. From the Book of Acts through all the reforms of the church catholic into contemporary ecumenical practices around the globe, the term deacon is most used and understood.

In popular usage, the church has used the terms *deacon*, *deaconess*, *diaconal* or *diakonia* for many years. The church has utilized the title "deacon" in various ways in the past, and forms of training and the formation for deacons, as well as public or ecclesial recognition for this ministry, have varied. For example, the ELCA, in its three expressions, has experienced these types of diaconal service contexts just in recent history:

Deaconess of the ELCA

Lutheran Deaconess Association (while not an agency of the ELCA, some

Rostered Diaconal Minister

members are on the ELCA roster)

Synodical Deacon

Diakonia Program

Congregational or Parish Deacon

Finally, many of our full communion partners, including the United Methodist Church and The Episcopal Church, include diaconal offices in their ministry, as do many members of the Lutheran World Federation (For further examples, see the Appendix B: *Here a Deacon, There a Deacon, Everywhere a Deacon*). Conversation with our full communion partners demonstrates that they respect our decisions

and appreciate our approach to complex questions. Our partners in mission and ministry have already indicated that any decision the ELCA makes on the movement to one roster and on an entrance rite will be honored and respected. Developing a roster of deacons could enhance the opportunities for partnership in mission.

Whatever the particular role or context, those who perform the ministry of “deacon” worldwide and in the ELCA carry responsibility for some form of service ministry. Some also proclaim the Word through preaching and teaching in local settings. In carrying forward these traditions, all deacons on the roster of the ELCA will maintain responsibility to empower, equip and encourage the whole people of God for their own daily baptismal vocation of service to the neighbor and care of creation.

The Character of a Deacon

The WSTF has developed a set of expectations for this new roster. Every deacon shall:

- Be rooted in the word of God, fulfilling a gospel-centered purpose that proclaims and furthers the reign of God among us;
- Daily return to baptism with prayer and attention to their spiritual lives;
- Advocate a prophetic diaconia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the church’s outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God’s world;
- Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation and abroad;
- Equip the baptized for ministry in God’s world, affirming the gifts of all people;
- Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God’s mission;
- Practice stewardship that respects God’s gift of time, talents and resources;
- Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- Share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

In sum, whatever their particular role or context, whether deeply engaged in proclamation and service in non-ecclesial contexts or serving in congregational or other "church" settings, those on the roster of Word and Service will strive to empower, equip and encourage the people of God for their daily baptismal vocation of service to the neighbor and care of creation. Consequently, the new roster will consist of those who have been identified, formed, trained and called for ministries of Word and Service throughout the whole church through locally stewarded churchwide processes as outlined in the Candidacy Manual. Rostered deacons will be supported by and accountable to churchwide standards and commitments as well as the synodical and local accountabilities and support of the ministries they serve. Rostered deacons will have responsibility and opportunity for engagement in broader ecumenical ministerial and ecclesial relationships. Unlike synodical or congregational deacons currently serving in particular settings, the ministry and rostering of deacons on the roster of the ELCA may be recognized and transferred across synods and institutions.

Transition

Giving thanks to God for the ministry of all who have served and are serving on the present lay rosters, as well as working to make the transition from three rosters to one unified roster as smooth as possible, the task force believes the following matters deserve attention:

- All members (active, including on leave from call; on disability; or retired) on the current three rosters should automatically be transferred onto the new roster, unless they choose to resign from their current roster.
- On the new roster, the "date of entering public ministry" for each transferred leader should correspond with the original date of consecration or commissioning onto their previous roster.
- Rostered leaders and candidates in process should be encouraged to attend gatherings (regional or however most practical) of transition to celebrate the new roster and provide formation for a common ethos of the diaconate, including its biblical, historical, ecumenical and missional emphases. We recommend the ELCA investigate financial support for these gatherings.
- At the time that the 2016 Churchwide Assembly adopts the proposed change to the Word and Service rosters, the existing rosters should be closed to new candidates. The new unified roster will officially replace the existing rosters on January 1, 2017 to give existing roster members time to decide whether or not they wish to make the transition.
- The formation of a new roster will require a time of education for existing rostered leaders and for congregations, synods and candidacy committees. Resources for use in these settings should be developed. In particular, resources should be developed that will assist and deepen the church's understanding of *diakonia*.
- New financial resources and efforts, including both transitional events for 'grand-parented' deacons and ongoing events for candidates will be required during this time of transition.
- The new roster will require reconsideration of the representational principles in the constitution.
- Realizing the promise that could result from new partnerships between ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service will require extensive and persistent advocacy for a new vision of ministry leadership, among both rostered and non-rostered leaders of the church.
- Questions regarding appropriate entrance rite will continue to be addressed by the Church Council-appointed Entrance Rite Discernment Group. This group is encouraged to continue their conversation utilizing the work of the 1993 Task Force that produced the *Study of Ministry*.
- Recognizing that new patterns of ministries and opportunities for mission will continue to emerge in the future, the ELCA should engage in broad-based, intentional, open conversation and discernment focused on various leadership needs to determine what forms of leadership might best serve God's mission for the sake of the world.
- The time leading up to and including the 2016 Churchwide Assembly should be utilized to facilitate these discussions and to equip and empower voting members to continue these conversations in their congregations, conferences and synods.
- The church should continue to provide opportunity for reflection on a theology of servant ministry in the world, on ways in which the church can more fully honor, support and uplift the gifts of ministers of Word and Service, and reflection on the future for these ministers of Word and Service in the face of changing opportunities for call.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
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Word and Service Task Force Report
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The ELCA Word and Service Task Force recommends that the ELCA:

1. Establish a single, unified roster of Word and Service;
2. Give the name ‘Deacon’ to those persons on the new roster;
3. Ensure that the existing rosters of Associates in Ministry, Deaconess, and Diaconal Minister be automatically transferred to the roster of Deacons unless a person on an existing roster declines, and that the existing rosters be then eliminated by January 1, 2017;
4. Modify the ELCA candidacy process to include this new roster;
5. Charge the Office of the Secretary to propose appropriate constitutional amendments to effect this change;
6. Use “Consecration” as the entrance rite for this new roster until such time as the Entrance Rite Discernment Group makes a final recommendation for an appropriate rite;
7. Arrange for funding for transition events and ongoing leadership and formation events to ensure growth and understanding of the Word and Service roster;
8. Arrange for the preparation of appropriate and informative materials for the church’s ongoing study; and
9. Refer the resulting amending/amended documents to the 2016 CWA for approval as necessary.

Word and Service Task Force Members

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Tammy Devine, diaconal minister
The Rev. Dr. William Gafkjen, bishop of the ELCA Indiana-Kentucky Synod
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1 A Theology for One Lutheran Diaconate in the 2 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

6 The tri-fold character of our life in God

7 Those who love and know God through the good news of Jesus Christ and the movement
8 of the Holy Spirit intuitively practice a life of proclamation-thanksgiving-service (*Kerygma-Eucharistia-Diakonia*). Proclaiming the gospel of justification, joyfully offering thanksgiving
9 even with every breath, serving the neighbor near and far simply because love cannot help but do
10 so: to do these is the desire of every Christian. It is also the rhythm “down deep” in every corner
11 of creation, as the biblical writers, mystics, and Martin Luther himself proclaimed.¹ The practice
12 is not sequential, however. It is organic. Just as there “is” no God the Father without the Son and
13 Spirit, no one without any of the others, so also proclamation never arrives without thanksgiving
14 and service and no one of these three actions without the other. This is simply the character of
15 the full Christian life.

16
17
18 The character of the Christian life depends upon the very character of God. Christians are
19 baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the eternal event of the three
20 divine persons living with, for, and through each other as the consummate expression of
21 inexhaustible love. The love of, in, and from God Trinity has no bounds. This love eternally and
22 infinitely sends and receives itself. The flow and flux and flowering of love in God cannot be
23 contained even in God. It is not enough for God to enjoy the love within; the love wills to create
24 and sustain others. To know and confess that God is love, then, is to state that *diakonia*
25 (neighboring care or service), too, is innate and integral to the character of God. *Diakonia*, too,
26 flexes and flows and flowers. *Diakonia* within God ensures that the creation by God is respected,
27 loved, and served. The character of the full Christian life *theologically* understood reaches ever
28 outward with care for the neighbor and all the creation. This is also part of what it means for the
29 human being to be created in the very image of God.

30 31 *Diakonia* includes apostolicity

32 Another aspect of the Triune life is the self-giving, the “sentness” of the divine persons. As the
33 very energies of God Trinity go ever beyond God to and through all that God loves, all who are
34 sent by God are impelled by God’s essential apostolicity. As the divine persons are sent, so also
35 God’s children. As we are sent, so also we are charged by the same apostolicity that energized
36 the prophets and disciples. Apostolicity belongs to the language and vocation of our baptism into
37 Christ. A robust missional imagination, then, characterizes all who would daily live from the joy
38 and impulse of our baptism. So this missional imagination, this apostolicity, this “sentness” is
39 integral, too, to diaconal service.

40
41 In turn, diaconal service strengthens this church’s right emphasis on evangelical mission as an
42 en-fleshed expression of the love of God that sends and receives. God’s children-servants daily
43 find Jesus’ promise of human fulfillment fulfilled when we give ourselves away and then receive
44 ourselves and more in return. Likewise, *diakonia* does not possess itself while it serves others.
45 *Diakonia* is always a giving and sending of one’s self to the other, especially for and to the other

46 however and wherever the other is. Indeed, when God's servants are sent, we carry not our
47 selves, but God's strength clothed in weakness to serve precisely the weak. In this cruciform way
48 God sends God. We who also are in and with God are sent out *to* wherever those who need
49 God's love through us are, *however* they are. Sent-ness and self-giving all redound with the
50 wonderful urgency of God's love that is always outward bound. And God's love is urgent
51 because of the urgency of all who are bound by suffering, those whom God loves so particularly.
52

53 **Sent to serve at the cross**

54 So we proclaim, we thank, and we serve. This Christian "tri-fold rhythm" within the Triune life
55 clearly indicates God's character and what God intends for our life and where we find our life
56 wanting. *Diakonia* is precisely the call to the disciple to serve because on the mortal side of
57 eternity it denotes the practical need to fulfill that to which *Kerygma* and *Eucharistia* aspire,
58 even as we already live in the fullness of God's grace. At the root, in the cracks, on the edges,
59 and at the center of the daily grind everywhere and anywhere, God intends abundant and
60 peaceful life.

61
62 This is also the meaning of the Lutheran "Theology of the Cross." The *theologia crucis* is rooted
63 in God's diaconal character. God in Jesus Christ is Emmanuel with humankind in all our
64 situations. God suffers where any suffer. Yet, despite, in, and beyond suffering, God promises
65 resurrection. Resurrection begins with God's healing of the creation now, whenever and
66 wherever the Gospel is received. The new life transforms into the celebration of perfect peace,
67 justice, and joy forever.

68
69 This is the presumption of every more formalized Lutheran theological theme. God in Christ
70 through the Holy Spirit lives in intimate solidarity with every suffering person. Therefore,
71 wherever one works to announce God's forgiveness, to heal, to bring peace, to establish justice,
72 to harbor hope and proclaim promise—especially at the suffering places where stands the
73 crucified God—there one serves Christ himself and there the servant makes visible to the served
74 the God who insistently and selflessly is with us. "Whatever you did to the least of these who are
75 members of my family, you did also to me" (Mt. 25:40). To the "least of these" and more—all in
76 their uniqueness of spirit, time and place—the Christian in gratitude is sent and self-giving.
77 Would that all Christians, all the church, be more evidently so diaconal.

78 79 **By what authority?**

80 So who is it who makes Christ visible so trenchantly in the suffering places and easily in the
81 joyous places? And by what authority? All Christians are called by God to serve wherever
82 Christ's cross is planted. This poses a problem for the self-preserving church, that church which
83 prefers its own maintenance over its God-given mission. To acknowledge that mission comes
84 before self-preservation of course does not mean that there is no place for self-care. Self-care is
85 necessary insofar as it empowers mission and it is mandated by mission. This is as true for
86 healthy institutional forms as it is for individual persons. But God's desire that all are to serve
87 poses also a freeing possibility for the church more to be "a church for others." When Jesus
88 asked us to follow him, he did not provide rubrics and caveats as to who is or is not qualified to
89 serve. In the ultimate sense, personal or learned qualifications have nothing to do with the matter.
90 Only Christ's grace and Christ's call matter. Whomever Christ graces, Christ calls; and all whom
91 Christ calls Christ graces: all whom Christ has called to serve and all who have heard that call

92 have been given the gifts to love, serve, heal, forgive, proclaim; to be and to present Christ
93 himself.

94
95 Christ's call to serve is the Christian mandate and Christ himself the final authority. If we do not
96 love and follow in response, without condition, it is only because we have not yet or again not
97 heard. All Christians are called to bring their and God's joy to every place of suffering and
98 shame, the cruciform places, whereby the God who bears the pain of our darkness will be
99 revealed as the God of greater light. God's light overcomes the darkness and perfect love casts
100 out all fear. The authority to serve and "be" Christ is the authority of God's own creative life-
101 giving love uttered as the call for those who love God to love all others: daily, randomly,
102 regularly, systematically, and even institutionally.

103
104 It is the tragic truth, though, that only the naïve and innocent can love and serve with pure
105 abandon. Even then, those who are served by love need service that is appropriate to their
106 circumstances. They need a knowing love and response-able service. Because of sin, "our age-
107 old rebellion," none really are innocent, and love in service to the neighbor must therefore be all
108 the more enabled by God's grace and resourced by human wisdom. Thus the church through the
109 ages has rightly not only organized and re-organized itself to serve the neighbor, but has
110 educated and re-educated itself on how best so to do given the challenges of its ever changing
111 contexts. At various times in the life of the church, the degree of dramatic change in the cultural
112 context has called for urgent and dramatic re-shaping of the church's witness and service. For
113 such a time, that for which the church stands and its public means for doing so need to be clear,
114 simple, and coherent with its own and the Great Tradition. The church's convictions and the
115 ways by which the convictions are expressed also must be adequate to the needs of the newly
116 urgent time.

117
118 **To serve in *this* time**
119 This is such a time. Technologized globalization has brought the neighbor from afar to within
120 our daily consciousness. She with her hijab and he with his aggressive secularity, yet both and all
121 previously "others" appear to us as more regularly gracious and surprisingly "human" than
122 stereotypes entertain. Today the parable of the Good Samaritan is far less an abstraction from
123 another distant culture and far more a daily opportunity for concrete neighborliness. Close
124 friends and real faces speaking from what only a generation ago were unknown value systems
125 make real for us the challenges and opportunities of postmodernity: that there is no longer a
126 "universally accepted" religious disposition or common story, but only one massive and diverse
127 public market wherein values, meanings and commodities all are the stuff of campaigns to buy
128 and vote.

129
130 To compound the challenge of this popular philosophical shift that has introduced the Areopagus
131 (Acts 17:22ff) to this digitized day with even more pluralism than recognized by St. Paul, the
132 literature of the educated "millennial" generation today redounds with nihilism and
133 insignificance. Given the dour and connected global economy, as well as the over-abundance of
134 "options" for self-meaning construction (from a surplus of fundamentalisms to a surplus of mere
135 metaphors), life for too many today is experienced as if the presence of so much means the
136 endurance and eternal meaning of nothing. How shall Christianity answer this but by way of
137 beginning again with what only has "worked" in every previous urgent time: gospel-inspired acts

138 of simple love that bring healing and comfort to the needy, the *diakonia* which for St. Francis
139 was the preferred mode of proclamation? Postmodernity, religious and philosophical pluralism,
140 multiculturalism, globalism, the complexification of life: all call for clearer and simpler forms
141 (offices) of modeling service that can be understood more readily within and beyond the church.

142
143 The complexities of this post-modern time notwithstanding, there is clear understanding and
144 even surprising agreement within and beyond the church as to what the office of “pastor” means.
145 For Lutherans, this is expressed in the ordained Ministry of Word and Sacrament and is given its
146 “constitutional” basis in the Augsburg Confession, particularly Articles 5 and 7. While the role
147 of pastor through the ages has, of course, borne the character of *diakonia*, it is fair to say that the
148 pastoral office by design emphasizes much more the formal presentation of *kerygma* and
149 *eucharistia*.

150
151 There has not been such a clear understanding of *diakonia/service*, however, as a public office in
152 the Lutheran tradition. While there is no explicit commendation for a ministry of service in the
153 early Lutheran movement, Luther and the reformers did not shrink from advocating faith active
154 in love to neighbor. Indeed, one can argue forcefully that much of Luther’s energy for reform
155 was driven precisely because the current practice of the church hierarchy inhibited the active
156 love of neighbor precisely. In turn, this inhibition was and is the child of anxious selves; as
157 Luther diagnosed it, salvation by “works” was so overwhelmingly burdensome to the individual
158 conscience that one was never free from insecurity about one’s own future.

159
160 But once faith was freed from this errant church system, on which most reforming energy was
161 necessarily spent, Luther could see nothing more natural and right than a Christian serving one’s
162 neighbor. Put otherwise, Luther could not even imagine the “humanity” of anyone who would
163 not care for his or her neighbor, even when directly threatened by a plague.² Luther did
164 occasionally advocate for a formal diaconate to aid the poor, as well as to free priests of “the
165 burden of temporal matters.” But any following of his encouragement was as sporadic as the
166 counsel itself.³ Faith freed so to be active in love for neighbor and world was the Lutheran
167 movement’s first goal. If focus was therefore more necessary on a clerical restructure so that
168 evangelical preaching and care could abound, faith with reason (!) would find its own way to
169 love the neighbor.

170
171 Very early with the Reformation, Lutheran ministry also became defined by two German words,
172 *Pfarrer* (which primarily meant pastor-preacher) and then also by *Amt* (service). The two ways
173 of seeing the one renewed reality of the ministerial office perhaps already showed, too, that it
174 was difficult to distinguish public neighbor-care from the priestly liturgical role. In other
175 Protestant experiments, as with John Calvin’s project in Geneva, ministry was more explicated to
176 include a formal role for *diakonia*. With Lutheranism, sometimes the pastoral office has assumed
177 the role of service (mostly as circumstances demanded). The absence of a formalized public
178 order for *diakonia* was noted and corrected in the work of pioneers like Theodore and Fredericke
179 Fliedner in Kaiserwerth, Johannes Wichern in Hamburg, and Wilhelm Loehe in Neuendettelsau,
180 all in Germany in the early 19th century. Deacons and deaconesses have a wonderful, though
181 largely underappreciated, presence in Lutheranism since then, thanks especially to the founding
182 work of John Passavant and Sister Elizabeth Fedde, among many others.⁴ The ordained office of
183 deacon belongs to the order of other Christian traditions, as with, for example, in the Norwegian,

184 Swedish, Finnish, and Icelandic Lutheran churches. It is noteworthy, too, that ecumenical full-
185 communion partners have instituted the ordained diaconate. For the ELCA today, 20 years of
186 Diaconal Ministers, along with the longer lived numbers of Associates in Ministry and the
187 Deaconess communities, have demonstrated a growing, significant, but still small part of the
188 public office representation of *diakonia*. These stand alongside and within the excellent many
189 institutional ways that service to and for the neighbor has been carried forward, as with hospitals,
190 rehabilitative and convalescent services, homeless shelters, orphanages, and the outstanding
191 ministries of Lutheran Social Services.

192

Making it more “personal” and re-formed

193 These are all celebrated and needed forms of *diakonia*. They must be sustained and prospered.
194 But they also, perhaps with some irony, do not convey the immediacy and *integral* necessity of
195 service within the trifold rhythm of full Christian life. They are not even necessarily visible as
196 acts from and within our congregational centers of Christian life. Too often they can be regarded
197 only as para-church agencies deserving of a congregation’s financial support (to be sure!),
198 though not necessarily expressive of one’s “personal” stake in their missions. How might we
199 better model, honor, and grow the daily life of the Christian with fulsome proclamation-praise-
200 service? And—surely also an important matter—how might we honor and grow those already in
201 the ELCA who serve in roles of *diakonia*, the unification of whom can mean more common and
202 effective witness/service for them and a clearer, even evocative, opportunity of formal service
203 for others in discernment about their own vocational futures?

204

205 The very nature of the church’s mission, those already who serve formally in diaconal ministries
206 in the ELCA and “the times” suggest that this church would do well to clarify and make more
207 compelling the ways by which we serve the needs of God’s world, always for *this* day. We are
208 also free to do so in whatever ways prove adequate, as the history of the church has shown, even
209 on “ad hoc” bases, as the circumstances of *diakonia*’s formalization in Acts 6 show. Beyond
210 ensuring that the Word is properly proclaimed and the sacraments rightly administered by way of
211 the ordained Ministry to Word and Sacrament, the church must and is free to arrange its other
212 ministries as best fits the day, as best evokes response in daily vocations, and as best sets
213 example for how all the baptized can fulfill our vocations. There is nothing more theologically
214 and confessionally right to do than this, if even the role of *diakonia* is less explicitly addressed in
215 our confessions than in our theological premises.

216

217 There is enspirited genius already in the “constitution” of the Lutheran movement to be so. AC 5,
218 6, 7, and 28 taken as a group call for the Gospel to be proclaimed and structures freely adopted to
219 serve the Gospel’s advance. We infer, with the vast majority of the tradition, that so we may
220 proclaim the Gospel more robustly and serve the neighbor, we are free to adopt new structures
221 and ways of “performing” faith-freed-to-love that neither subtracts from what is essential to our
222 confession nor adds new essentials to it. We seek rather to perform our catholic faith with our
223 ever-reforming Lutheran attitude. Indeed, we believe on theological grounds that we best
224 “perform” God’s character—that is, practice faithful discipleship—by sharpening the shape and
225 emphasizing the content of public diaconal ministry.

226

227 Many write today about what is required for the church’s renewal. This is not a new practice. All
228 church history is composed of new voices singing variations on one song and of what happens

230 when the song becomes unrecognizable. Sometimes creativity for its own sake turns the ear
231 away, particularly when what is familiar and loved is not honored. Sometimes ancient and not so
232 ancient rote does the same with what may be very familiar, but appears to have no bearing on
233 one's present personal and public life. This inevitable dynamic of history is recognized and
234 respected by the Lutheran movement's principle of *semper reformanda*, always reforming. We
235 reform freely so to be true both to the Gospel and to present ears, eyes, mouths: all persons and
236 all senses, wholly. We change—which is to reaffirm daily, for *this* day our baptismal covenant—
237 so to perform our faith expressly for *this* day like no other day. We change to address and love
238 *this* day because we really do want to face head-on “wearied religions” and a “wearied planet”
239 and because we believe “God does not heal without human hands.”⁵ We believe down deep in
240 our life in God that we are meant for neighbor-service, *diakonia*. And we need servants who are
241 both neighbor-servants and exemplars, hands-on diaconal coaches to be with us and all fellow-
242 sufferers wherever we are on the daily journey. For today, this age-old expression of Christian
243 service may indeed look like something wholly in keeping with our history and yet emergent
244 with a new vigor and face for this day.

245

246 Conclusion

247 We believe that the world, as well as this church, would be better served were a new unified
248 diaconal ministry to stand alongside the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. It would be a ministry
249 that is “flexible enough to offer a wide range of ministries and models for supporting the
250 baptized in daily life.”⁶ Such a diaconal ministry is biblically rooted, historically informed,
251 ecumenically related, and missionally driven. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America lives
252 from a theological foundation that allows for a Ministry of Word and Service. More
253 significantly, this foundation and the trajectory it has propelled in the ELCA’s young life
254 commend that we adopt and adapt such a ministry for the empowering of all who proclaim-give
255 thanks-and serve as the right rhythm of our life together in God.

256

257 *This text authored by Rev. Dr. Duane Larson was adopted by the Word and Service Task Force.*

¹ Marc Lienhard, “Luther and the Beginnings of the Reformation,” in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*. New York: Crossroad, 1988, 291ff.

² “Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague (1527),” *Luther’s Works*, 43: 119-38.

³ “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church,” (1520), *Luther’s Works*, 36: 11-57.

⁴ For an excellent overview of the topic, see Susan Wilds McArver, “A History of the Diaconate,” in Duane Larson (ed.), *From Word and Sacrament, Renewed Vision for Diaconal Ministry* (ELCA: 1999).

⁵ See Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion, The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (San Francisco: Harper One, 2012) 239.

⁶ Stephen P. Bouman, *From the Parish for the Life of the World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) 219.

Here a Deacon, There a Deacon, Everywhere a Deacon, Deacon

A Brief Sampling of Current Uses of the Role/Title “Deacon” in the ELCA and Beyond
Bishop Bill Gafkjen on behalf of the Transition & Communication Sub-Group + July 2014

This document was prepared for internal use in support of the work of the ELCA Word and Service Ministry Task Force. Three intentions its shape its content: (1) to briefly explore current uses of the term "deacon" in ELCA contexts, (2) to similarly explore current uses of the term in ecumenical, especially full communion partner, contexts, and (3) to provide a descriptive paragraph that highlights the distinctive characteristics of ELCA Rostered Deacons in reference to those uses and contexts.

A cursory exploration of synodical documents and congregational websites accompanied by conversation with a variety of folks across the church suggests that the word, title, and role of deacon is alive and well in the life of the church, albeit in a wide variety of expressions and tasks. The forms and levels of training and formation, as well as public or ecclesial recognition of this ministry, also vary greatly, from local/congregational to synodical, from informal recognition to a freestanding graduation ceremony, from volunteer service to churchwide rostering. The rites of initiation also vary. What follows is a small, simple sampling, not an exhaustive list, either in breadth or depth.

ELCA Local, Synod, and Churchwide

ELCA Deaconess. As a consecrated roster of the ELCA, “the Deaconess Community consists of theologically trained, professionally prepared women, called to ministry and service by congregations and synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.” Theological training of ELCA Deaconesses typically includes a Masters of Arts in Religion or similar degree. Deaconesses are engaged in intentional community with one another, are professionally trained for particular vocations, and serve under call from a congregation, synod council, ELCA church council, or other agent of the denomination with a focus on service ministry.

ELCA Diaconal Minister. As a consecrated roster of the ELCA, Diaconal Ministers offer a ministry of Word and service, sharing the hope of Christ, helping where there is need, and equipping others for healing and justice in the world. Diaconal Ministers hold a theological Masters Degree and training or degree work in a professionally focused area. Diaconal Ministers serve under call through agencies, institutions, and traditional church programs as they build bridges between the church and the world.

Synodical or Parish Deacon. A number of ELCA synods have established some form of synodical deacon (e.g. Upper New York, Florida Bahamas, Metro Chicago). In most cases, synodical deacons are trained through a two-year program of study and formation (usually using an extra-synodical program like Diakonia; see description below). After completion of the course, participants are considered for certification by synod leadership and serve in congregations, most often their home congregation, engaging particular tasks under supervision and in partnership with the congregation’s pastor. In most cases, the deacon’s term of service is coterminous with that of the congregation’s pastor. In some synods such deacons may serve on behalf of synod leadership at the conference or synodical level, primarily engaged in administration and non-sacramental ministry (e.g. preaching, liturgical leadership) for and with congregations. Most such deacons serve either as volunteers or under contract with a small stipend.

Congregational Deacon. Some ELCA congregations use the term “deacon” to indicate all elected members of the congregation’s leadership council. In other congregations deacons are specific congregation council members who are tasked primarily with some aspect of the administration of the congregation or worship leadership. Some congregations use the term deacon for those lay people (whether elected or not) who assist in leading worship at or around the Table in some way (e.g. assisting ministers, communion servers, etc.). While some of these folks might receive training in partnership with other congregations, most are elected or appointed, trained, and installed by and for the local congregation.

Independent Lutheran Organizations

Lutheran Deaconess Association Deaconess/Deacon. A pan-Lutheran organization located in Valparaiso, IN, the LDA says that it “prepares women and men for ministries of service to those in need in the church and world, supports deaconesses and deacons in their various ministries, affirms the whole people of God in their own diaconal service, and assists the church in its diaconal mission.” Upon completion of a non-degree program of coursework, community life, internship, and formation LDA deaconesses and deacons (a recent addition) are consecrated by the LDA community for their ministry in the world, which may occur through formalized call, employment, volunteer ministry, or in daily life. Those who are members of the ELCA and desire to be rostered typically also move through candidacy for commissioning as an Associate in Ministry.

Diakonia Program. Operating in one form or another and through various relationships with a number of synods and their leadership, the independent Diakonia program describes itself as “a two-year process of spiritual formation and theological education for baptized members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or anyone wishing in good faith to study these teachings...to provide each participant the opportunity to discover their God-given gifts, strengthen their faith and their abilities, and give them purpose within their own congregations, synods, and the church-wide body of Christ.” Some synods use this program as the primary locus of education and formation for synodical deacons. Others in which the program operates do not have a formal relationship with it and most graduates (who sometimes call themselves deacon or deaconess) do not move through a process of synodical or other recognition for more public ministry. Rather, in these situations they either serve on a volunteer basis in their home congregations or simply continue to grow in their own daily discipleship.

Whatever the particular role or context, on the whole those who bear the title or role of deacon in the ELCA carry responsibility for some form of service ministry. Some also proclaim the Word through preaching and teaching in local settings. Very few deacons or deaconesses preside at Holy Communion or Holy Baptism, and then only under episcopal authorization. Many also carry the stated responsibility to empower, equip, and encourage the whole people of God for their own daily baptismal vocation of service to the neighbor and care of creation.

ELCA Deacon. This last responsibility of deacons, to empower and equip others, is a keystone for the emerging ministry of ELCA Deacons of Word and Service. Whatever their particular role or context – whether deeply engaged in proclamation and service in non-ecclesial contexts or serving in congregational or other “church” settings – every ELCA Deacon’s two-fold focus is to serve the neighbor and to empower, equip and encourage the people of God for their daily baptismal vocation of service to the neighbor and care of creation. This ministry is understood to be distinct from, alongside, and in mutual complementarity with the ministries of ELCA Pastors of Word and Sacrament. Consequently, the “new” unified ELCA Roster of Deacons consists of those who have

been identified, formed, trained, called, and consecrated or ordained for ministries of Word and Service throughout the whole church through locally stewarded churchwide processes. ELCA Deacons are supported by and accountable to churchwide standards and commitments as well as the synodical and local accountabilities and support of the ministries they serve. ELCA Deacons have responsibility and opportunity for engagement in broader ecumenical ministerial and ecclesial relationships. Unlike all other “non-rostered” deacons in ELCA settings, the ministry and rostering of ELCA Deacons may be recognized and transferred across synods and institutions.

Deacons in a Troika of Ecumenical Full Communion Contexts

Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church has two formally defined orders of deacon: Transitional deacons and those whose lifelong call is to serve as deacon. The former, transitional deacons, are those who are preparing for ordination to “the presbyterate,” or priesthood. The latter are more relevant to this discussion.

It is difficult to find a clear, universally applicable description of the role of ordained deacons in the Episcopal Church. This is due, in part, to the responsibility of each diocese to shape this role (and preparation for it) according to its needs. Nevertheless, there are some common foundations.

For example, the Canon to the Ordinary¹ of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis characterizes the role of deacons this way: “The mission of the deacon is to be a holy person who walks out of the church to deeply encounter the world at large, and then walks back in to explain to those inside what was discovered. The lay people and priests are seen more as the evangelists to the world, while the deacon is the conscience of the church, reminding us of our role as servants to those outside the doors.”

Each diocese determines its own requirements for the formation and education of deacons. The most common practice today is for deacons to be trained within the diocese over a multi-year period using volunteer instructors (both ordained and lay people), meeting on weekends and evenings.

Although deacons are not compensated for their ministry, they are considered clergy, voting in conventions as clergy, filling clergy positions on boards and commissions that have defined clergy and lay seats, being accountable to all clergy disciplinary canons. They are expected to dress when on duty in a clerical collar and to vest as a deacon at worship. Only priests and bishops can offer sacramental blessings and consecrate the elements of the Eucharist, but deacons are supposed to have the first priority over other clergy in reading the Gospel at Eucharist, and also offer the dismissal at the end. By rubrics deacons are supposed to offer the Prayers of the People, but in practice many congregations prefer that a layperson offer the prayers. Otherwise, deacons are not supposed to take strong leadership roles in congregations except in social justice/outreach ministries.

The Episcopal canons dictate that once a deacon has been ordained “the Bishop, after consultation with the Deacon and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, may assign a Deacon to one or more congregations, other communities of faith or non-parochial ministries. Deacons assigned to a congregation or other community of faith act under the authority of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight in all matters concerning the congregation.”

Presbyterian Church – USA

Following the development of Reformed ecclesiology, the Presbyterian Church – USA ordains persons to three ordered ministries: ministers, elders, and deacons. These three ministries represent two ecclesial functions: ministries of the Word performed by presbyters (pastors and elders) and ministries of service performed by deacons. Deacons are elected and ordained by and serve in a local congregation for particular, renewal terms as part of a board of deacons or as individual deacons elected to particular

positions of responsibility. They lead the local church in its ministries of compassion (distributing aid, caring directly for the poor, the sick, refugees, and prisoners), and justice (working for equity in society). Deacons often also assume other duties as assigned by the congregation's session (council), including worship responsibilities like assisting with Holy Communion. Many deacons are also tasked with care of congregational members and their particular needs or work with new member welcome and incorporation.

According to the denomination's *Book of Order*, once deacons are ordained they remain ordained, even if not currently serving on the congregation's session or board of deacons. In fact, they remain so as long as they are active members of any congregation of the denomination, unless and until the ordination is revoked through disciplinary or other formal measures.

United Methodist Church

The United Methodist *Book of Discipline* (paragraph 303.2) says that "Men and women who respond to God's call to lead in service and to equip others for this ministry through teaching proclamation, and worship and who assist elders² in the administration of the sacraments are ordained deacon." Deacons are said to be called by God, authorized by the church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifelong public ministry of Word and Service. This is expressed in teaching and proclaiming the Word and assisting elders in administration of (but not presiding at) Baptism and Eucharist in worship, forming and nurturing disciples, conducting marriages and funerals, and both serving in the world and creating opportunities for other disciples to become aware of and to address the needs and hopes of the world.

United Methodist deacons may work primarily in congregations or they may work primarily in settings like hospitals, social service agencies, etc. When a deacon serves in a setting beyond the local congregation, such a deacon is to be given a "secondary" appointment by her or his bishop to a congregation where they "take missional responsibility for leading other Christians into ministries of service." In rare and carefully defined situations, a deacon may be authorized by the bishop to preside at Holy Communion in the absence of an elder.

United Methodist Deacons are categorized as clergy. In addition to engaging a candidacy process, all deacons, like all elders, are required to complete a minimum of 24 semester hours of theological education at an approved seminary. This or may not be part of a degree program.

The United Methodist Church once consecrated Diaconal Ministers, but no longer consecrates new ones. Diaconal Ministers were understood to be laypeople who lead in service ministries. This lay ministry now falls under the church's office of home missionaries and deaconesses.

Finally, A Brief Word About the Word Deacon and Gender

It is interesting to note that in nearly all of the above usages of the term "deacon," the word is used in a non-gender specific manner. In other words, "deacon" refers to both men and women who serve in that office. The most common exceptions appear to be where there are established communities that consist primarily or exclusively of women. In those cases, the term "deaconess" is used for women and, as in the case of the Lutheran Deaconess Association, "deacon" is employed for men as they have recently been added to the community.

The non-gender specific use of the term deacon appears to be the most common norm over time and geography. This practice appears to follow that of the apostle Paul, who, for example, does not use a feminine form in referring to "our sister Phoebe, a deacon [diakonon] of the church" in Romans 16:1. It is also of interest to note that in many aspects of contemporary North American life, the use of feminine forms of many titles or roles has begun to disappear or to even be regarded as inappropriate. For example, those who travel by air are no longer tended to by "stewards" and "stewardesses," but by

“flight attendants.” Note also the increasingly frequent transition in public discourse from the use of “actor/actress” to “actor” and from “waiter/waitress” to “server.” In some other public roles, feminine forms have nearly never been used in North American culture. For example, a female physician is not referred to as “doctress” and, of course, no feminine suffix is added to “pastor” in most traditions.

Consequently, as it carries consistent, persistent biblical, historical, ecclesial connection of usage for the sort of servant (diakonia) ministry engaged by those who hold this office, the term “deacon” appears most appropriate for contemporary usage with a new unified roster of Word and Service in the ELCA, which will include women and men alike. Use of the term and title “deaconess” will likely continue for those who have used it in the past and may also be used by some women who enter this roster in the future. This need not be cause for conflict or correction, but, rather, may be honored as yet another expression of the rich diversity of life and ministry in the Spirit and opportunity for conversation and clarity about this important role in the life of the church.

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A smattering of documents and sources consulted:

Colleagues in judicatory offices of full-communion denominations

Constitution and Canons, Episcopal Church -

<https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/648>

diakonia – <http://www.thediakoniaprogram.org>

ELCA Candidacy Manual and other documents –

<http://www.elca.org/en/Our-Work/Leadership/Vocation-Become-a-Leader/Lay-Rosters>

Episcopal Diocese of Kansas –

http://www.episcopal-ks.org/resources/documents/Deacon_guidelines_2008.pdf

Lutheran Deaconess Association members and web site – <http://www.thelda.org>

Upstate New York Synod, ELCA –

<http://upstatenysynod.org/download/deacons/Brief%20Guide%20for%20Pastors%202-13.pdf>

Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church, USA –

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/ministers/ordination/>

The Presbyterian Deacon: An Essential Guide by Earl S. Johnson, Jr.

United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry –

<http://www.gbhem.org/clergy/deacons>

¹ Similar to a synodical Assistant to the Bishop in the ELCA.

² United Methodist elders correlate, essentially, to ELCA pastors.

Recommendation of the Conference of Bishops to the ELCA Church Council
for an Expanded Conversation Around Leadership within this Church

We as the Conference of Bishops offer a word of deep gratitude to the Word and Service Task Force and the Entrance Rite Working Group. We recognize their many hours of fruitful work. Reflecting on that work has helped the Conference to identify even broader, more foundational questions about the church and its mission. Consequently, we ask that the church council expand the conversation and discernment across the church. This conversation and discernment would revolve around the various leadership needs within this church as we move together into the future. The Conference of Bishops supports moving forward the work of unifying the Word and Service rosters at the 2016 churchwide assembly while at the same time asking that a decision on the appropriate entrance rite and related issues be delayed to a future date.

We live in a time of incredible change within the church and world. Among many congregations worship numbers are declining, age of congregants is increasing, and sustainability is being questioned. Seminarian debt is on the rise while at the same time the number of bi-vocational and part-time ministries is on the increase. We also recognize that new patterns of ministries and opportunities for mission will continue to emerge. At issue is what kind of leadership is needed within Christ's church, the ELCA.

As this conference entered into discussion about the faithful work of the Word and Service Task Force and the Entrance Rite Working Group additional questions emerged:

- What forms of leadership might best serve God's mission?
- Do we have a theology that unleashes servant ministry in the world?
- How do we as a church more fully honor the gifts of ministers of Word and Service?
- What is the future for ministers of Word and Service in the face of changing opportunities for call?

The work of the Theological Education Advisory Committee also raises questions about leadership, educational standards, and lay theological education.

We suggest:

- that the time leading into and during 2016 churchwide assembly be used to facilitate broad-based discussion and discernment around leadership within this church.
- that voting members be equipped and empowered to continue these conversations in their congregations, conferences and synods.
- that we as a church work together to define issues of leadership and refine recommendations about rosters and entrance rites through a process of intentional, open conversation seeking God's guidance for the sake of the world.

March 10, 2015

Women of the ELCA

Linda Post Bushkofsky, Executive Director

The women's organization continues its strong ministries in global education, scholarships, racial justice, grants, Bible study, leadership and stewardship. The organization's award-winning publications assist and inspire. The work of the churchwide staff of Women of the ELCA is to support the organization's participants as they live out our mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

Women Building Global Community

Planning is in full swing for travel to Tanzania, November 5-14, 2015, in the organization's program known as Women Building Global Community. The focus of the seminar will be daily discipleship and community. We will engage women in their daily ministry at Mwangaza's Binti/Mama Initiative that trains intergenerational groups of women on issues of health, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, conflict resolution and gender violence, several Lutheran World Relief projects, and the impact of women on the economy through women's co-ops and small businesses like Ilava, which means, "It Can Be Done!"

New approach to Bible study

The organization's magazine has published a Bible study since its inception. Most recently, it has been a nine-month study and a three-month summer study with a separate, for-purchase leader guide. The Bible study is now taking on a new shape, which we hope will encourage new women to join a study group, something they might not have been willing to do if it required a nine month commitment. Instead of a nine-month study and a three-month summer study, we will run several studies during the year. We will no longer publish a separate leader guide and companion Bible. Over the years, many readers have asked that the leader information be contained right in the magazine, and now we will do that.

We hope that by shortening the studies, we can get new authors who could not make a commitment to write a longer study. Traditionally, we have asked a scholar, often retired, to write the nine-month study. Typically this person has the time, experience and academic background to write a study and leader book, as well as the freedom to travel to Bible study introductory events. However, *Gather* is finding it increasingly difficult to identify new and diverse writers who are able to commit to such a large project. We think readers will enjoy hearing the perspectives of a larger, more diverse group of writers.

The Shape of the Year

Summer: Three sessions (June, July/August)

Fall: Three sessions (September through November)

Advent/Christmas: Shorter seasonal devotional (December)

Winter: Four sessions, probably on a book of the Bible (January/February through April)

Spring: One session, an intergenerational lesson (May)

In the summer of 2015, Emma Crossen, Women of the ELCA's former stewardship director, is writing a three-session study on giving entitled *No Catchy Slogans*

In the fall of 2015, Liv Larson Andrews, pastor of Salem Lutheran Church in the West Central neighborhood of Spokane, Washington, will write *Slow Faith*, a three-session study on speed and slowness, and how the Kingdom of God moves slowly, yet we are asked to move with ever greater speed.

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In the winter of 2015–16, our four-session Bible study is *Christian Citizenship 101*, an exploration of the book of Philippians, written by E. Louise Williams and Phyllis N. Kersten, two regular contributors to *Gather* (and our former publication *Lutheran Woman Today*).

Katie's Fund in action

The Katharina von Bora Luther Endowment Fund, fondly known as Katie's Fund, is making it possible for 12 young women to participate in travel to the Holy Land this year as part of the 2015 Peace Not Walls Young Adult Trips, an initiative of ELCA Young Adult Ministry and the Peace Not Walls Campaign. Six of the women have Women of the ELCA connections and six do not. Katie's Fund, our 18 year-old endowment, supports leadership development, global partnerships and ministry in daily life.

Staffing changes

In February, Terri Lackey became director for communication, a position that had been vacant for some time. Terri had served as managing editor of *Gather* magazine. Elizabeth Hunter, formerly of *The Lutheran*, *The Little Lutheran* and *The Little Christian*, is now the managing editor of *Gather*.

Training events

The annual Conference of Synodical Presidents was held in February, providing resources, leadership training, fellowship and worship for the presidents of our 64 synodical organizations. Treasurer's training will take place May 1-2, 2015.

Additional information about Women of the ELCA can be found at any of these locations:

- www.womenoftheelca.org
- www.welcatg.org
- www.boldcafe.org
- www.Facebook.com/womenoftheelca
- www.Twitter.com/womenoftheelca
- www.Pinterest.com/womenoftheelca

Publishing House of the ELCA (Augsburg Fortress)

Submitted by Beth A. Lewis

Strategic Focus

Augsburg Fortress, the ministry of publishing of the ELCA, has made significant changes in recent years in response to the shifting landscapes of both North American church life and the publishing industry. These are exciting, but challenging times for denominational publishers. To address these rapidly changing needs, we have focused our ministry and business of publishing in these categories and under these three imprints: worship & music resources and Lutheran faith formation resources from [Augsburg Fortress](#), ecumenical faith formation resources from [sparkhouse](#), and books and digital resources for adult learners and leaders from [Fortress Press](#).

Resources for Congregations (Worship and Music)

The Augsburg Fortress and churchwide worship teams continue to work closely together to craft worship resources specifically for ELCA congregations and other ministries, especially through the Evangelical Lutheran Worship and Sundays and Seasons resource families. In November 2014, we published a bilingual version of Evangelical Lutheran Worship Setting Seven: [Santa Comunión/Holy Communion](#). Later this year, we will provide major enhancements to [sundaysandseasons.com](#), which has served the ELCA as a rich and reliable online worship planner since 2005.

Ecumenical Co-Publishing Venture for Congregations

Augsburg Fortress is delighted to partner with [Liturgical Press](#), the Roman Catholic publishing house, in the co-publication of [One Hope: Re-Membering the Body of Christ](#), a resource to help Lutheran and Catholic communities walk together, recognizing and nourishing unity at a grassroots level.

Resources for Congregations (Faith Formation)

The major curricular resources launched in 2014 by sparkhouse, our ecumenical faith formation resource development team, continue to gain enthusiastic users across the ELCA and among our full communion partner congregations. Congregations have the opportunity to try out our sparkhouse children's Sunday school resources for free on Sample Lesson Sunday, April 12. By registering, they may select from among any of our [sparkhouse Sunday school curricula](#) – Spark: Activate Faith, Holy Moly, Connect, or Whirl – and receive a full lesson from the sparkhouse Sunday school curriculum of their choice. They will receive everything they need, for every student, for free! Congregational leaders should register at <http://www.samplelessonsunday.com> by March 23. For those interested in youth ministry resources, we will have a similar program, Sample Lesson Week, an opportunity to experience a [sparkhouse youth curriculum](#) of your choice for free. Youth leaders simply choose the curriculum they would like to try and register at <http://www.samplelessonweek.com/> by April 10. We will send all the materials needed for every student and leader in the entire youth group. On March 30, we will send registrants an email with a link so they may preview all of the lesson materials ahead of time. On or before April 20, a package of Sample Lesson Week materials will be mailed to those who have registered for Sample Lesson Week, which will run May 3-9.

One of the many requests we have heard, from across the Church, is for ways to cost-effectively reach families with children who may not regularly participate in church life. We are very excited to announce a forthcoming initiative: sparkhouse Family! Content from our highly engaging and successful faith formation curricula for children will be adapted for use in the home. You may watch for more details at <http://sparkhouse.org>, which will launch in the next few weeks. These new books, Bibles, and videos will begin to appear in late summer 2015.

Resources for Higher Education

Fortress Press continues to expand the number of books and digital resources published for adult learners and leaders. In just the past couple of years, Fortress Press has expanded from approximately 70 titles per year to 130 in 2014. In January, we published Mark Granquist's [Lutherans in America: A New History](#). Through this lively and engaging history, he brings to light not only the institutions that Lutherans founded and sustained, but the people who lived within them. This book shows the complete story; not only of the policies and the politics, but the piety and the practical experience of the Lutheran men and women who lived and worked in the American context. Later this year, we are launching a new Fortress Press initiative: Theology for the People. This new initiative will offer adult readers inside, or outside of the academic setting, books that are culturally engaged and grounded in fresh, substantive, and accessible theological reflection. Watch for more information at <http://fortresspress.com> this fall.

A few of our many new Fortress Press publications since the November church council meeting include: (Both means both Print & eBook formats)

- [Reclaiming Participation: Christ as God's Life for All](#); Cynthia Peters Anderson; Both
- [The Histories of the Latin American Church: A Handbook](#); Joel M. Cruz; Both
- [Exploring Church History](#); Derek Cooper; Both
- [Exploring the Life and Calling](#); Gary Black Jr.; Both
- [John](#); Karoline M. Lewis; Both
- [Thinking Theologically](#); Eric D. Barreto, editor; Both
- [Creativity as Sacrifice: Toward a Theological Model for Creativity in the Arts](#); James M. Watkins; Both
- [Environment, Economy, and Christian Ethics: Alternative Views on Christians and Markets](#); Alistair Young; Both
- [Cleansed Lepers, Cleansed Hearts: Purity and Healing in Luke-Acts](#); Pamela Shellberg, Both
- [This Risen Existence: The Spirit of Easter](#); Paula Gooder; Both
- [Everyday God: The Spirit of the Ordinary](#); Paula Gooder; Both
- [The Church in Act: Lutheran Liturgical Theology in Ecumenical Conversation](#); Maxwell E. Johnson; Both

New Office

We are delighted with our new office at 510 Marquette Avenue South in downtown Minneapolis, which we moved into October 2014. Should your travels bring you to the Twin Cities, please let us know so that we may welcome you and provide you with a tour of our new workspace!

Summary

Thank you for your interest in and continuing support of your ministry of publishing! We welcome suggestions from our partners in ministry from across this church. Please send your thoughts or questions to Beth Lewis at ceo@augsburgfortress.org.

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Portico Benefit Services Digest of Board Actions

Submitted by: The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, President and CEO

Meeting Dates: February 27-28, 2015

Category I: Policies with an impact beyond the unit which require Church Council approval.

Approved two nominees for one open position to complete the Slate of Nominees (see below) to serve a one-year term on Board of Trustees for action by the ELCA Church Council at its April 2015 meeting.

Nominee	Expertise	Region-Synod	Gender	Member	ELCA Requirement
John Robert Hoffman	Financial Services	3-G	M	No	Lay
Michael R. Weir, Jr.	Finance/CPA	4-D	M	No	Lay

FOR INFORMATION –from February 2014 meeting and provided to the ELCA Church Council as part of the April 2014 Digest:

Approved the Slate of Nominees for Continuation of Service for 2015-2016 (see below), which will be provided to the ELCA Church Council for action at its April 2015 meeting.

- Janette E. Drew
- Lisa A. Kro
- Kathleen K. Mooney
- Jill A. Schumann

Category II: Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan

Retroactively effective January 1, 2015

Approved amendment to provide coverage for early intensive behavioral intervention for pervasive development disorders and autism spectrum disorders, including, but not limited to: Intensive Early Intervention Behavioral Therapy Services (IEIBTS); Intensive Behavioral Intervention (IBI); and Lovass Therapy, subject to prior authorization by the Medical and Mental Health Benefits Administrator.

Approved the resolution relating to a private prisons social criteria investment screen.

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Received amendments approved by the President:

January 5, 2015

ELCA Disability Benefits Plan – Section 2.01, ELCA Retirement Plan – Section 2.20, and

ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan – Section 2.01

Amending to conform plan language to the administrative practice regarding who can be an Eligible Employer.

December 17, 2014

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 3.05

Amending to align billing practices with plan processes related to waiver of health benefits coverage.

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 4.01

Amending to delete language that narrows the definition of Eligible Child.

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 5.02

Amending to increase the contribution limit on health flexible spending accounts (FSA) from \$2,500 to \$2,550, to be consistent with the IRS limit.

Category III. Other procedures and board actions.

Approved the election of the President, the Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, for a new term, commencing October 1, 2015 until September 30, 2019.

Received the report on the 2015 Trustee Conflict or Duality of Interest and Code of Conduct.

Received Portico's February 2015 Management Report and all Committee Reports, en bloc.

Portico Benefit Services

Submitted by: The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, President and CEO

This summary from Portico Benefit Services provides a brief overview of several topics, including: 2015 Open Enrollment update, Portico's impact at synod assemblies, Anthem data breach, ELCA Clergy Facebook group, new disability benefit provider, legal update, stewardship, investment market news, ELCA Social Purpose funds, and the 2015-2017 Strategic Plan.

2015 Enrollment Update

With great partnership and support from synods, sponsoring organizations, and members, Portico Benefit Services successfully completed 2015 Open Enrollment. Here is a brief recap of the results:

Sponsoring organizations providing a health benefit plan option: 7,085

Platinum+: 167	Gold+: 6,347 (90%)
Silver+: 374	Bronze+: 197

Organizations changing their health benefit plan option from 2014: 384

- Those opting for a higher-value option or making a lateral move: 162 (for example, Gold+ to Silver+ level A or B)
- Those opting for a lower-value option: 222

Members making elections on myPortico: 13,410

Active members: 12,133	On disability: 325
Coverage continuation while non-sponsored: 952	(for example, retirees up to age 65, on leave from call, lay coverage continuation)

- Members choosing to buy up to a higher-value health option: 316
- Members making pre-tax retirement contributions: 5,870
This year, an additional 8% of members opted to make a pre-tax contribution, bringing the total to 47% of all eligible members. Since 2013, the number of eligible members making contributions has doubled.
- Members making tax-advantaged account elections:
Health FSA: 4,011 (18% growth v. 2014)
Dependent (Day) Care FSA: 308 (8% growth v. 2014)
Member HSA contributions: 416 (76% growth v. 2014)

Retirees age 65+ choosing one of three ELCA Medicare-Primary options: 7,257

Synod Assemblies

Portico leaders and regional representatives appreciate the opportunity to have a presence at synod assembly. Even a few minutes in front of those gathered often leads to good connections with members and laity. This month you'll receive an Annual Report that we hope can be included in your assembly materials.

Anthem Data Breach

A small percentage of ELCA health plan members were affected by the recent cyber-attack on Anthem Inc., the country's second-biggest health insurer. Although ELCA health plan members aren't Anthem members, our ELCA-Primary medical benefits administrator, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, partners with Anthem to serve members in some states. Portico worked with Blue Cross to promptly notify affected members via mail and encourage them to enroll in free credit monitoring services provided by Anthem.

ELCA Clergy Facebook Group

As part of our commitment to be with our members where they gather, Portico has become active on the ELCA Clergy Facebook page, which has almost 6,000 participants. The Rev. Richard Bruesehoff provides tactical responses to technical questions and the Rev. Jeffrey Thiemann comments on strategic and policy questions. While it isn't the right place to publicly address an individual's private concerns, we continue to get good feedback from our members that they appreciate our joining the conversation, and hanging in there even when emotions run high.

New Disability Benefit Provider

Beginning June 1, 2015, Liberty Mutual will administer the ELCA disability benefit previously administered by Aetna. Liberty Mutual emphasizes personal case management and timely decisions and claim resolution. To support a seamless transition, we are implementing a communication strategy that provides bishops and synod staffs with the information they need to answer questions, and targeted communication to our 325 members currently receiving disability benefits.

Legal Update

The Church Alliance (made up of 38 church benefit organization CEOs) strives to ensure that legislative and regulatory initiatives continue to fully address, protect, and support the unique nature of retirement and health benefit plans operated by churches, religious institutions, and affiliated organizations.

- We filed an amicus brief in the lawsuit brought against the IRS by the Freedom from Religion Foundation regarding the clergy housing allowance. The appeals court ruled in favor of the IRS, preserving the housing allowance.
- We have strong sponsors in the Senate working to bring the Church Plan Clarification Act to a vote. This bill would make necessary technical corrections to federal laws, giving church retirement plans similar benefits to secular plans. Most important for the ELCA is a provision that allows church plans to auto-enroll retirement plan members for pre-tax retirement contributions.
- We are developing the Church Health Plan Clarification Act. This bill would allow us to create a church health plan exchange where Portico plan members with low household incomes would be able to use the same Premium Tax Credits now only available on the secular state health insurance exchanges.

Stewardship

Operating and capital expenses were under budget for the full year ending Dec. 31, 2014. As a result:

- Our retirement plan expense ratio, 0.66%, was well below the 0.88% benchmark.
- Our health plan expense ratio, 10.7%, was also well under the 12% benchmark. When compared to external benchmarks, Portico continues to be among the most efficient stewards of health dollars in the U.S.

Investment Market News

Our investment funds performed well on balance in 2014.

- Our funds are diversified across multiple investment management organizations, and more than 70% of those investment managers exceeded their benchmarks during 2014. This was not the case for most of the investment industry. Morningstar reported that fewer than 20% of U.S. stock investment managers exceeded their benchmarks during 2014.
- With few exceptions, our actively-managed funds performed better than comparable mutual fund peer group benchmarks during the year, in some cases by a wide margin. Importantly, this also holds for 10-year and longer time periods.

As an investor advocate, Portico filed shareholder resolutions with companies on behalf of plan members to address issues such as greenhouse gas emissions, recycling, sustainability reporting, human rights, and board diversity.

ELCA Social Purpose Funds

Portico is planning to enhance the ELCA Social Purpose funds to better carry out the mission of the ELCA. We are now researching *social impact first* investments that prioritize social impact over financial return, and will gradually add these investments after Nov. 1, 2015. With a modestly lower return/higher risk possible, they will represent no more than 10% of each Social Purpose fund.

Strategic Plan

In November 2014, our Board of Trustees approved Portico's 2015-2017 Strategic Plan, *Build a Foundation for Growth*. First objective: Serve our current membership by maintaining or improving the current high levels of engagement and experience. Second objective: Build on the first by exploring opportunities to extend our product and service offerings beyond ELCA employers.

Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA (MIF)

Submitted by Eva M. Roby, President and CEO

Financial Update

The Mission Investment Fund, the lending ministry of the ELCA, continues to serve the congregations, ministries and members of the ELCA by providing investments and loans for building projects. MIF's total assets increased slightly to \$661.1 million as of December 31, 2014 from \$660.1 million at year-end 2013. Net assets, or equity, rose to \$192.2 million at December 31, 2014, up from \$190.2 million at year-end 2013. MIF's capital ratio remains steady at 29 percent, a firm indication of this financial institution's continuing strength and stability.

Loans to congregations and ELCA-related ministries for capital projects decreased to \$461.3 million at December 31, 2014 from \$464.4 million at year-end 2013. The number of loans outstanding was 786, even with the year-end 2014 number. Investment obligations remained even at \$464.2 million.

Partnerships

Throughout 2014 and into 2015, MIF has been actively reaching out and strengthening partnerships throughout the ELCA and with our ecumenical partners.

MIF continues to work closely with the ELCA churchwide organization to create an ELCA-sponsored credit union to offer consumer lending as well as a wide range of federally insured financial products for members and ministries. We are awaiting approval of a credit union charter from the National Credit Union Administration.

At the request of the ELCA's Church Council, MIF began exploring an administrative process for handling payments from congregations to synods. After considerable study, we concluded that a national Financial Services Organization (FSO) serving the synods with a wide range of accounting and financial reporting capabilities could be beneficial. We believe such a program would reduce overall costs or allow funds to be reallocated to other needs. It would also result in improved internal controls, the elimination of the cost of separate synod audits, and reporting of consistent individual synod data and aggregate data for comparison. We are currently working to develop a pilot FSO.

MIF is collaborating once again with the ELCA's Youth Gathering team to help sponsor a number of deserving congregations in the Detroit area. MIF is providing grants for lodging and meals so that the youth and youth leaders in these congregations can attend the Youth Gathering in their own vicinity. As always, MIF will host a booth in the Interaction Area and sponsor a convenient, onsite Service Center where youth leaders will be able to cash checks on the congregation's MIF Youth Ministry Demand Investment accounts.

The Mission Investment Fund continues to participate in loans for Episcopal ministries through the Episcopal Church Building Fund (ECBF). We are honored to partner with the ECBF in an upcoming symposium on new trends in growing congregations and building churches. We expect participation by a wide-ranging, ecumenical community.

Looking Ahead

MIF is now in the final year of our current strategic plan, and we are focusing on a key priority: providing an extraordinary customer experience. Throughout this year, we will be developing new strategies for 2016-2018.

Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM)

Submitted by Doug Haugen

The vision of Lutheran Men in Mission is for every man to become a bold, daring follower of Jesus Christ. The mission is, by God's grace, to help congregations build life-changing ministries with men; to strengthen men's faith and relationships for witness and service; and to equip followers of Jesus Christ through events, resources and leadership development.

Events

Since the last church council meeting, Lutheran Men in Mission has conducted two *One Year to Live* retreats. *One Year to Live* is a retreat model developed by Lyman Coleman in cooperation with Lutheran Men in Mission. The retreat is designed to help men take an honest look at their faith, what is keeping them from experiencing God more fully, and what they believe God is calling them to do for the rest of their life within the safety of a small group. The retreat is completely "lay-led" as all the small group facilitators and staff members have been participants in earlier retreats. Over 700 men have now experienced the *One Year to Live* weekend. The intent is to eventually bring this to every synod. Lutheran Men in Mission sponsors a growing number of local events including *High, Deep and Wide* which features inspirational/educational segments interspersed with times of great fun. *Building Men for Christ* is a one-day seminar for rostered and lay leaders designed to teach how to engage more men in the congregation.

Leadership

Lutheran Men in Mission's goal in the next five years is to generate a network that anyone can come to with questions on male issues and the "how-tos" of men's ministry. To that end, we've brought together over 20 of the most creative "out-of-the-box" thinkers on men's ministry from various ethnicities, ages and geographic areas. With just two meetings completed, we are well on our way toward fulfilling that vision through social media, networking within the ELCA and beyond, and developing strategies, resources and events that reach all men for Christ. The *Building Men for Christ* is training designed to help rostered and lay leaders, male and female, to see ministry with and to men as an integral part of overall congregational ministry and helps them reach and activate men for the congregation's ministry and outreach. Like *One Year to Live* and *High, Deep and Wide*, this one day workshop continues to spread to new areas. 500 leaders have now been trained at 27 events. Please go to lutheranmeninmission.org for the updated schedules of *One Year to Live* and *Building Men for Christ*.

Resources

The *Master Builders Bible for Men* continues to be our strongest resource with over 60,000 in circulation. Along with the study questions written in the margins, what makes this resource unique is the 32 page section for men's ministry leaders.

LMM has distributed 25,000 *El Nuevo Testamento* to Spanish-speaking ministries through our synod and congregational men's ministries.

ManTalk is a deck of playing cards designed to help men engage in meaningful (and fun) conversation. Four categories of questions deal with relationships, sports and leisure, lessons and reflections, and ethics and spirituality.

The most recent issue of the *foundations* newsletter focuses on the new life that men and congregations have found in *One Year to Live*. *foundations* is distributed to approximately 8,000 men.

En Bloc Items**I. Board Development Committee****II. Budget and Finance****A. Audit Committee Report****CC ACTION [EN BLOC]****Recommended:**

To approve the report of the ELCA Audit Committee describing their review of the audited financial statements, management letter, and response of management for the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust's year ending December 31, 2014.

III. Executive Committee**IV. Legal and Constitutional Review Committee****A. Approval of Signatories**

In April 1990, the Church Council adopted a resolution [CC90.04.31] authorizing signatures by assistant vice presidents and assistant secretaries for the execution of documents on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

WHEREAS, the Minnesota nonprofit corporation act authorizes the board of directors of a corporation organized thereunder to designate two or more directors to form a committee that shall have authority to act for and on behalf of the board of directors; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that any two of the Bishop (President), Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer are hereby appointed as a committee having the authority of the Church Council in the management of the business or fiscal affairs of this corporation to authorize and approve, on behalf of this corporation, transactions to which it is a party; and be it further

RESOLVED, that any one of the Bishop (President), Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer or in the absence of all of the foregoing, any two of the assistant vice presidents may execute, and the Secretary or any assistant secretary may attest, any document required or desirable in connection with a commercial or fiscal transaction to which this corporation is a party, including but not limited to conveyances, assignments, mortgages, contracts, notes, leases, bills of sale, and financing statements.

Personnel changes have necessitated action to update that resolution.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**Recommended: To adopt the following resolution:**

WHEREAS, in the opinion of legal counsel (Faegre & Benson of Minneapolis), the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act authorizes the Church Council as the board of directors of this corporation to appoint additional officers; and

WHEREAS, this corporation previously has authorized execution of various documents, when necessary, by two assistant vice presidents in the absence of the bishop, vice president, secretary, and treasurer (CC90.4.31*); and

WHEREAS, this corporation previously has appointed various persons to be assistant vice presidents and assistant secretaries of this corporation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the previous appointments of assistant vice presidents and assistant secretaries of this corporation (CC90.04.32, CC92.11.103, CC96.11.61b, CC03.11.85, CC07.11.90, CC08.11.52, CC09.03.39, CC11.08.60, CC12.11.44hh) be and are hereby rescinded; and be it further

RESOLVED, for the sole purpose of executing documents, as specified in CC90.04.31, that the following be and are hereby appointed as assistant vice presidents of this corporation: Pr. M. Wyetta Bullock, Pr. Marcus R. Kunz, Pr. Walter S. May, and Ms. Jodi L. Slattery; and be it further

RESOLVED, for the sole purpose of executing documents, as specified in CC90.04.31, that the following be and are hereby appointed as assistant secretaries of this corporation: Mr. Phillip H. Harris, Ms. Laura L. Knitt, Ms. Mary Beth Nowak, Ms. Sue E. Rothmeyer and Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff.

B. Approval of ELCA Continuing Resolutions

ELCA continuing resolutions 14.41.A15. and 14.41.B15. are being amended to assist in clarification of roles on committees. Continuing resolution 14.41.E15. is being amended to provide more flexibility for term expirations on the Audit Committee.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC – Two-thirds approval required]

Recommended:

To approve the following amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

14.41.A10. replace with 14.41.A15. Budget and Finance Committee

A Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The treasurer of this church shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer. The committee shall prepare and present a comprehensive budget to the Church Council for its consideration and presentation to the Churchwide Assembly. The committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Treasurer.

14.41.B05. replace with 14.41.B15 Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

A Legal and Constitutional Review Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The secretary of this church shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Secretary. This committee shall provide ongoing review of legal and constitutional matters. It shall review all proposed amendments to constitutions, bylaws and continuing resolutions.

14.41.E02 replace with 14.41.E15 Audit Committee

An Audit committee-composed of 5 to 7 members appointed by the Budget and Finance Committee and approved by the Church Council for two year, renewable terms-shall assist the Budget and Finance Committee and the Church Council in fulfilling oversight of the churchwide organization's accounting and financial reporting, internal control systems, and audit functions, consistent with its responsibilities as specified in the charter recommended by the Audit Committee, reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee, and approved by the Church Council. A minimum of two members of the Audit Committee shall be members of the Budget and Finance Committee. The chair of the Audit Committee shall be a member of the Budget and Finance Committee and shall be appointed by the chair of the Budget and

Finance Committee. In consultation with the executive for administration, the Audit Committee approves the appointment and dismissal of the director for internal auditing.

V. Planning and Evaluation

VI. Program and Services

VII. Other Items

A. Church Council Nominations and Elections

The Church Council has the responsibility of electing people to fill terms on boards of Separately Incorporated Ministries (SIM), social ministry organizations, and seminaries. Bylaw Bylaw 8.31.03. outlines basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries. In 2013, transition provisions were made for SIMs. Trustees whose terms expire in 2015 may be eligible for election by the Church Council to serve an extended one-year term, until elections can be held at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. Alternatively, the Church Council, at the request of the SIM board, could elect someone else to serve for that year. Biographical information is provided in [Biographies](#).

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg to a four- year term expiring in 2019: Tommie Robinson and Cheryl Williams;

To elect to the board of directors of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, to a three-year term expiring in September 2018: Rebecca Pallmeyer;

To elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary, to a one-year term expiring in 2016: Aaron Schmalzle;

To elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary, to a two-year term expiring in 2017: Gus Vinajeras and Danette Miller; and

To elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary, to a three-year term expiring in 2018: Judy K. Leidy, Barbara Burgie, and Roderick G.W. Chu.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To authorize the following members of the Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) Board of Trustees to continue serving for 2015-2016: Janette E. Drew, Lisa A. Kro, Kathleen K. Mooney, and Jill A. Schumann.

Revised March 30, 2015

To elect Dan Currell to the Publishing House of the ELCA (Augsburg Fortress, Publishers) Board of Trustees to a one-year term expiring August 2016; and

To authorize the following members of the Publishing House of the ELCA (Augsburg Fortress, Publishers) Board of Trustees to continue serving from August 2015 to August 2016: Bob Hahn, Rosemary Ohles, and Winston Persaud.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To authorize the following member of the Mission Investment Fund Board of Trustees to continue serving for 2015-2016: Warren Hanson.