



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

April 7, 2017

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

FROM: The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, secretary

SUBJECT: Report of Actions of the Church Council (March 31, 2017)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Eaglewood Resort, Itasca, Ill., March 31, 2017. Here is a summary of particular actions along with background information.

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1. CONTINUITY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Background:

The chairs of the Church Council's Budget and Finance, Legal and Constitutional Review, Planning and Evaluation and Program and Services committees serve on the council's Executive Committee. The Church Council terms of the chairs — Mr. Paul G. Archer, Deacon Christine P. Connell, the Rev. Vicki T. Garber and the Rev. Stephen R. Herr — end on Aug. 31, 2017.

At their Spring 2017 meetings, the council's committees elected new chairs to begin their terms on Sept. 1, 2017: Mr. Reid A. Christopherson, Planning and Evaluation Committee; Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson, Program and Services Committee; Mr. James M. Hushagen, Legal and Constitutional Review Committee; and Mr. Clarence M. Smith, Budget and Finance Committee.

Church Council Action:

To declare that the newly elected chairs of the Budget and Finance Committee, Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, Planning and Evaluation Committee and Program and Services Committee shall be members of the Executive Committee of the Church Council beginning on September 1, 2017.

2. MILWAUKEE AS THE SITE FOR THE 2019 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

Background:

ELCA bylaw 13.41.02.h. states that the secretary of this church shall “arrange for and manage churchwide meetings, including the Churchwide Assembly.” Secretary Wm Chris Boerger told the 2016 Churchwide Assembly that the Office of the Secretary would bring a proposal for the time and place of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council’s Spring 2017 meeting, and the information would then be communicated through normal channels.

Church Council action:

To designate [the Wisconsin Center, 400 W. Wisconsin Ave.] Milwaukee, Wisconsin — subject to the satisfactory completion of negotiations in the judgment of the secretary of this church — as the site for the Fifteenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, either August 5-10, 2019, or August 12-17, 2019; and

To authorize the Executive Committee to select another venue, if negotiations are not successful.

3. ELCA FOUNDATION GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

Background:

At its November 2016 meeting, the Church Council established [CC16.11.40] “a task force to consider whether the ELCA Foundation should be separately incorporated from the churchwide organization or otherwise reorganized, and to make recommendations on governance and structure.”

The ELCA Foundation Task Force on Structure and Governance prepared a report outlining the potential structures and presented it to the ELCA Endowment Fund board of trustees at its March 16-17, 2017, meeting.

Church Council action:

To affirm the direction of the ELCA Foundation Task Force on Structure and Governance to move toward a structure in which the deferred giving programs of the ELCA Foundation are transferred to the Endowment Fund of the ELCA; and

To authorize the task force and staff to lay the groundwork for that transition, including the hiring of such advisors and consultants as reasonably necessary, with the goal of bringing a complete proposal, including the necessary implementing continuing resolutions, to the Church Council at its November 2017 meeting.

4. STRATEGY TOWARD AUTHENTIC DIVERSITY WITHIN THE ELCA (MOTION B)

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.05.25]

To refer Motion B to the Church Council.

Motion B: Resolution for a Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council voted [CC15.11.55] to recognize and affirm the extensive efforts of the presiding bishop to call the entire church to confront racism and to add our voice to that call, and to invite the presiding bishop to include the current efforts in a broader, comprehensive strategy toward becoming a racially and ethnically diverse church committed to dismantling racism; and

WHEREAS, Women of the ELCA has developed a wealth of resources and curriculum for racial justice from a biblical and historical perspective and the ethnic specific ministry associations along with the ethnic specific, multicultural and racial justice team have developed strategies for engaging and involving people of color in every aspect of the life of our church; and

WHEREAS, this church is blessed with a breadth and depth of people of color and people with a first language other than English whose voices need to be amplified in order to guide this church in moving forward towards becoming a more inclusive and diverse church; and

WHEREAS, even with these resources and supports, synods and congregations have had difficulty achieving this church’s commitment to diversity as reflected in the continuing resolutions under section 5.01. of the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Churchwide Assembly direct the ELCA Church Council to form a task force for the purpose of developing a comprehensive set of strategies to equip congregations and synods to work towards becoming a more authentically diverse church. The work of the task force shall include but is not limited to:

- consulting with Women of the ELCA, the ethnic specific ministry associations, the multicultural and racial justice team, the Conference of Bishops and ecumenical partners
- collecting existing resources such as those available from Women of the ELCA and the ethnic specific ministry associations and beyond the ELCA
- identifying needs for additional resources
- supporting synods in identifying their specific opportunities for growth
- assessing the effectiveness of diversity strategies across the three expressions church in order to identify strategies that have yielded authentic diversity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the task force be composed of one person from each of the nine regions and one bishop who will serve as co-chair. The composition of the task force shall conform with the representational principles in section 5.01.f. of the ELCA constitution except that persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English shall comprise 100 percent of the task force, and the task force shall be ethnically diverse. The members of the task force shall be appointed by the Church Council in consultation with the ELCA director of ethnic specific and multicultural ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Church Council designate funds to support the work of the task force as soon as funds become available, no later than April 2017. The work of the task force shall begin no later than August 2017 and conclude at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the task force submit a report and recommendations to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly that includes:

1. a summary of the information gathered by the task force, and
2. a proposal of recommendations for metrics and supports to provide mutual accountability for our commitment to diversity across the three expressions of the church and a proposal for funding these efforts.

Response from Domestic Mission unit (Spring 2017)

The director for ethnic specific multicultural ministries and the racial justice program director convened a video conference (February 2017) with the presidents of the six ELCA ethnic associations to continue visioning relative to CA16.05.25 and current initiatives that intersect the action called for by the resolution. The current leadership/representation of the ethnic associations is comprised of active leaders from six different synods and five different regions. The broad relational reach of the ethnic associations is more than sufficient to produce a team representative of all nine regions as called for by CA16.05.25.

Currently, the ethnic associations with support of the Ethnic Specific Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice (ESMMRJ) team are engaged in updating and/or developing new strategic plans for mission and ministry relative to our ELCA community with and among people of color. All previously adopted strategic plans will be ready for review by Church Council at its November 2018 meeting and, if needed, submitted for adoption at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

The racial justice program director convened a webinar, “Transforming White Privilege” <https://vimeo.com/200713450> (January 2017), to offer resources to assist synods in furthering work of cross cultural and racial justice engagement within synods and congregations. The link for the resource site for “Transforming White Privilege: A 21st Century Leadership Capacity” is: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/module/overview/transforming-white-privilege>.

The racial justice program director represented the ESMMRJ team at the March 2017 Conference of Bishops to introduce the work of the team and the ethnic associations as a resource to bishops, synods and congregations for deepening capacity for racial/cross cultural engagement. At that Conference of Bishops meeting, the racial justice program director and the executive for research and evaluation made a presentation to further the work of equipping synods and congregations towards becoming a more authentically diverse church.

Following are the recommendations to the Church Council from the Domestic Mission unit:

- In lieu of creating a task force, the Domestic Mission unit recommends that Church Council authorize the collaborative efforts of the ethnic associations in concert with the Domestic Mission unit Ethnic Specific Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice Team as designated agency to develop a plan for implementation of action called for by CA16.05.25.
- The Church Council will receive a full report and further recommendations at its November 2017 meeting, including an analysis of the scope of work called for by the resolution, configuration of implementation team

(pending consultation with Women of the ELCA and ecumenical partners) and projections of funds/support for implementation.

Church Council action:

To authorize the Domestic Mission unit and representatives of the ethnic specific ministry associations, in consultation with Conference of Bishops, Women of the ELCA, and ecumenical partners, to provide recommendations of names of persons to be appointed to the task force for implementation of action CA16.05.25;

That the task force be convened by the Domestic Mission unit comprised of both association and non-association participants with attention to regional representation, lay/clergy and gender balance; and

To receive a progress report and further recommendations including analysis of scope of work called for by Motion B, names of recommended members to the task force, and a projection of funds to support implementation at the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

5. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Background:

At its April 2016 meeting, the Church Council approved [CC16.04.05] the first recommendation of the Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC):

To create a new advisory committee to the Church Council (hereafter the Advisory Committee) whose charge it is to sustain a robust network of theological education for the ELCA and to prioritize and oversee the implementation of the TEAC recommendations.

Mr. John W. Lohrmann, chair of the Theological Education Advisory Committee, presented the committee's reports to the Church Council at its Spring 2017 meeting. He discussed the objectives identified by the Theological Education Advisory Council and the advisory committee's efforts to implement those objectives. He detailed the work of the committee's six work groups: seminary health and sustainability, funding revisions and benchmarks, young adult leadership and discernment, ethnic specific education, assessment criteria and communications.

Church Council action:

To designate five percent of the churchwide seminary grant in 2018 fiscal year for a focused, collaborative project among all seminaries that expands the number of persons of color preparing for rostered ministry in this church.

6. REVISION OF THE ROSTER MANUAL

Background:

The Office of the Secretary, in consultation with other churchwide offices and units, reviewed and proposed changes for the "Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the ELCA." The last revision was approved by the Church Council at its November 2010 meeting. The secretary has provided periodic updates to reflect new or revised policies adopted by the Church Council and incorporated the constitutional amendments of subsequent churchwide assemblies. A summary of the significant changes was outlined in the Report of the Secretary.

Church Council action:

To approve the updated Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for use by synod bishops, synod staff members, and others who hold responsibilities for such matters in this church; and

To authorize the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to provide periodic updates reflecting new or revised policies subsequently adopted by the Church Council.

7. 2016 ELCA CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION OPERATIONAL PLAN REPORT

Background:

The Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Church Council reviewed the report of the churchwide organization on its 2016 operational plan and recommended the council take the following action.

Church Council action:

**To receive the ELCA Churchwide Organization Operational Plan Report for 2016; and
To thank the staff of the churchwide organization for their ongoing work.**

8. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY SUCCESSION PLAN

Background:

Ms. Patricia Zerega carries out the ELCA's corporate social responsibilities through a half-time contract arrangement with the Domestic Mission unit and Portico Benefit Services. At its November 2015 meeting the Church Council affirmed [CC15.11.52k] a succession plan developed by the unit to ensure the future of corporate social responsibility work beyond Ms. Zerega's planned retirement in June 2018. The succession plan was revised to specify that her successor begin service in January 2018, allowing a transition period of training. The revised plan included budgetary and contract considerations.

Church Council action:

To affirm the succession plan proposed by the Domestic Mission unit for the Corporate Social Responsibility position.

9. ESTABLISHMENT OF A CHURCH COUNCIL DESIGNATED FUND

Background:

Income projections indicated that the churchwide organization will experience a significant budget gap during fiscal year 2018 between estimated current fund income and usual expense levels. The Budget and Finance Committee reviewed plans to navigate the implications of this gap in alignment with strategic directions identified during the Called Forward Together in Christ process.

A new Church Council designated fund was proposed equal to the excess revenue over expenses from fiscal year 2016 or \$1,630,000. These funds would be released in fiscal year 2018 to support budgeted operations of the churchwide organization. Notwithstanding this amount, the organization has exceeded its target cash position and continues to be compliant with the organizational cash flow policy.

Church Council action:

To approve a Church Council designated fund in the amount of \$1,630,000 representing the excess revenue over expenses from fiscal year 2016 for release in fiscal year 2018 for the budgeted operations of the ELCA churchwide organization.

10. AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Background:

ELCA continuing resolution 14.41.E15. provides that the Church Council's Audit Committee "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. ... In consultation with the executive for administration, the Audit Committee approves the appointment and dismissal of the director for internal auditing."

Church Council action:

To approve the report of the ELCA Audit Committee describing the review of the audited financial statements, management letter, and response of management for the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust’s year ending December 31, 2016.

11. DESIGNATION OF CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES AT SYNOD ASSEMBLIES

Background:

Provision S7.23. of the *Constitution for Synods* provides:

The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of this church as may be designated from time to time by the Church Council shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton named the official representatives for the synod assemblies. The grid, “2017 ELCA Synod Assemblies,” identified each representative to a respective synod assembly.

Church Council action:

To designate the persons identified in the “2017 ELCA Synod Assemblies” grid with voice but not vote in the meetings of the assigned Synod Assembly, including like privileges accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council has designated.

12. CAPITAL UNIVERSITY ASSET ACQUISITION OF TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Background:

The boards of Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary, both in Columbus, Ohio, decided together to create a unified institution through an asset acquisition of Trinity Lutheran Seminary by Capital University. The Church Council considered the draft bylaws for Capital University, which incorporate Trinity Lutheran Seminary as a school of the university. In addition, the council considered a draft asset transfer agreement, to address how Capital University will acquire and utilize the assets of Trinity Lutheran Seminary, and a statement of principles regarding the Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary reunion.

Church Council action:

To receive with appreciation the draft documents relating to the proposed asset acquisition of Trinity Lutheran Seminary by Capital University;

To thank the administrations and boards of Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary for engaging in thoughtful, forward-looking, spirit-filled discussions about the future of these institutions within the ecology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To state that merger actions involving these schools must comply with the requirements in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

13. REVISION OF GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

The Church Council approved changes to the governing documents of 1517 Media (the Publishing House of the ELCA), the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Luther Seminary and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (subsequently to be a supporting organization for United Lutheran Seminary).

14. ELECTIONS AND NOMINATION

Background:

The bylaws of certain organizations authorize the Church Council to nominate or elect members of their governing boards. ELCA bylaws 8.21.03. and 8.21.04. outline the parameters for the election or nomination of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries.

In keeping with ELCA constitutional provision 14.15., the Church Council filled vacancies on the governing boards of separately incorporated ministries created by the transition from a biennial to a triennial Churchwide Assembly.

Likewise, ELCA continuing resolution 20.62.A16. states:

In the event that the term of any member of the Committee on Appeals expires before that member's successor is elected, the Church Council may elect an individual in the same category—minister of Word and Sacrament or layperson—to serve on the Committee until the next Churchwide Assembly.

A member elected by the Church Council who serves less than one-half of a term shall be eligible for election to a full term by the Churchwide Assembly.

To nominate to serve as chair of the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary advisory committee beginning June 1, 2017: The Rev. David C. Nagler.

To elect to the board of directors of Luther Seminary for a four-year term expiring in 2021: Ms. Joyce A. Thompsen, Mr. John E. Haugo, Mr. David L. Hayes, Mr. Thomas Holtz, Mr. David L. Rutlen, Mr. Carlos E. Peña and Ms. Kathleen Brekken;

To elect to the board of directors of The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago for a three-year term expiring in 2020: Mr. Harry C. Mueller;

To re-elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary for a three-year term expiring in 2020: The Rev. Gus Vinajeras and Ms. Danette Miller; and

To elect to the board of trustees of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, to be subsequently known as United Lutheran Seminary, for a three-year term expiring in 2020: The Rev. Nancy J. Deming.

To elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc., for a three-year term expiring in 2020: The Rev. Daniel F. Forchand.

To elect to the board of trustees of Portico Benefit Services (Board of Pensions of the ELCA) for a two-year term expiring in 2019: Ms. Lori A. Kirkland, Ms. Jennifer L. McGinnis and Mr. Morris L. Larson;

To elect to the board of trustees of the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA for a two-year term expiring in 2019: The Rev. Martín J. Lopez-Vega, Ms. Lori S. Fedyk and Ms. Nicole Hudson; and

To elect to the board of trustees of 1517 Media (Publishing House of the ELCA) for a two-year term expiring in 2019: The Rev. Pedro M. Suarez, Ms. Julie M. Stecker, Ms. Susan G. Worst and Mr. Fred D. Halvin.

To elect to the Committee on Appeals for a two-year term expiring in 2019: The Rev. Paul J. Blom, the Rev. Christine A. Timm, Ms. Lesley M. Houston and Mr. George K. Rahdert.

