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2018 Synod Assemblies by SYNOD

#	SYNOD	START	END	ELECTION	CHURCHWIDE REP
1A	Alaska	04/26/18	04/28/18	X	Chris Boerger
1B	Northwest Washington	NO ASSEMBLY			N/A
1C	Southwestern Washington	NO ASSEMBLY			N/A
1D	Eastern Washington-Idaho	04/27/18	04/29/18		Ron Glusenkamp
1E	Oregon	05/19/18	05/19/18		Jodi Slattery
1F	Montana	06/01/18	06/03/18		Brenda Smith
2A	Sierra Pacific	06/01/18	06/03/18		Dana Dutcher
2B	Southwest California	06/01/18	06/02/18		Prairie Rose Seminole
2C	Pacifica	05/18/18	05/19/18		Bill Horne
2D	Grand Canyon	06/14/18	06/16/18	X	Bishop Eaton
2E	Rocky Mountain	05/03/18	05/05/18	X	Bill Horne
3A	Western North Dakota	05/31/18	06/02/18		Bishop Eaton
3B	Eastern North Dakota	06/02/18	06/03/18		Andrew Steele
3C	South Dakota	05/31/18	06/02/18		Victoria Flood
3D	Northwestern Minnesota	06/08/18	06/09/18		Gabi Aelabouni
3E	Northeastern Minnesota	05/04/18	05/06/18		Kevin Strickland
3F	Southwestern Minnesota	06/08/18	06/09/18		Dan Rift
3G	Minneapolis Area	05/04/18	05/05/18	X	Bishop Eaton
3H	Saint Paul Area	05/18/18	05/19/18		Heidi Torgerson
3I	Southeastern Minnesota	05/04/18	05/05/18		Benyam Kassahun
4A	Nebraska	05/31/18	06/02/18	X	Bill Horne
4B	Central States	06/07/18	06/09/18		Ruben Duran
4C	Arkansas-Oklahoma	05/04/18	05/06/18		Judith Roberts
4D	N.Texas - N. Louisiana	04/27/18	04/28/18		Kathryn Lohre
4E	Southwestern Texas	05/04/18	05/06/18	X	Sue Rothmeyer
4F	Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast	05/17/18	05/19/18		Molly Beck Dean
5A	Metropolitan Chicago	06/08/18	06/09/18		Chris Boerger
5B	Northern Illinois	06/15/18	06/16/18		Steve Bouman
5C	Central/Southern Illinois	06/07/18	06/09/18		Sue Rothmeyer
5D	Southeastern Iowa	05/18/18	05/19/18		Mikka McCracken
5E	Western Iowa	06/08/18	06/10/18		Kathryn Johnson
5F	Northeastern Iowa	06/08/18	06/10/18		Heidi Torgerson
5G	Northern Great Lakes	05/17/18	05/19/18		Linda Bobbitt
5H	Northwest Synod of Wisc	06/02/18	06/03/18	X	Chris Boerger
5I	East-Central Synod of Wisc	05/18/18	05/19/18		Chris Boerger
5J	Greater Milwaukee	05/31/18	06/02/18		Judith Roberts
5K	South-Central Synod of Wisc	05/04/18	05/06/18	X	Rafael Malpica-Padilla
5L	La Crosse Area	06/08/18	06/10/18		Kevin Strickland

2018 Synod Assemblies by SYNOD

6A	Southeast Michigan	05/11/18	05/12/18		Al Starr
6B	North/West Lower Michigan	05/20/18	05/22/18		Bishop Eaton
6C	Indiana-Kentucky	05/31/18	06/02/18		Bp Don Kreiss
6D	Northwestern Ohio	06/08/18	06/09/18		Wyvetta Bullock
6E	Northeastern Ohio	06/08/18	06/09/18		Mikka McCracken
6F	Southern Ohio	06/01/18	06/02/18		Nick Kiger
7A	New Jersey	05/11/18	05/12/18		Mikka McCracken
7B	New England	06/07/18	06/09/18	X	Stephen Bouman
7C	Metropolitan New York	05/11/18	05/12/18		Wyvetta Bullock
7D	Upstate New York	06/03/18	06/05/18		Ruben Duran
7E	Northeastern Pennsylvania	06/08/18	06/09/18		Nick Kiger
7F	Southeastern Pennsylvania	05/03/18	05/05/18	X	Chris Boeger
7G	Slovak Zion	01/20/18	01/25/18		N/A
8A	Northwestern Pennsylvania	06/14/18	06/16/18		Mikka McCracken
8B	Southwestern Pennsylvania	06/14/18	06/16/18		Mikka McCracken
8C	Allegheny	06/01/18	06/02/18		Gabi Aelabouni
8D	Lower Susquehanna	05/31/18	06/02/18		Mikka McCracken
8E	Upper Susquehanna	06/15/18	06/16/18		Amy Reumann
8F	Delaware-Maryland	05/31/18	06/02/18		Tammy Jackson
8G	Metropolitan Washington, DC	06/16/18	06/16/18		Christina Jackson-Skelton
8H	West Virginia-Western MD	06/01/18	06/02/18		Eric Wester
9A	Virginia	06/08/18	06/10/18		Ron Glusenkamp
9B	North Carolina	06/01/18	06/02/18		Dan Rift
9C	South Carolina	05/31/18	06/02/18		Kevin Strickland
9D	Southeastern	05/31/18	06/02/18		Sue Rothmeyer
9E	Florida-Bahamas	06/01/18	06/03/18		Stephen Bouman
9F	Caribbean	06/15/18	06/16/18	X	Rafael Malpica-Padilla



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



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Future**Directions**

2025

www.ELCA.org/future

Future@elca.org

Congregational Vitality



You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16.

Description of Congregational Vitality

*Communities of Jesus that nurture
life-changing relationships with God,
one another, and the world.*

- COB, March 2019



Vital congregations do these three things:

1

STRENGTHEN THEIR
RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD

- a. Leadership articulates how God shows up in and through the congregation and its people*
- b. The congregations has a clear understanding of God's larger mission, and members know their purpose in this time and place*
- c. The congregation can articulate that purpose and create a plan for implementation*

Vital congregations do these three things:

- a. Relationships among leadership, pastor(s), and members create a loving community with good communication*
- b. People work together respectfully through successes and challenges*
- c. There is a sense of ownership and belonging that drives the commitment and engagement in the mission of the church*

2
NURTURE
RELATIONSHIPS

Vital congregations do these three things:

- a. *The congregation opens its door to welcome the stranger and goes beyond its doors to share the love of Jesus Christ*
- b. *Creates and nurtures partnerships within the community to make a positive impact on the strength of the community*



A STRONG PRESENCE
IN THE COMMUNITY

Current Efforts in Congregational Vitality

- CV Pilot Synod Project:
 - To learn from intentional, collaborative efforts with six synods to strengthen leadership development, faith formation, and community engagement
- CV Pilot Synod Process:
 - To assess growth in vitality indicators (measured by survey tool) and apply learning to churchwide and synodical work to strengthen congregational vitality



Current Efforts in Congregational Vitality, cont.

- Renovated Grants Process
 - One system for all churchwide grants (uniform application and metrics)
 - Move from relating to 150 grantees to 9,300 congregations
 - Quarterly vs. Annual Grant Process (increased flexibility and responsiveness)
 - Grant Applications ask:
 - *What are you testing?*
 - *How will you know if you get there?*
 - *Who are you partnering with?*
 - *What is the expected outcome?*



Current Efforts in Congregational Vitality, cont.

- Encouraging “Holy Innovations” - *Listening to God, one another and neighbor; trying something new as a result of that listening; then doing something different because of what we learned.*
 - a shift from technical to adaptive change
 - steeped in spiritual practice
 - focuses on helping communities of Jesus join the movement of the Holy Spirit
 - Less about success/failure and more about learning
- Directors for Evangelical Mission support congregational vitality in synods
- Learn from each grant and assess whether changes are needed in model



Congregational Vitality Survey

- Church Council Members are invited to take the Congregational Vitality Survey based on your own congregational experience



Church Council Discussions

- What questions do you have about this initiative?
- How do you envision your governance role as we move forward?
- What expectations do you have of the churchwide organization related to this focus?





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Aide-mémoire for administration and staff on funding of the subsidy related to retiree benefits

This aide-mémoire is prepared for guidance of administration and staff of the churchwide organization and a unit of the churchwide organization, the Board of Pensions.

When the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) became the successor at 12:01 A.M. (Central time) on January 1, 1988, to the predecessor American Lutheran Church (ALC), Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), particular obligations were inherited from those uniting churches. Among those obligations was funding of a portion of the cost of retiree medical coverage based on service within the predecessor churches.

In the agreements for merger and in subsequent actions within the life of the ELCA, this obligation was recognized as a responsibility of the whole ELCA to be funded from income provided by congregations throughout this church.

A portion of that obligation is funded through use of the ELCA Continuation of the ALC Major Medical-Dental Trust for Retired Participants and the ELCA Benefits Contribution Trust.

In 2002, an agreement was established between the Church Council of the ELCA and the Board of Pensions of the ELCA to ensure adequate funding for payment of those obligations of the predecessor church bodies, given actuarial projections at that time. A variety of steps were a part of that mutual decision (see ELCA Church Council Minutes [November 16-17, 2002], Exhibit F, Part 6, pp.6ff.).

The 2002 agreement specified funding through mission-support income received by the churchwide organization and by an assessment within the fee structure of the Board of Pensions for pension and other benefits. In recent years, those amounts have varied. For 2008, the amounts will be \$2.5 million through mission-support funds in the expenditure plan set by the Church Council and 0.7% of defined compensation in the fee structure of the Board of Pensions.

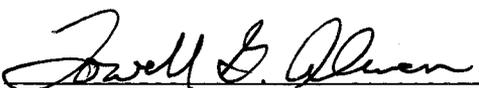
The contribution rates, including the contribution for retiree support, are set annually by the Board of Trustees of the ELCA Board of Pensions.

Based on current actuarial projections, the anticipated obligation—with continued funding at the 2008 levels—will be met in 2021. It is understood that as actuarial projections are updated, the remaining funding period may need to be lengthened or shortened. Both parties recognize the need for careful dialogue and consultation prior to any change in the funding formula for retiree support.

Concurred by the parties on September 18, 2007, and affirmed by the following:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

By: 

By: 

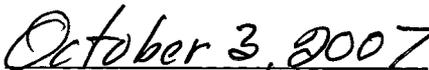
Print name: The Rev. Lowell G. Almen

Print name: Mr. John G. Kapanke

Title: Secretary

Title: President

Date: 

Date: 

The Campaign for the ELCA - Where Needed Most Policy and Decision-Making Process

Church Council Action, November 2017:

To request that the churchwide organization prepare a plan for the process by which “where needed most” dollars in Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA will be allocated and that the plan be reported to the Budget and Finance Committee at the April 2018 Church Council meeting for approval.

The Campaign Where Needed Most - Description of Use from Interpretation Materials:

Undesignated gifts to the campaign are used to support campaign priorities where they are needed most. From sharing the gospel with others to supporting our church’s up-and coming leaders, these gifts allow our church flexibility to respond in the time and place when it can make the biggest impact.

Decision-Making Committee:

As needed, but at a minimum quarterly, the following ELCA churchwide staff will review proposals and make decisions about Campaign - Where Needed Most allocations.

- ELCA Treasurer, Office of the Treasurer
- Director for Budget and Planning, Office of the Treasurer
- Executive Director, Mission Advancement
- Director of the Campaign for the ELCA, Mission Advancement
- Executive Director, Domestic Mission
- Executive Director, Global Mission
- Executive for Administration, Office of the Presiding Bishop

Process for Submitting Proposals:

Units with programmatic oversight of campaign priorities will submit proposals to the committee for review. Allocations will be approved based on the guidelines below.

Policy for Allocation of Campaign Where Needed Most Funds:

Campaign Where Needed Most funds will only be used to fund the established, approved priorities of the Campaign for the ELCA.

Guidelines for Advancing or Approving funding from Campaign Where Needed Most Gifts:

The following guidelines will be used by the committee to advance or allocated funds from gifts made to the Campaign Where Needed Most:

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 6, 2018

10 - Policy and Process for the Allocation of Where Needed Most Funds

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- To provide seed money for campaign programs where an initial investment is required to launch the ministry. Funds advanced from Where Needed Most will be replenished as gifts are raised. Any unfunded balance at the end of the Campaign will be charged to the Campaign Where Needed Most Fund.
- To complete critical projects where fundraising has fallen short of goal and more funds are needed to complete the investment already made.
- To fund ELCA global personnel (Young Adults in Global Mission and ELCA missionaries).
- To fund programs where we have made multi-year commitments (such as four-year scholarship commitments for International Women Leaders studying at ELCA colleges).
- To further advance a Campaign priority where specific funds raised are currently and expected to remain below 50 percent of goal.

Current Spending & Proposed Plans (based on these guidelines)

Balance at January 31, 2018	\$3,100,000	
2018 Earmarked Programs*		
ELCA World Hunger – 2018 allocation	\$750,000	<i>Approved</i>
S. Sudan – Juba Center – balance of advanced funds	\$250,000	<i>Approved</i>
Youth and Young Adult Grants – balance of advanced funds	\$310,000	<i>Approved</i>
Disability Ministries	\$100,000	<i>Pending</i>
Global Ministries	\$470,000	<i>Pending</i>
New and Renewing Congregations - 2018	\$500,000	<i>Pending</i>
Youth and Young Adults - Internships with SMOs	\$30,000	<i>Pending</i>
Youth and Young Adults - Youth Leadership Academies	\$40,000	<i>Pending</i>
Total Uses Approved or Pending	\$2,450,000	

* Funding requests for New and Renewing Congregations and Youth and Young Adult Ministries Grants for fiscal year 2019 have been received. These requests will be considered later in 2018 based on available funding.

Appendix A to Church Council Action on Retiree Medical Issues

Special Issue 1: Spouses and Disabled Children in Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze (“Metal”) Plans

Currently, there are 46 spouses and four disabled children receiving subsidies but who are covered by “Metal” plans, instead of a Medicare plan. Currently, their subsidy is calculated as a percentage of the plan they are on rather than as a percentage of the Medicare Standard Plan Option, which is often a more generous subsidy. To restore the spirit of the plan, the Ad Hoc Working Group recommends calculating the subsidy as if they received a standard Medicare Plan, which was the original intent. This proposal would essentially end the favored treatment received by these recipients.

Special Issue 2: Economy Plan Option Members

Approximately 200 individuals chose the Economy Plan Option for retiree medical benefits. Their subsidy is currently calculated as a percentage of the Economy premium. The Ad Hoc Working Group believes it would be inappropriate to penalize these members for being cost-conscious in the past and proposes calculating the 2019 subsidy as if they participated in the Standard Plan Option in 2018. This would also eliminate the need for a separate calculation.

Special Issue 3: Excess Discount Accumulation

For the estimated 1,000 members and spouses that will receive an excess discount, it needs to be determined whether the accumulated excess discounts (which can be used against future premiums) belong to the individual member or to the family. The Ad Hoc Working Group recommends that these excess discounts belong to the individual members and can be used only by those members.

Special Issue 4: Subsidy Waiver Eligibility

Approximately 3,000 people who are eligible for a subsidy have waived coverage. Currently, they could re-enter the plan (under the conditions imposed by the plan) and receive a subsidy. The Ad Hoc Working Group’s proposes that members who have waived coverage would be eligible for a subsidy if they re-enter the plan by January 1, 2019 via 2019 Annual Enrollment. Retirees who do not re-enter the plan by January 1, 2019, or who leave the plan after January 1, 2019, would not be eligible for a subsidy if they re-enter the plan at a later date.

Special Issue 5: New Retiree Eligibility

There are approximately 200 people who are eligible for a subsidy but who have not retired. The Ad Hoc Working Group proposes that if and when they retire, they have an opportunity to elect whether to participate and receive a subsidy, if eligible. If they waive coverage at that time, they would not be eligible for a subsidy if they enroll in the plan in the future.

Special Issue 6: Plan Waiver Eligibility

Separate from the eligibility for the subsidy, there is the question of whether eligible retirees who have waived coverage can subsequently participate. The Ad Hoc Working Group recommends allowing retirees to rejoin the plan. As noted above, however, they would not be eligible for a subsidy if they re-entered the plan after January 1, 2019.

Association of Asian and Pacific Islander

ELCA

ASIAN LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

Asian Lutheran Spirituality through ethnic specific ministries, celebration of diversity of cultures, Witness and service



WIFI
PLTS
2770PLTS

Ministry	Self/Family	Community
Project Robert W (Indonesian)	Project Lit-In (Chinese)	Project Peter - (Kai)
Student Ee Thao (Hong)	Master Layley Bang (Korean)	Ms Margrethe (Japanese)
Master Jade Yi (Chinese)	Stephanie (Sub)	Ms Fern Lee (Chinese)
Bible Study	Panel	
Project Sarah Yost	Master Diakonda - Indonesian	
Project European Descent	Ms Tita - Filipino	
Master Monta (Sub)	Ms APINGIRI (SON) - (Euro Descent)	
Ms Tita (Sub)	Ms Note (Lip) - (Asian)	

In the future together

Some of our recent activities

- ▶ The leaders of all ethnic associations have had several opportunities to work together and deepen relationships especially in the last two years.
- ▶ The ethnic association presidents met for a retreat in Tampa, Florida in February and participated in the installation of Bishop Pedro Suarez.
- ▶ Being able to come together and meet before the church council meetings is such a gift. We thank Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and DM Executive Director Rev. Stephen Baumann and the ELCA Church Council for supporting our need to come together and be heard.

Collaboration between Associations

As a result of intentional collaboration with other ethnic associations, the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice and the Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders are having joint assemblies in Robinsdale, MN. We are involved in each other's panel discussion.



*The 14th Assembly of the
Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders-ELCA*
April 11-14, 2018
Elim Lutheran Church, Robbinsdale, MN

ALIC

Asian Lutheran International Conference

January 2019

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the page, framing the central text. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

BRIDGE

AAPI News letter

TASKFORCE FOR STRATEGIC DIVERSITY

- ▶ Thank you to Church Council
- ▶ AAPI representatives on the Task Force
- ▶ Rev. Dr. Surekha Nelavala
- ▶ Rev. Dr. Moses Penumaka

Two Major events during 500 years of Reformation

Luther's small Catechism from Asian Perspective
Regional theological Conference in India





Namaskar

I bow down to the divine in You



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Report of the Audit Committee to the Budget and Finance Committee**

March 22, 2018 meeting:

This meeting was held by conference call.

Chairperson Ingrid Stafford called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Annette Roman, Controller, led the group in prayer.

The following committee members were present: Chairperson Ingrid Stafford, Meri Jo Petrivelli, Clarence Smith, and Jim Zils.

Lori Fedyk, Treasurer, began the meeting by thanking the committee for their work and dedication. She introduced herself and shared her background. She then reviewed a summary of churchwide financial results for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2017.

Diane Snopek, Principal Accountant, reviewed the financial statements of the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust as of December 31, 2017. She noted the following: total assets increased to \$737.5 million, including a cash balance of \$8.2 million. Investments increased to \$729.3 million, an increase of 15.7 percent from December 31, 2016. Total assets increased by \$102.8 million from December 31, 2016.

Total liabilities of \$1.7 million are in line with 2016 results. Participants' equity increased by approximately 16.3 percent, the combination of a 4.2 percent growth in units outstanding and an 11.5 percent increase in unit price. At December 31, 2017, the unit price was \$1,324.22.

Bryan Zygmunt, Partner from Crowe Horwath, reviewed the audit process and thanked the ELCA staff for their support in the completion of the audit and for being well prepared, responsive and transparent. All requests for information were completed on a timely basis. Brian explained the testing of the internal controls and substantive testing procedures performed in the audit as well as the review procedures performed related to the alternative investments implemented in 2017. Seth Weener, Manager from Crowe Horwath, reviewed the SAS 114 letter to the Audit Committee and noted: the opinion of the auditors will be unqualified; the reliance upon management's judgments and accounting estimates; that there were no audit adjustments or waived audit adjustments; that there were no difficulties encountered during the audit, no disagreements with management, no consultations with other auditors by management, and no other significant findings or issues. He also reported that there are no relationships that would impair the objectivity or independence of the auditors and that there has not been any update to the most recent peer review.

James Wilkins, Foundation CFO, provided a summary of the status of the Foundation Transition. Mr. Wilkins and Ms. Roman shared that one the greatest challenges during the transition was making sure there was an appropriate balance between day to day deliverables and the additional work related to the transition and the completion of the service level agreement. The committee asked for an updated report on the Foundation transition be provided to the Budget and Finance Committee.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 6, 2018

5 - Audit Committee Report

The Audit Committee approved the financial statements and the accompanying audit report on the financial statements of the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust as of December 31, 2017.

After the executive session, the meeting was adjourned at 2:23 pm.

**This Exhibit included
personal information
provided solely to the
Church Council for its
deliberations.**

Board Development Committee

Jim Utt, Chair



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Information to be shared

- Received an overview on the governance policy discussion, the survey results and names for ad hoc
- Reviewed results of webinar primer on mission support – way forward for future primers
- Café Entertainment at November 2018 Thursday “welcome dinner” – see Clarence if interested



Actions that Require Church Council Action

- Action on the Ad Hoc Committee



Budget and Finance Committee Clarence Smith, Chair

April 2018



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Actions that Require Church Council Action

- Campaign Where Needed Most Policy and Decision-Making Process



Church Council Action

November 2017

...prepare a plan for the process by which “where needed most” dollars in Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA will be allocated...



Policy for Allocation

Funds will only be used to fund the established, approved priorities of the Campaign



Decision-Making Process

- Units with programmatic oversight of campaign priorities will submit proposals to the committee for review.
- Committee is made up of:
 - ELCA Treasurer
 - Director for Budget and Planning
 - Executive Director, Mission Advancement
 - Director of the Campaign for the ELCA
 - Executive Director, Domestic Mission
 - Executive Director, Global Mission
 - Executive for Administration



Guidelines for Allocation

- Seed money for campaign programs
Funds advanced will be replenished
as gifts are raised
- Unfunded balance at the end of the
Campaign
- Complete critical projects where
fundraising has fallen short and more
funds are needed to complete
investment already made



Guidelines for Allocation

- Fund ELCA global personnel (Young Adults in Global Mission and ELCA missionaries)
- Fund programs where we have made multi-year commitments (scholarship commitments)
- Further advance a Campaign priority where specific funds raised are currently and expected to remain below 50 percent of goal



ACTION

To approve the policy and process for the allocation of “where needed most” dollars in Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA and report results to the Budget and Finance Committee as part of the regular Campaign reporting.



Other Items Discussed

- Future Directions 2025
- ELCA Foundation Transition



Questions



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Always

being made

New.

Today's Topics

- Status report
- Highlights
- Learnings
- 2018 focus
- What does this mean for us?



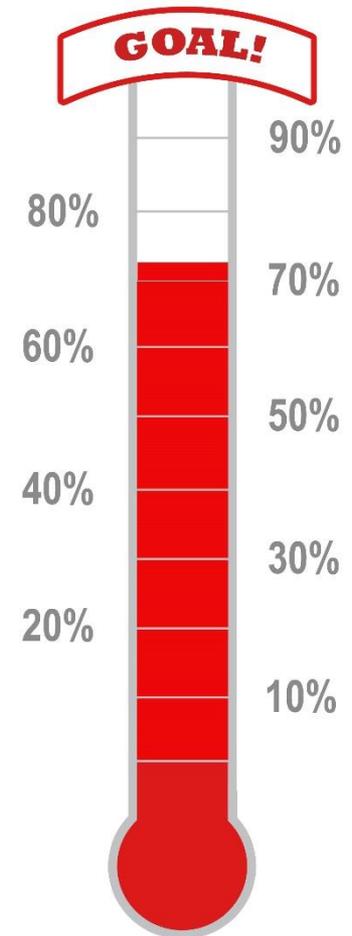
Progress To-Date

\$175.5 million total impact
for campaign priorities

\$145 million in gifts and
commitments

\$30.5 million in planned gifts

As of Feb. 28



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

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Always
being made
New.

Lutheran Disaster Response

- From hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, to earthquakes in Mexico, to wildfires in California, to refugee crises in Syria, Myanmar and several other nations – Lutheran Disaster Response is at work around the world.
- **Nearly \$23 million given in 2017!**



Here's how you can help:

Pray

Pray regularly for the work and mission of this whole church.

Gather

Host an event with congregations and members in your area.

Give

Support the mission of the ELCA through an annual financial gift.

Tell

Share the impact of campaign ministries at synodical events.

Invite



Campaign Highlights

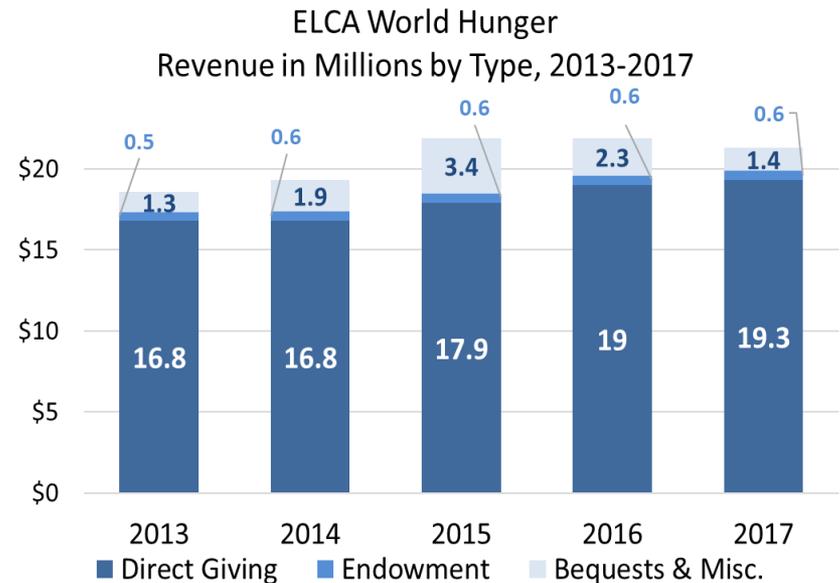
- ELCA World Hunger
- International Women Leaders
- Fund for Leaders
- Young Adults in Global Mission
- Major-gifts program
- Volunteer boards



Campaign Highlight

ELCA World Hunger

- Sustained growth in direct giving to ELCA World Hunger, even amid our other successful relief and disaster efforts
- More than \$21.5 million contributed in 2017 – the largest year of direct giving in the program’s history



Campaign Highlight

International Women Leaders

- Creation of a generous, energized and creative donor base
- Second gathering of lay women philanthropists and business leaders in April
- \$100,000 match for International Women's Day



Campaign Highlight

Fund for Leaders

- Endowment reached the \$50 million milestone
- \$15 million campaign goal achieved one year early
- Attracted the ELCA's largest major gift commitment – \$3 million to fund 60 new scholarships



Campaign Highlight

Young Adults in Global Mission

- Doubled the capacity of the Young Adults in Global Mission program
- Opened four new country programs – Rwanda, Cambodia, Australia and Senegal
- Successful utilization of a new peer-to-peer fundraising platform



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

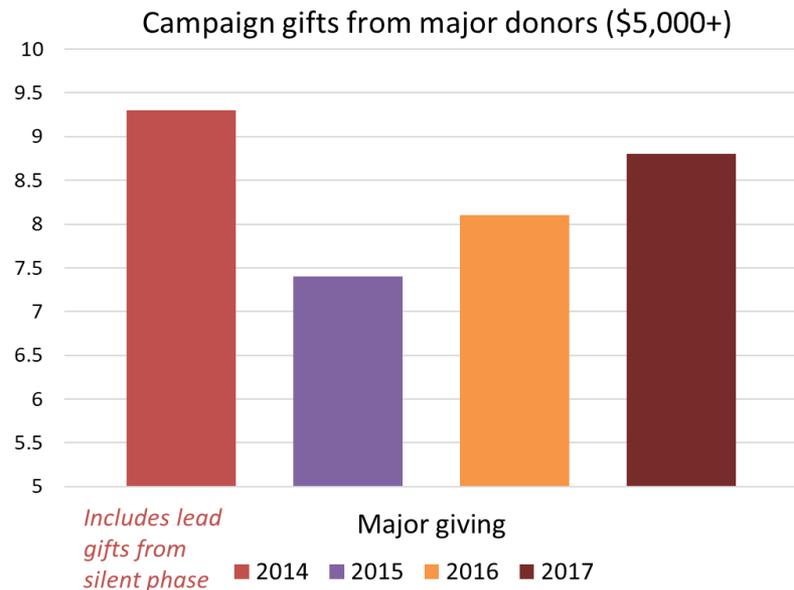
THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Always
being made
New.

Campaign Highlight

Major Gifts Program

- Intentional build-up of our major giving program resulting in steady progress in securing gifts from donors with higher-level capacity



Campaign Highlight

Volunteer Boards

- Growth in numbers and generosity of volunteer board members, including:
 - Bishop's Advisory Council
 - Campaign Steering Committee
 - World Hunger and Disaster Development Table
 - Malaria National Leadership Team
 - Fund for Leaders Leadership Table



Campaign Learnings

- A programmatic and fundraising infrastructure is crucial to program success.
- A long donor history or campaign silent phase is instrumental in realizing Campaign goals over the longer term.
- A thriving undesignated giving fund (in this case, “Campaign: Where Needed Most”) can provide valuable support and seed money for ministries that are new or less visible.
- Synods play a recognized and key role in ministries of congregational starts and renewal.



2018 Focus

Project 500

- Engage the ELCA's top 500 major-donor prospects as a coordinated team effort
- The Always Being Made New Campaign Dinner in Washington, D.C. served as a launching point
- Hoped-for outcomes:
 - Raise an increased number of major gifts in the final year of the campaign
 - Better track movement with our individual major-gift donors



2018 Focus

Other Fundraising Initiatives

- Secured matching gifts for various efforts including:
 - **\$100,000 match for International Women's Day**
 - **\$515,000 match for ELCA World Hunger's Global Farm Challenge** at the upcoming Youth Gathering



2018 Focus

Other Fundraising Initiatives

- Growing support for Campaign “Where needed most” to give the ELCA flexibility in responding where the need is greatest and offset priorities with fundraising progress below projections
- End-of-year giving opportunities



2018 Focus

Annual Theme: Leadership



Always
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THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ELCA

**Together, we are investing
in the future of the ELCA.**

This year marks the Leadership theme year within *The Campaign for the ELCA*, including **ELCA Fund for Leaders and Youth and Young Adults**. Through these ministries, we are accompanying youth and young adults in their faith journeys and supporting talented, gifted seminarians as they prepare to begin a life of ministry. Join us!

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

ELCA.org/campaign

- ELCA Fund for Leaders and Youth and Young Adults
- Packet with materials sent in early January
- “Rostered Ministers Appreciation” this fall



2018 Focus

Synod and Congregation Engagement

- Work with synods as they implement their own campaigns in conjunction with *The Campaign for the ELCA*
- Churchwide representatives will provide campaign information and updates at synod assemblies
- Collaborate with congregations to connect their priorities and members with the work of the campaign



Church Council Update

- Current Church Council members have given \$83,453
- Prior Church Council members have given \$65,272
 - Grand total: **\$148,725** (since 2013)
- In addition, there is \$27,205 of outstanding commitments from current members and \$15,240 of outstanding commitments from prior members
 - Grand total: **\$42,445**
- Combined total: **\$191,170**



Let's challenge ourselves
– this council –
to raise a total **\$250,000!**



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Always
being made
New.

What does this mean for us?

- 100% participation of Church Council members
- Consider a challenge gift from yourself
- Engage your congregation around the Global Farm Challenge and Leadership theme year

(To be continued...)



Update on the Campaign for the ELCA

Four years ago, we set the bold and daring goal of raising \$198 million in a five-year span – a significant increase in funding designated for existing and new ministry initiatives – as part of The Campaign for the ELCA. Now, as we enter the campaign’s fifth year at 73 percent of our goal (\$144 million as of Jan. 31, 2018), we are asking individuals, congregations, synods and our partners to rally, and to help us drive toward the successful completion of this effort.

In this final year of the campaign, we are focused on:

- 1) Reaching our \$115 million goal for ELCA World Hunger. One way we can do this is by supporting and lifting up efforts like the 40 Days of Giving Lenten initiative and the Global Farm Challenge as part of the Youth Gathering;
- 2) Investing in our future leaders through this year’s annual theme of Leadership – including Fund for Leaders and Youth and Young Adult;
- 3) Continuing to accompany our neighbors from around the world through the Global Church priority; and
- 4) Advancing congregational vitality, as well as enhancing ministries with those with disabilities.

Thank you for all that you do to support these priorities!

Fundraising updates

- As of Jan. 31, 2018, The Campaign for the ELCA has received \$144 million in cash and commitments, representing 73 percent of its \$198 million goal. Additionally, we have been notified of \$30.5 million in planned gifts toward the ministries of the campaign.
- The ELCA Fund for Leaders met its campaign goal of \$15 million on January 31, 2018! The development efforts now continue toward the larger goal of full tuition scholarship support for all qualified seminarians.
- The Always Being Made New Campaign Dinner in Washington, D.C., was an instrumental event as part of the major gifts strategy for the final year of the campaign. The team continues to follow up with those who attended, as well as those who were unable to attend the event.
- Introduced at the Campaign Steering Committee meeting in April 2017, the campaign team launched an initiative called “Project 500” as part of the campaign’s major-gift strategy in 2018. “Project 500” includes monthly major-gift moves management meetings with the goal of continually being focused on engaging the ELCA’s top 500 major donor prospects as a coordinated team effort. Two primary hoped-for outcomes are to raise an increased number of major gifts in the final year of the campaign and to better track movement with our individual major gift donors.
- In addition to major-gifts work through “Project 500,” over the next year, the campaign team will focus on:
 - Securing matching gifts for various efforts, including a \$100,000 match for International Women’s Day and \$500,000 for the ELCA World Hunger’s Global Farm Challenge at the upcoming Youth Gathering;
 - Working with congregations across the ELCA to connect their priorities and members with the work of the campaign;

- Growing support for Campaign “Where needed most” to give the ELCA flexibility in responding where the need is greatest and offset priorities with fundraising progress below projections; and
- Connecting with synod bishops and other partners across the church to identify how we can work together to achieve our collective goals in the campaign’s fifth year.

Synod engagement and support

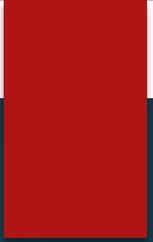
- The campaign team is continually working with synods as they implement their own campaigns in conjunction with The Campaign for the ELCA and/or lead efforts with donors and congregations in their region.
- Churchwide representatives will provide campaign information and updates at many of this year’s synod assemblies.
- In addition to work with synods, the campaign team continues to collaborate with congregations to connect their priorities and members with the work of the campaign. Over the last few months, the campaign director has visited a number of congregations around the country to inform, inspire and invite deeper engagement.

Church Council leadership and support

- All Church Council members are encouraged to give, stretch, pray and tell about the Campaign for the ELCA and its significant impact on ministries in this country and globally.

Campaign communications

- This year marks the Leadership annual theme year – lifting up ELCA Fund for Leaders and Youth and Young Adults – within the campaign. A kick-off packet was mailed to synods and congregations in early January 2018 and an e-blast with links to electronic resources and the new Fund for Leaders video was sent in later that month. In addition, congregations are encouraged to participate in a “rostered ministers appreciation” initiative this fall. An accompanying toolkit with resources and activity ideas will be mailed in June. Resources are available to ELCA.org/Resources/Campaign-for-the-ELCA under the “Annual Themes” tab.
- The 2017 Campaign Report, which will feature the progress and impact of the campaign in its fourth year, will be distributed to congregations, synods, volunteers and major gift donors in May.
- In January, more than 300 congregations with landmark anniversaries in 2018 received a letter congratulating them and asking if they’d consider supporting the campaign in conjunction with their anniversary celebrations.
- A new campaign video, a 90-second “sizzle reel” featuring snippets of campaign ministries, was developed for the Campaign Dinner and will be used throughout the final year of the campaign. It is available on the ELCA’s YouTube page.
- The campaign continues to distribute a quarterly newsletter, which reaches 11,000 people. The newsletter offers financial updates, campaign news items, donor profiles and special announcements.



Congregation Vitality

WORKING DEFINITION

Congregation Vitality

- ▶ **Framing:** This definition is offered, for this moment in time, as a way to teach and draw faith communities into conversation, imagining, and faithful action about God's ongoing mission.
- ▶ ¹Communities of Jesus²,
- ▶ that nurture life changing relationships³
- ▶ with God, one another, and the world.

1 This phrase is meant to evoke an expansive understanding of the how, in this age, people are gathering to engage God's Word. We envision campus ministries, Bible Camps, pub theology gatherings and more as places where the Triune God is at work creating faith.

2 We understand that it is God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who through the power of the Holy Spirit calls, gathers and makes holy.

3 In relationship with the Triune God and others we are most certainly nurtured, but we are also changed, in other words the Word has the power to transform.

Discussion on Sustainability and Church Structures
November 11, 2017
Church Council

What does sustainability mean in our changing context?

First, sustainability must be defined to clearly understand what is being asked. Sustainability of what? What is the essence of what we do? There is a difference between internal vs. external sustainability, and how our work is aligned with society.

In what ways do you measure sustainability? Is it about numbers (population), finance (budget), property, or mission?

What is the criteria to determine sustainability?

Some criteria to determine sustainability includes looking at our leadership. It's important to understand the value of nimbleness and change.

Sustainability does not equal maintaining. Sustainability relies on relevancy and keeping up with changes in society. It's good to seek out opportunities to innovate in the face of changing contexts.

How could the Future Directions Table assist council in developing a process or framework for sustainability?

Helping to create new and alternative models for leadership development, training and calls will be helpful. For those already in leadership roles, methods of care and support for those in challenging calls can be developed. There can be ways to cultivate desire for more engagement with faith, and create dynamic communities of faith.

While developing new resources, it will also be good to look at what can be pruned away. How can the current models be changed to reimagine resources? There needs to be work done to re-root in community, re-tool leaders, and re-invest resources to accomplish goals.

In what ways could council emphasize a sustainability framework at every meeting?

Becoming introspective at and in-between meetings could help with a sustainability framework. Church Council should take on leadership roles outside council meetings (if they are not already). In these roles as council members and as leaders in the church, it would be helpful to be introspective (How are we doing? How are our members doing? How are our leaders doing?).

What are the most important factors contributing to the effective governance of the ELCA by the Church Council?

The Church Council needs to build a governance policy that clarifies roles, decision making, and conflict resolution. There needs to be relationship-building between other council members, bishops, unit executives and churchwide staff. Also, strengthening and clarifying the relationship with the Administrative Team.

What are the boundaries in authority and decisions making among Church Council, the Presiding Bishop and other officers, and the Churchwide Organization Administrative Team?

One boundary is identifying which things can be done by only one group. Communication among all leadership groups also needs to occur. All leadership groups need to feel welcome to speak.

It is unclear who has the actual authority to allocate resources between churchwide assemblies, and how that process works. Passing down history and knowledge without control.

How can we continue to strengthen the way the Church Council, Conference of Bishops and Administrative Team share leadership of this church?

Make use of technology to assist in work—conference calls, meetings by email, for example—to handle business or information outside of formal meetings.

Equipping lay leaders, not just rostered ministers around two priorities.

Allow more flexibility for staff. Council does more strategic direction, assessing outcomes, identifying risk and opportunities, empowering staff.

How can we strengthen Conference of Bishops advice and input to Church Council?

One possibility is to have more joint meetings between Conference of Bishops and Church Council. Another suggestion is to have more bishops involved in Church Council meetings, or to make the already present liaison bishops full voice and vote.

What does a culture of willing accountability mean in the way leadership and relationships are conducted? (Goal 5)

How do Church Council members hold themselves accountable? What are their outcomes? What is the best way to face a lack of trust of institutions, in general?

Top to bottom/bottom to top alignment of goals. Clergy preach the name of Jesus; laity articulate the faith.

Are there alternatives to typical governance right for our context and time—permission giving, exploration, action, reflection rather than command and control?

Being cognizant of discerning spiritual source in policy making. Look at the proactive committees vs. the reactive committees.

Joint Leadership Table Commitments

What is the Church Council's role in our shared commitments? What does this mean?

Church Council's role is mission accountability, resource allocation (leverage for objectives), and cross committee lines. Give direction to look at innovative leadership models including learning from global partners. Church Council's role is to "ride herd on" [accompany while leading] shared commitments. Encourage and hold accountable those who are responsible for leadership. They should create a culture of governance-clarity around the role of governance.

The Church Council should live out, in all its expressions, corporately as well as individually. They should support the continued explanation and intent of each of the four identities and support communication of the same across all platforms.

Church Council needs to define leadership. Who are leaders, and what are Church Council's expectations of them? How are they held accountable?

Church Council should ask officers, and whoever gives reports, to outline and present them based on identity and priorities.

In what ways can Church Council be supportive in embracing a fourfold identity: We are church/Lutheran/church together/church for the sake of the world?

Church Council should communicate honestly about what and how they are doing (there may be a difference in advocating for the gospel and for church). Council should support the continued explanation and intent of each of the four identities and support communication of same across all platforms.

The four-fold identity should be kept in front of the Church Council, and be more visible (specifically, during meetings). Appeal to the positive: hope and joy, then grace, then Lutheran. Release the vision.

How can Church Council be supportive in growing leaders for vital congregations in leadership formation and leadership development?

Church Council can get direction from Conference of Bishops on what congregational vitality looks like to create an informed assessment tool. Redefine "congregation" as "followers of Jesus."

Develop strategies for leadership development and recruitment. Congregational vitality should include help for congregations to be accepting of the seminarians of today (women, people of color, LGBTQI). Grow leaders by modeling it in Church Council (bringing names of potential leaders). Develop cultural competency in our leaders (especially rostered) so they are equipped to work with marginalized groups (rural, poor, etc).

Across all five goals, how are we as a church stewarding resources, communication and becoming a multicultural church?

The five goals are virtually unknown among ELCA leaders and laity; the work is only beginning. Relationships need to be developed and nurtured. Committee reports can be structured around Future Directions.

How can council best align resources w,ith priorities?

Align and narrate budget with reference to the goals/priorities. Example: what priorities are used to determine reductions to the Domestic Mission budget? Evaluate effectiveness of current strategies to realign resources.

Connect planning, budgeting, and evaluation so we can allocate resources toward priorities. Customize mission support that best serves the needs of all three expressions. Vision needs to drive budget. The major gift planners can be directed to focus on Fund for Leaders.

How is this church reinvesting in ethnic-specific communities, rural communities and people in poverty?

AMMPARO is a shining example.

What percent of new mission starts/redevelopments are addressing the ethnic-specific contexts and sub-contexts? Publicize this information more broadly.

There is investment in ethnic-specific communities and people in poverty, but the ELCA should continue to share in these investments and tell the stories of these communities.

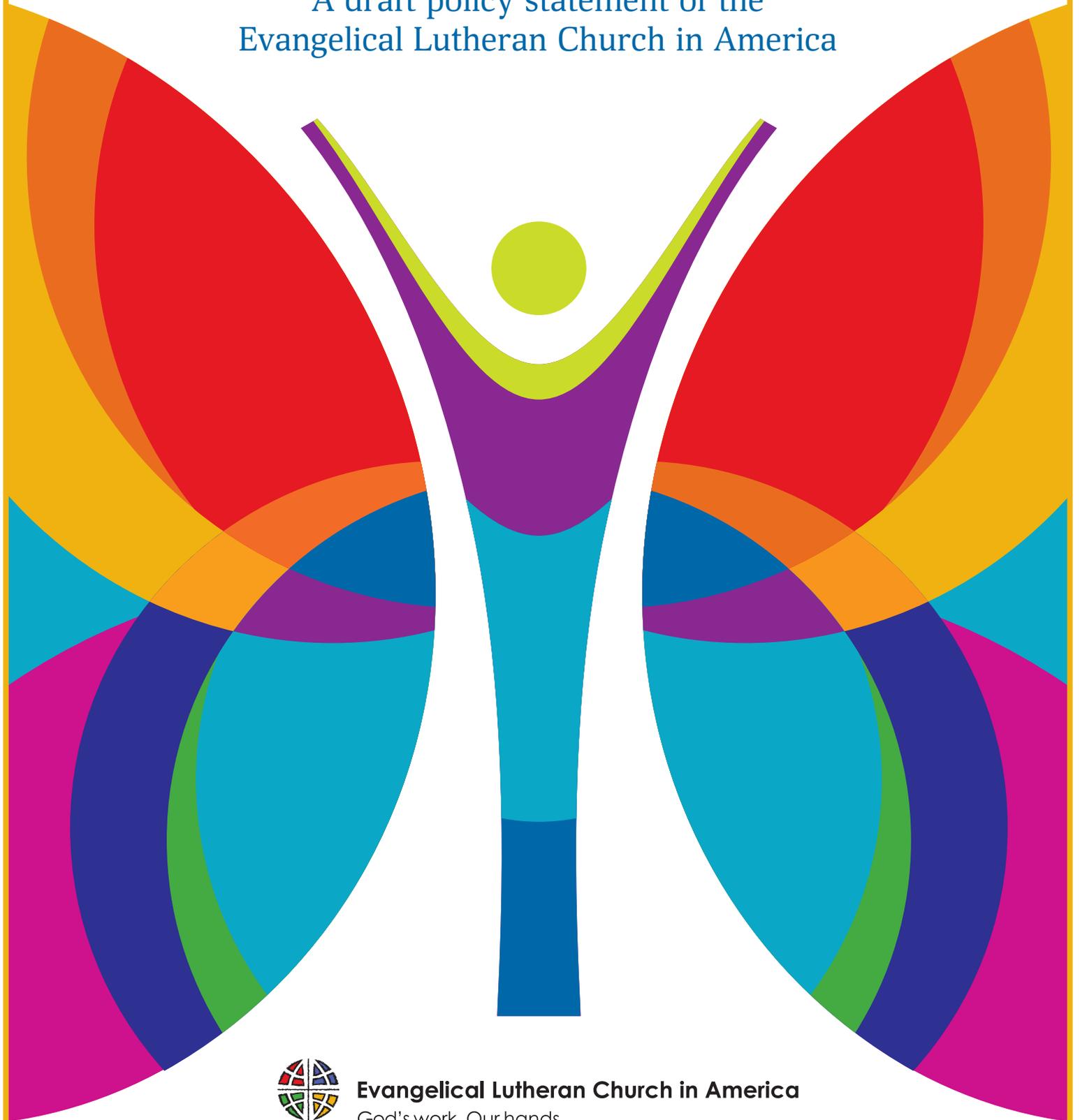
Rural communities are different, especially when their sustainability is different. How can they thrive in a new way? More ministry given to aging and rural populations.

Share the wealth. Don't punish congregations that aren't financially stable; don't reward those who don't share. Support vibrant, sustainable ministries even if the financial sustainability piece isn't there.

The church can work with full communion partners.

A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment:

A draft policy statement of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



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

Jan. 8, 2018

Dear Church,

Two years ago Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton invited 11 of us to serve on a task force to draft a policy statement on inter-religious relations. It has been a privilege to work together to craft the document that now comes to you for your review and comment.

Each member of the task force brought both expertise in an aspect of inter-religious engagement and personal experience in working with and learning from those in other religious traditions. Our own meetings have been enriched by lively and thoughtful discussion of the themes and commitments incorporated in this document.

We hope that you will experience similar joy and fresh learning as you read these pages and discuss these ideas with others in your congregation, classroom or circle of friends. We are eager to receive your feedback and are grateful to be part of a church that invites wisdom from people of all ages and backgrounds.

On behalf of the task force, I thank you for taking time to read and reflect on what is presented here. May this discernment process also help you articulate your deepest convictions as a person of faith.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia J. Lull". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "J".

The Rev. Patricia J. Lull
Bishop, Saint Paul Area Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Executive, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations & Theological Discernment

Reader's introduction and tips for individual and group study

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Inter-Religious Task Force, appointed by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton in 2016, is preparing an inter-religious policy statement to be considered by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. This draft of "A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment" is an invitation to everyone in the ELCA to join in conversation and discernment about our inter-religious calling and commitments.

There are several ways to participate in the process:

1. Study, discuss, comment: You are invited to study, discuss and use the online response form to share your thoughts in response to the draft. This can be done by individuals or as part of a study group. The response form is available online. [Click here](#) to take the survey.
2. Participate in a hearing: Some synods and ELCA institutions will be holding hearings, and you might attend one in your area. If you are interested, please speak to your synod office, [LEIRN representative](#) or send an email to eirinfo@elca.org.

The comment period will close on June 30, 2018.

This draft represents the best thinking of the task force to date. This draft comes with the unanimous support of the task force for sharing with our church for discussion. It follows and grows out of the long-time inter-religious relations of the ELCA and its predecessor bodies, as well as the contemporary case studies of inter-religious relations lifted up in the 2016 publication *Engaging Others, Knowing Ourselves: A Lutheran Calling in a Multi-Religious World* (Lutheran University Press).

Your response to this draft, along with that of many others across this church, is vital to the process of developing a proposed policy statement that will be considered by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Talking together is important in our life together as part of Christ's body. Your feedback will inform the task force's thinking as it revises this draft to create a proposed policy statement to be considered first by the ELCA Church Council and then by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

In preparing to lead discussion sessions, questions like these may help guide the discussion:

- What in each section speaks to your experience? In what ways?
- What do you think are the strengths of each section? Weaknesses?
- What else needs to be said? How should it be said differently?
- What advice do you have for the task force, keeping in mind that it is charged with writing a policy statement for the whole ELCA?

Tips for leading the sessions:

- Keep in mind that discussing matters related to inter-religious relations require a degree of sensitivity.
- Invite people of all genders, ages and perspectives to join the discussion. Sometimes people just need to be invited to feel welcome.
- Leaders do not need to be pastors. Discussion facilitators from within the congregation or group can be recruited and briefed.
- Read and become familiar with the content of the entire draft before beginning a study session.
- Be prepared to take some notes or assign a recorder to capture ideas and thoughts during the discussion. This may be especially helpful when you get to the online response form.

Thank you for your prayerful participation.

1 **A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment:**
2 **A draft policy statement of the**
3 **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**
4

5
6 **PART 1**

7 **INTRODUCTION**

8
9 “This church confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power
10 of God for the salvation of all who believe.” “Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate,
11 through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection
12 God fashions a new creation” (ELCA Constitution, Chapter 2).

13
14 The grace of God is an undeserved gift that re-orientes our relationship with God. With
15 this gift comes an invitation to love and serve the neighbor. God entrusts to us as
16 “in clay jars” (2 Corinthians 4:7) the “message of reconciliation” for all (2 Corinthians
17 5:19). “Christ, our peace, has put an end to the hostility of race, ethnicity, gender, and
18 economic class” (“Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture,” ELCA social statement,
19 1993, p. 1). As ambassadors for Christ in a deeply divided world, we seek right, peaceful
20 and just relationships with our neighbors of all religions and those who practice no
21 religion. We do this as an expression of our faith.

22
23 Since 1988, we have deepened and expanded our inter-religious relations as church,
24 building upon the work of our predecessor bodies, The Lutheran World Federation and
25 our ecumenical partners. Our 1991 policy statement, “Ecumenism: The Vision of the
26 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” called for “a separate, official statement” that
27 would reflect the “distinct responsibility for the church to enter into conversations and
28 reach greater understanding with people of other faiths.” This declaration seeks to fulfill
29 that recommendation.

30
31 **OUR CONTEXT**

32
33 *Encounter with religious diversity*

34
35 Each layer of history, starting with the native peoples of this land, has shaped the
36 religious diversity of American society. In recent decades, patterns of global migration,

37 immigration and forced displacement, coupled with new patterns of religious affiliation,
38 have resulted in rapid and radical changes to the religious diversity in our midst. Today,
39 many Lutheran Christians in the United States encounter neighbors of other religions
40 and worldviews in their communities, schools, work places, civic spaces, circles of
41 friends and families.

42
43 As used in this document, the word “religion” refers to all beliefs, such as Buddhism,
44 Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Whenever “neighbor” is used, it includes all
45 of those who profess a religion, plus those who do not, including those who consider
46 themselves atheists or agnostics or ascribe to other worldviews that are not explicitly
47 religious. This document seeks to address a Lutheran approach to understanding and
48 engaging with our neighbors in a multi-religious, pluralistic context.

49
50 *Possible responses to our context*

51
52 As a church, we must consider anew our calling and commitments in a multi-
53 religious world. Many Lutherans and many Lutheran ministries already participate
54 in inter-religious activities such as theological dialogue, advocacy and service,
55 which build mutual understanding and advance the common good. Lutheran
56 Christians are called to move from co-existence to a more robust engagement.
57 Namely, we’re called to move beyond fear, stereotypes, apathy and mere tolerance
58 to friendship, mutual understanding and cooperation, confronting whenever
59 possible the often-compounding oppressions experienced by people of all religions
60 and worldviews on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender and class.

61
62 *Fear and division*

63
64 There are many ways individuals and communities can respond to religious
65 difference. The most harmful responses are grounded in ignorance and fear, which
66 can breed stereotypes that in the extreme are used to fuel incidents of religious
67 bigotry, restrict religious freedoms, and arouse conflicts that are destructive of
68 life, property and the environment. We live in a context of ongoing anti-Semitism
69 and anti-Muslim bigotry, as well as incidents, harassment and violence directed
70 against other minority religious and ethnic communities, houses of worship and
71 indigenous peoples. The ELCA must play an active role in dispelling fear of our
72 neighbors, in opposing religious bigotry and in standing with those who are the
73 targets of fear, discrimination, hatred and violence.

74 *Inaction*

75

76 Another possible response to religious diversity is inaction. For some of us,
77 an encounter with religious difference may seem a distant reality or one we
78 are not quite ready to acknowledge. Some of us have limited information and
79 experiences, which can sometimes mean that we are less motivated to reach out
80 to our neighbors. All of us have been exposed to stereotypes, which may seem
81 harmless when not acted upon or spoken aloud. Yet, in the face of bigotry, apathy
82 and passivity are not neutral. They too can be destructive. In the Small Catechism,
83 Martin Luther explains that there are responsibilities associated with “not bear[ing]
84 false witness against your neighbor.” He explains that “we are to fear and love God,
85 so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy
86 their reputations. Instead, we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and
87 interpret everything they do in the best possible light” (Small Catechism, Eighth
88 Commandment). Action is, in fact, required of us.

89

90 *Encounter and engagement*

91

92 When the alternative is so devastating, respectful conversation, mutual
93 understanding, advocacy, accompaniment, friendship, mutual hospitality and
94 multiple forms of cooperation are imperative. Lutherans are called to move beyond
95 tolerance of our religiously diverse neighbors to engagement with them. This
96 calling leads to concrete commitments that we strive to live out as people of faith.
97 We are freed in Christ to engage our neighbors in a multi-religious world.

98

99 **OUR VISION**

100

101 As the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), our vision is what inspires our
102 calling. It is a vision of a world in which individuals of diverse cultures and races, with
103 varied understandings of the divine, live in harmony. Ours is a vision of a world where
104 hope abounds and fear no longer separates one person from another or one people
105 from another, where “justice roll[s] down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-
106 flowing stream” (Amos 5:24) and “the leaves of the tree [of life] are for the healing of the
107 nations” (Revelation 22:2b). We envision a world of God’s shalom, in which the generosity
108 and mercy of God are celebrated, and all of God’s creatures and all of God’s creation are
109 treated with care.

110

111 The Scriptures yearn for such a world of shalom, but they also recognize that we live
112 “between the times”—between the inauguration of God’s kingdom and its fulfillment. In

113 the meantime, we struggle with all the forces that work against the kingdom. But we,
114 the baptized, experience the gift of Christ in us and the gift of the Holy Spirit calling
115 us to turn away from those forces and to celebrate every sign of God’s kingdom. As a
116 community of faith, we are inspired to put our vision into practice here and now, even
117 if we can see only the vague outlines of its fulfillment. We realize that we will fall short
118 of the glory of God. Nevertheless, we live in love and hope. We foster healthy relations
119 and healthy communities in which all can flourish. We break the cycle of escalating
120 retaliation that divides and destroys. With God’s help, we seek to mend and heal the
121 world that God so dearly and so deeply loves.

122

123 Guided by this vision and sobered by this realization, we seek, as one part of our
124 undertaking, to achieve mutual understanding among all people of different religions
125 and worldviews and to inspire all to work together for the common good. We do so to
126 give an accounting for the hope that is within us (I Peter 3:15b).

127

128 *Mutual understanding*

129

130 Lutheran Christians who engage their religiously diverse neighbors can expect
131 both a new understanding of the other and a deeper understanding and
132 appreciation of their own Christian faith. “Understanding” as used here is a
133 process of moving from factual understanding of commonalities and differences
134 to grasping coherence and even glimpsing beauty, sensing how it is that others
135 love and cherish their religious traditions, while empathizing with others in
136 the challenges and struggles they may face in their religious commitments.
137 Mutual understanding opens us up to the possibility of friendship—of accepting
138 responsibility for each other’s well-being.

139

140 Luther was clear in his insistence that our understanding of faith can and does grow
141 and change: as we experience new things in life, as we study and learn, and as we
142 meditate and pray. Hence, it is possible for one’s understanding to change without
143 one’s faith being undermined. Participating in inter-religious relations does not
144 diminish but deepens our faith. By engaging our neighbors, we learn to articulate
145 our faith more clearly. We learn to express what being a follower of Jesus really
146 means to us in today’s world. In encounter, we can also expect to learn something
147 about the glory of the Lord, relying on the Spirit who, like at Pentecost, amazes and
148 delights us by giving us the capacity to comprehend each other in our “speaking
149 about God’s deeds of power” (Acts 2).

150 *Common good*

151

152 In this vision, religious diversity, when accompanied by understanding and
153 cooperation, enriches the whole. Through inter-religious relationship, we receive
154 the gifts of our neighbors and experience more fully the exquisiteness that all
155 are made in the image of God. Mutual understanding and a commitment to the
156 common good are reciprocal. Mutual understanding and a deep appreciation of
157 the similarities and differences among religions and worldviews enhance working
158 together for the common good. At the same time, working together for the
159 common good can enhance mutual understanding and the self-understanding of
160 each participant. Seeking mutual understanding and the common good are active
161 ways in which we take steps toward our vision of God’s shalom.

162

163 **OUR CALLING**

164

165 As the ELCA, we claim inter-religious engagement as part of our vocation. We—the
166 individual members and participants, congregations and the whole church—are called by
167 God and freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbors in a multi-religious world. This
168 calling begins with our neighbors next door and extends “to the ends of the earth” (Acts
169 1:8). This includes loving and serving those who share our faith in Jesus Christ, as well
170 as those who do not. It is our duty and joy to extend God’s shalom—God’s love, mercy
171 and grace to all those who are made in the image of God and the whole of creation. In
172 other words, we are called to inter-religious engagement *because* we are Lutheran.¹ We
173 live out this calling in four ways.

174

175 *Love our neighbor*

176

177 Every person’s calling to love and serve God and our neighbor is central to the
178 Lutheran tradition. As Luther reminded us, God asks that we direct our gratitude
179 for God’s generosity outward to others rather than upward in activities intended
180 to please God. No one is excluded from “our neighbor.” Jesus makes this point in
181 the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), in which he chooses a person
182 of another religion to illustrate what it means to *be* a neighbor. Our vocation, our
183 calling to be a neighbor, does not exclude from “neighbor” those whose religion is
184 different from our own. God’s mercy is to be extended to all.

1 Biblical and theological basis for these commitments is discussed in detail in Part 2 of this document.

185 *Serve our neighbor*

186

187 Our vocation includes service to the individual neighbor and to the community
188 as a whole. The two are connected because how well the community functions
189 affects every individual in it and vice versa. To know how to serve the community,
190 we need to understand what benefits all parts of that community, and this means
191 reaching out to neighbors across religion, race, ethnicity, gender and class. Our
192 vocation also includes serving *alongside* our neighbor, as we respond together to
193 meet the needs of others. While we may not necessarily share the same religious
194 inspiration for doing so, our common vision for peace and justice leads us to
195 engage in service for the sake of the world.

196

197 *Live in solidarity with our neighbor*

198

199 Being a neighbor can be risky. When power is abused and fears grip a community or
200 a nation, standing up for those who are being targeted or excluded takes courage. We
201 are called to exhibit this courage and take this risk. In the face of social pressures that
202 make us feel paralyzed, our calling includes developing a sense of agency—that is, a
203 sense that each of us can make a difference. Our attention needs to be focused on our
204 God-given gifts and responsibilities rather than the many impediments to acting on
205 behalf of those who are being maligned or harassed or harmed, recognizing that some
206 of our neighbors are experiencing multiple forms of oppression at once. For all of this,
207 a support community of fellow believers and inter-religious partners is very important.

208

209 In the United States, many Christians live in neighborhoods that are predominantly
210 Christian, where social expectations (holidays, school vacations, work rules,
211 etc.) have accommodated their beliefs and practices, affording them significant
212 privilege. The same is often not true for our neighbors who practice other
213 religions or those who practice no religion at all. They can be made to feel like
214 outsiders. As a result, we are called to be sensitive toward our neighbors of other
215 religions and worldviews, relinquishing our privilege and engaging them in the
216 spirit of accompaniment. This includes listening, learning and letting go of the
217 need to always issue the invitation or be in control of the process. It also means
218 recognizing that other religions are organized differently, sometimes with very little
219 or no corresponding structures to our own. Assumptions about cultural norms,
220 both within the ELCA and about our neighbors, need to be constantly analyzed
221 and avoided. Setting the course for building and deepening partnerships and
222 determining the right pace together are ways in which we can begin to practice
223 mutual hospitality—the deepest form of living in solidarity with our neighbor.

226 We are committed to engaging our neighbors without compromising who we are or
227 the fullness of the calling we have received. An integral part of this calling is to be
228 witnesses to Christ: to bear with our lives the good news of the gospel and to share
229 the joy of the good news with our neighbor in ways that honor our conviction that
230 every human is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and that all of creation
231 is good (Genesis 1:31). This means that we will faithfully share with our neighbors
232 our belief that Jesus Christ is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6); we
233 will serve as ambassadors of the ministry of reconciliation we have received from
234 God through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18); and we will uphold Scripture, the Creeds
235 and the Confessions as core to our Lutheran identity and vocation. As we engage
236 our neighbors in the fullness of who we are and what we believe, we expect that
237 so, too, will our partners engage us with their deepest convictions.

239 We enter into this calling in a spirit of humility and self-criticism, repentant of our past
240 mistakes, anticipating future mistakes and committed to the justice, peace, and well-
241 being of our neighbors. In doing so, we seek to build upon our church’s longstanding
242 work in inter-religious relations, with ecumenical partners and through The Lutheran
243 World Federation. We accept that we will have unanswered questions about how God is
244 working in and through our neighbors of other religions and even in and through us.
245 Yet, we anticipate that in loving, serving, standing in solidarity with, and witnessing to
246 our neighbors, we will encounter God, participate in building a more just and peaceful
247 world and find our faith enriched.

249 **OUR COMMITMENTS**

251 Today, we participate in God’s mission in an increasingly multi-religious world. In our
252 neighborhoods and globally, there are examples of peaceful religious co-existence but
253 also active religious intolerance, inter-religious conflict, violence, discrimination, and
254 religious bigotry and persecution. In the midst of this, God has given us the ministry of
255 reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). Therefore, in faithful response to God’s love in Christ
256 Jesus, we are called and committed to actively:

- 257 • **seek mutual understanding** with our neighbors of other religions and
258 worldviews; and
- 259 • **cooperate** with our neighbors of other religions and worldviews as instruments of
260 God’s justice and peace.

261 Across the ELCA, the form of our inter-religious relations will vary depending on
262 context. As a church, we hold these commitments in common as a policy to guide our
263 work and as a measure of accountability to our inter-religious partners.

- 264 1. The ELCA will pray for the well-being of our neighbors of other religions and those
265 who practice no religion, and we will pray for God’s continued guidance as we live
266 out our Lutheran calling in a multi-religious world.
- 267 2. The ELCA will hold fast to the gospel, and to Scripture, the Creeds, and
268 Confessions at the core of our Lutheran identity and faith and will work to
269 foster relationships of mutual respect with regard to our inter-religious partners’
270 identity and commitments (“Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World:
271 Recommendations for Conduct,” the World Council of Churches, Pontifical Council
272 for Interreligious Dialogue & World Evangelical Alliance, 2011).
- 273 3. The ELCA will witness to the power of life in Christ in and through our daily lives,
274 in our inter-religious relations, and in preaching that gives testimony to the power
275 of God at work in the world. We will engage our neighbors of other religions and
276 worldviews with respect for their traditions and will not approach inter-religious
277 relations as a means for manipulative or deceptive attempts at conversion.
- 278 4. The ELCA will seek to know its neighbors, to overcome stereotypes, and “to come
279 to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best
280 possible light” (Small Catechism, Eighth Commandment).
- 281 5. The ELCA will explore and encourage inter-religious friendship, accompaniment
282 and cooperation with all who seek justice, peace, human wholeness and the well-
283 being of creation, recognizing that dialogue and cooperation are the activities of
284 people not religions.
- 285 6. The ELCA will defend the full participation of all in our religiously diverse society,
286 “strengthening public space as a just place for all” (“The Church in the Public
287 Space: A Statement of The Lutheran World Federation,” 2016).
- 288 7. The ELCA will defend human rights and oppose all forms of religious bigotry, fear-
289 mongering, violence, discrimination and persecution and stand in solidarity with
290 those who experience them, whether they are Christian or of another religious
291 tradition or worldview, upholding commitments made in existing ELCA social
292 teaching.
- 293 8. The ELCA will seek to be aware of when we have made mistakes or missteps,
294 acknowledge them, and seek repentance, reconciliation and right relationship with
295 our inter-religious neighbors.
- 296 9. The ELCA, in consultation with our partners, will seek to understand the religions
297 of the world so as to identify and oppose those distortions that misuse religion to
justify oppression, violence, genocide or terrorism.

- 298 10.The ELCA will, whenever possible, work with other Christians and through
299 ecumenical and inter-religious coalitions in its quest for inter-religious
300 understanding and cooperation.
- 301 11.The ELCA will seek counsel from other religious groups in its discernment of and
302 advocacy for the common good.
- 303 12.The ELCA will identify and produce study and dialogue materials and pastoral
304 guidelines for understanding and engaging with other religions, exploring the
305 implications of this understanding for our interpretation of Lutheran Christianity,
306 and reaching out in right relationship to our neighbors of other religions and
307 worldviews.

308

309 **PART 2**

310

311 Part 1 offers a concise statement regarding our context, our vision, our calling and
312 our commitments with regard to our neighbors. Beyond this concise statement, other
313 questions need to be considered: How do we relate to these neighbors? What do
314 the Scriptures say about those of another religion? What are some of the Lutheran
315 convictions that influence our calling? And what about our commitment to evangelism?
316 Part 2 will seek to begin to address these questions.

317

318 **HOW DO WE RELATE TO NEIGHBORS OF ANOTHER RELIGION?**

319

320 *Various approaches and examples*

321

322 No single path exists for inter-religious understanding and cooperation. It takes a variety
323 of forms and moves in differing directions. That is, dialogue can foster study, and study
324 can lead to dialogue. Conversation can lead to cooperation, and cooperation can foster
325 dialogue. Group experiences can produce one-to-one relationships, and one-to-one
326 relationships can lead to group encounters. Whatever form inter-religious relations
327 take, the goal should be to achieve ever-deeper mutual understanding and to maximize
328 cooperation for the sake of the world.

329

330 While engaging those in other religious communities certainly can and should be done
331 individually as we meet individuals at work or in our neighborhood or in school, it also
332 can be done together. Many ELCA members and participants are experienced at inter-
333 religious cooperation. Their good work opens opportunities for us to replicate or to join
334 rather than needing to invent or to initiate. It is not possible to provide a comprehensive
335 list of these activities, but food banks and other social service projects, when undertaken
336 cooperatively with our neighbors of other religions and worldviews, are examples, as are

337 advocacy endeavors, such as working for the care of creation or the reduction of HIV
338 and AIDS. Some congregations share their buildings with other religious communities
339 and find the relationship mutually enriching. ELCA colleges have faculty and students
340 and courses that reflect religious diversity and initiatives and student groups that seek
341 to foster sensitivity to religious difference and competency for vocational life in a multi-
342 religious world. Lutherans have carefully and compassionately tended to the important
343 dimensions of religion and culture when welcoming and receiving refugees as new
344 neighbors. For more examples, see *Engaging Others, Knowing Ourselves: A Lutheran*
345 *Calling in a Multi-Religious World* (Lutheran University Press, 2016).

346

347 *Unique considerations*

348

349 None of what has been said in this declaration suggests that all religions are the same
350 or that they should become so. Each is different. Even if we understand one, we will be
351 surprised by another, and sometimes even our own! As a result, we need to be careful
352 not to identify individual similarities without taking into account the distinctive role
353 each element may play in its own religion. (For example, fasting is a spiritual practice
354 of both Islam and Christianity, but fasting takes a different shape and significance in
355 the two religions.) This is not to deny, however, that shared values, concerns and hopes
356 do exist across traditions. Discovering them is one of the many joys of inter-religious
357 conversation and cooperation.

358

359 *Expanding our inter-religious commitments*

360

361 The ELCA has already made a commitment to the Jewish people (see “Declaration
362 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community,” 1994).
363 That commitment reads: “We express our urgent desire to live out our faith in Jesus
364 Christ with love and respect for the Jewish people. We recognize in anti-Semitism a
365 contradiction and an affront to the Gospel, a violation of our hope and calling, and
366 we pledge this church to oppose the deadly working of such bigotry, both within our
367 churches and in the society around us. ... We pray for the continued blessing of the
368 Blessed One upon the increasing cooperation and understanding between Lutheran
369 Christians and the Jewish community.” This declaration of our inter-religious
370 commitment reaffirms that 1994 statement, while at the same time extending the
371 scope of our calling to reflect engagement with our broader multi-religious context,
372 including with our Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh neighbors, and those
373 who are not religious.

374 *Relating to neighbors who are not religious*

375

376 This declaration focuses on neighbors who practice other religions. However, a
377 large number of people in the United States are religiously unaffiliated. Some, such
378 as atheists or secular humanists, have rejected religion and a belief in God; others
379 have affirmed individual spirituality over institutional and/or church affiliation.
380 Lutheran Christians are called to build relationships with all of our neighbors.
381 Many are longing to see Christians practicing the generosity and love they profess
382 and are eager to cooperate on projects that improve the larger community. Such
383 cooperation is a way of practicing our calling, as well as a way of giving authentic
384 witness to our faith.

385

386 *Pastoral considerations*

387

388 There are a number of pastoral considerations beyond the scope of this declaration,
389 for example, the common reality of multi-religious family life. Therefore, the church
390 recognizes the need for the ongoing development of appropriate pastoral aids, including
391 guidelines for inter-religious marriages, guidelines for pastoral counseling, guidelines for
392 religious education, and guidelines for joint prayer services. In general, the ELCA is open
393 to participating in inter-religious prayer services that honor the distinctive commitments
394 and gifts of each tradition. A good deal of understanding and careful planning is needed
395 to design meaningful services that respect the integrity and rich traditions of more than
396 one religion.

397

398 **WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT THOSE OF ANOTHER RELIGION?**

399

400 *God's goal of shalom*

401

402 According to many passages in the Bible, the goal of God's activity in the world is
403 shalom. Shalom can best be described as whole, healthy relationships (a) among
404 humans, (b) between humans and the rest of creation, and (c) between humans and
405 God. The Bible uses multiple images to describe shalom, such as the wolf lying down
406 with the lamb, swords beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, people
407 able to enjoy the fruits of the trees they have planted, turning the other cheek, going
408 the second mile, and a city with its gates wide open for all, with plenty of food, water
409 and medicine, and with God so close that no special building is needed (Isaiah 2:4, 65:21-
410 22; Matthew 5:39-41; Revelation 21:22, 25 and 22:1-2). If God's goal is shalom, then our
411 calling is to foster shalom. Every time we initiate, restore, heal and embody mutually
412 respectful relationships—especially with those who practice different religions—we take a

413 step toward God’s desired goal of shalom. The hope for shalom guides and supports our
414 vision and our calling.

415

416 *Other religions in the Bible*

417

418 There is no uniformity in the Bible regarding people of other religions. In some cases,
419 the leaders of Israel try to draw a sharp line between the Israelites and their neighbors.
420 In other cases, God is portrayed as working through their neighbors who practice
421 another religion. In addition to the good Samaritan example already mentioned, there
422 are numerous examples:

- 423 • Moses receives valuable advice from Jethro, a priest of Midian, not an Israelite, who
424 also happens to be his father-in-law (Exodus 18).
- 425 • Cyrus of Persia, who did not worship the God of Israel, is “anointed” by God to
426 deliver the Israelites from exile (Isaiah 45:1).
- 427 • Jesus encounters a Canaanite woman and is moved by her faith to heal her
428 daughter (Matthew 15:27).
- 429 • Jesus responds to the needs of a Roman centurion, a commander within the
430 occupying forces—not likely a person who practiced Judaism (See Matthew 8:5-13
431 and Luke 7:1-10).
- 432 • In the story of Abimelech, Abraham and Sarah, it is the outsider Abimelech who
433 listens to God and does what is right (Genesis 20).
- 434 • The Canaanite named Rahab hides the two spies Joshua sent to find out about
435 Jericho prior to its conquest (Joshua 2).
- 436 • And the magi from the east, who likely did not practice Judaism, visit the infant
437 Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12).

438

439 These are but a few examples of how God loves, and works with, in and through people
440 of various religions. These passages reveal the perhaps surprising truth that God at
441 times invites Christians to learn from and even emulate people of other religions. In
442 the case of the good Samaritan, for example, Jesus explicitly instructs us to “Go and
443 do likewise.” These scriptural stories invite us to listen and ponder, from a position of
444 humility, for how God might use inter-religious relations to instruct us and challenge our
445 faith to grow.

446

447 *Jewish and Muslim relations*

448

449 Though our relationship to our neighbors of other religions and worldviews are each
450 important, Christians have had a particularly complex relationship with their closest
451 neighbors in the faith, Jews and Muslims. In significantly different ways, all three

452 traditions claim to worship the God of Abraham. Given this kinship, Lutherans have a
453 particular responsibility to overcome inaccurate stereotypes and misunderstandings of
454 Jews and Muslims and to seek fuller understanding and cooperation.

455

456 In Romans 9-11, Paul wrestles with the role of those Jews who have not accepted Jesus
457 as the Messiah. He has more questions than answers, but he is clear about one thing: “I
458 ask then, has God rejected his people? By no means!” (Romans 11:1) “For the gifts and
459 the calling of God are irrevocable” (Romans 11:29). Here is evidence that at least one
460 group of people who had rejected Jesus were considered people of God. Another passage
461 where this occurs is Genesis 17:20: “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and
462 make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes,
463 and I will make him a great nation.” The Scripture unequivocally asserts not only that
464 God has made the descendants of Ishmael a great nation, distinct from the nation
465 of Israel but also that God blesses them. Our Muslim neighbors regularly associate
466 themselves with Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael and re-enact central events in their story
467 during the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

468

469 **WHAT LUTHERAN CONVICTIONS INFLUENCE OUR CALLING?**

470

471 *Grace without prerequisites*

472

473 Our Lutheran tradition has emphasized that God’s grace comes to humans without
474 any prerequisites. When God repairs God’s relationship with us, it is entirely a result of
475 God’s generosity, not something we have earned. As a result, we cannot know the limits
476 of God’s grace and love. Any attempt to define a limit introduces a prerequisite. God’s
477 remarkable generosity frees us to engage in inter-religious outreach and in this way to
478 embody God’s generosity. Our calling is to come to know our neighbors and in doing so
479 to see in them the image of God.

480

481 *Limits on our knowing*

482

483 The Lutheran tradition offers other reasons for caution about our claims to know.

484

- 485 • Luther said that no human could know another person’s relationship with God. To
486 be sure, what that person says or does gives us clues, but, ultimately, we cannot
487 see into another’s heart.
- 488 • Similarly, Luther insisted that we cannot know the inner workings of God. To be
489 sure, God has generously revealed God’s attitude toward us, God’s overall purpose
490 and God’s character, but the inner workings of God remain hidden. Hence, we must

491 be careful about claiming to know God’s judgments regarding another religion or
492 the individual human beings who practice it.

- 493 • There is another reason for caution. The Lutheran tradition has understood the
494 word “faith” to mean trust. Faith is relational and not simply, or even primarily,
495 about affirming beliefs. Hence, we also must be careful not to judge our neighbors
496 on the basis of their religious beliefs.

497

498 The full story of the relationship between our neighbor and God is beyond our
499 knowledge. In the context of inter-religious relations, what is important is that we do not
500 need to have this question answered in order to be hospitable, treat one another with
501 respect, and find ways to cooperate for the sake of the larger community.

502

503 *God in the world*

504

505 As we respond to our calling, we are confident that God is at work in the world, behind
506 the scenes, caring for all of creation, respecting human freedom and dignity, and
507 fostering wholeness. We are sent out into the world by God who is already at work
508 there. When we reach out to a neighbor, we are reaching out to someone who, whether
509 the person acknowledges it or not, has already received gifts from God. In addition, just
510 as the love of God reaches us through the words and actions of others, so do our own
511 words and actions serve as “channels” (Luther’s word) of God’s gifts to others.

512

513 *Ministries of reconciliation*

514

515 Our calling in Christ is to participate in ministries of reconciliation. “In Christ God was
516 reconciling the world to himself” and “entrusting the message of reconciliation to us”
517 (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). This message, whether spoken or embodied, aims to restore
518 relations. It includes both humans and other parts of creation (“in him God was pleased
519 to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven” (Colossians 1:20).
520 Further, our calling to ministries of reconciliation is complementary, not contradictory, to
521 our calling to share the gospel. When we seek to restore right relations—among humans,
522 all of creation, and with God—we are serving as “ambassadors for Christ, since God is
523 making his appeal through us” (2 Corinthians 5:20). The disciple who is invited to follow
524 Christ is invited to be a reconciler—a reconciler who works for unity, justice and peace.

525

526 *Ever depending on forgiveness*

527

528 Our calling of reconciliation depends on God’s forgiveness. We need to acknowledge
529 not only our own personal errors and omissions but also the collective errors of our

530 tradition.² These include misdeeds, such as our readiness to benefit from the conquest
531 of American Indian lands, chattel slavery and the treatment of the Jews during and after
532 the Reformation,³ in addition to failures to reach out with respect to people of all races,
533 ethnicities and cultures. Not only do we rely on forgiveness for the past, we also rely on
534 forgiveness for the present and the future. Because our responsibility for others has no
535 limits, inevitably our best efforts will fall short. We, therefore, rely on forgiveness for support
536 as we reach out into unfamiliar territory, navigating religious and cultural differences.
537 The promise of forgiveness sets us free to risk the unfamiliar. Fortunately, based on the
538 experience of those who have taken such steps, we can expect and hope that our neighbors
539 will be gracious and hospitable to us and be quite willing to overlook or forgive our well-
540 intentioned mistakes. In all likelihood, they too find themselves in unfamiliar territory.

541

542 *Acknowledging suffering*

543

544 At the heart of Luther's "theology of the cross" is our calling to take the reality of
545 suffering seriously. Whenever possible, this means seeking ways to end suffering. At
546 other times, we have no option available to accomplish this. God, who is most fully
547 revealed through the cross and the resurrection, always comes to "be with" humans
548 and calls them to "be with" others. From this perspective, God is seen more clearly
549 through suffering—including the suffering of Jesus, the suffering of others and our own
550 suffering—than through success.

551

552 Acknowledging the reality of suffering unites us not only to God but also to one
553 another. The commonality and universality of human suffering binds us inextricably to
554 each other. This influences our understanding of our vocation. When we acknowledge
555 the suffering of those whose beliefs are different from our own and recognize the
556 commonality of suffering, we find a fuller more compassionate understanding of those
557 who differ and a common calling to alleviate it wherever it exists. At the same time,
558 when we acknowledge the suffering of other Christians who experience discrimination
559 or attacks because of their religious beliefs, we can begin to understand how inter-
560 religious relations can be necessary not only for cooperation but, indeed, for survival. In
561 suffering of all forms, as neighbors who come to see each other as made in the image of
562 God, we stand together, not apart.

² We do so not because we bear personal guilt for the past but because we are responsible for the future. Repentance is a re-orientation that puts us on a different path in the present and the future.

³ See the "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" Social Policy Resolution CA16.02.04 adopted by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly and "Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community," requested by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly and adopted by the Church Council in April 1994 (both available at ELCA.org).

563 **WHAT ABOUT OUR COMMITMENT TO EVANGELISM?**

564
565 Throughout the centuries, and for all time, our primary calling as Christians is to share
566 the good news of Jesus Christ, who frees us to love and serve our neighbors. This calling
567 to evangelism, of witnessing to the power of life in Christ, must be carried out in all
568 aspects of our lives and work as church, including in our inter-religious relations. Only
569 then are we authentically engaging our neighbors as Christians.

570
571 Evangelism takes many forms, in word and in deed, always offered in love. Whether
572 through preaching, teaching, or acts of justice and mercy, “The commandment we have
573 from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also” (1 John
574 4:21). Because the good news frees us to love and serve our neighbors, and likewise to
575 share with them why the love of Jesus calls and inspires us to do so, evangelism and
576 inter-religious engagement are both parts of our calling. The Great Commission, found
577 both in Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-16, stands alongside the call for Christians to
578 be salt, leaven and light in the places where they live (Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 13:33).

579
580 Historically, Lutherans have emphasized the remarkable generosity evidenced by God
581 and our own inability to do anything to contribute to our salvation. We are saved
582 by grace. Faith is a response to the love of God, not a prerequisite for that love. As
583 Lutherans, we share this good news as a compelling counter-narrative to a theology of
584 “you must believe, then God will save you,” which in Luther’s day took the form of “you
585 need to do your best, and then God will save you.”

586
587 Sharing this gift that we have been given freely is a faithful response to God’s love
588 in Jesus Christ. This is different than proselytizing or targeting certain groups for
589 conversion. God’s gift, freely given, cannot be forced upon others. Our love and care,
590 as an extension of God’s love and care, are also freely given without any contingencies.
591 We do not require others to accept a credal statement in order to receive our love and
592 care. Luther was confident that, whenever the good news is shared, the Spirit is at work.
593 This Spirit blows when and where it wills. We are called to share the good news, but
594 bringing others to Christ is ultimately God’s work through the Holy Spirit. As we are
595 taught in Luther’s Small Catechism, “I believe that by my own understanding or strength
596 I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has
597 called me through the gospel” (Explanation to the Third Article of The Apostles Creed,
598 translation in Evangelical Lutheran Worship). As individuals called to be reconcilers
599 in God’s world, we have two tasks: to share the good news and to love and serve our
600 neighbors, no matter who they are. In other words, our calling is to embody that all—
601 without exception—are created in the image of God. Admittedly, we always fall short, and

602 sometimes we even forsake this calling. In the past and even today, there are examples
603 of those who have been victimized by Christians, sometimes explicitly in the name of
604 Christ. Reconciling and re-building trust with our neighbors is an important way in
605 which we re-present Christ, serving as his ambassadors, and becoming reconciled also
606 to God.

607

608 *The way*

609

610 But what then about a passage such as John 14:6, “I am the way and the truth and
611 the life. No one comes to the father except through me”? This passage needs to be
612 understood not in isolation, but in relation to other parts of the Bible. Its immediate
613 context is important. It occurs during Jesus’ discussion with his disciples about
614 the cross and the death that he faces. So “the way” is the way of the cross, of
615 acknowledging suffering.

616

617 “The way” of the cross does not include manipulation, judgmentalism or a claim
618 to have all the answers. As we engage with people who practice another religion,
619 we are called to ponder what it means to embody the way of the cross. From St.
620 Paul we learn the power and persuasiveness of humbleness rather than arrogance
621 in our relationship with others. “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ
622 Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as
623 something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being
624 born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and
625 became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:5-8).

626

627 *The truth*

628

629 Lutherans wholeheartedly agree with John 14:6 that Jesus is “the truth.” Jesus is
630 God incarnate, born among us as a human being. As Luther taught and the ELCA
631 constitution affirms, Jesus is the preeminent form of God’s Word.⁴ To know Jesus
632 is to know God. In this sense, the person of Jesus is the truth. The life, death and
633 resurrection of Jesus is at the center of our witness. This is not to say that truth is
634 absent from other religions. Human beings cannot know everything about God, nor
635 can we set limits on God.

⁴ The preached word is the second form, and the written Scripture is the third.

636 *The life*

637

638 Lutherans also confess and draw daily strength from Jesus as “the life,” the third
639 description in John 14:6. As St. Paul writes, “Do you not know that all of us who have
640 been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been
641 buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead
642 by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3-4). It is
643 from this perspective of life in Christ that we engage our neighbors of other religions.
644 We do so with full awareness of our own dependence on God’s grace, mercy and
645 forgiveness and with trust that God in Christ has willed reconciliation for all.

646

647 As Christians, we believe that the good news of God’s grace is worth offering to others.
648 Not only may God work through others, God may also work through us to the degree
649 that we witness to a God of generosity and forgiveness, a God who loves humans, values
650 their freedom and works for their wholeness.

651

652 **CONCLUSION**

653

654 Our vision is a society where the dignity of every person is respected, where God’s
655 shalom reigns and all people work together for the common good. As we live or
656 work with individuals of other cultures and religions, we are called to overcome the
657 isolation that separates neighbors from one another and to serve as ambassadors of
658 Christ’s ministries of reconciliation. We are called to learn to know and understand our
659 neighbors and to work together for their well-being. We are called to work with them
660 to overcome the obstacles and suffering they face, and to build justice and peace for all
661 people and God’s creation. We are called to live in hope, not fear.

662

663 Our calling is a responsibility, yes, but it is also a joy. Engagement with our neighbors
664 enriches our lives and our faith. In relationship with our neighbors, we come to
665 understand more fully the depth and breadth of the riches of God and to appreciate
666 more deeply the wonder of God’s generous love, which we experience through the life,
667 death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We discern more accurately how to reflect God’s
668 generosity in our thinking and in our behavior. And, as individuals and as neighbors,
669 we benefit from the increased health of our communities and from a world that is
670 increasingly just and peaceful, as God intends.

671

672 May God bless the efforts of this church and its members and participants as we set our
673 sights on this vision, as we seek to respond to God’s calling and as we strive to uphold
674 these commitments.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment:

A draft policy statement of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



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

Church Council Discussion

April 5, 2018

INTER-RELIGIOUS TASK FORCE

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WHY THIS?

A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment:

A Policy Statement of the ELCA (1991)

“[Ecumenism] should not be confused with the important but distinct responsibility for the church to enter into conversations and reach greater understanding with people of other faiths. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does engage, in a variety of ways, in this inter-faith work and needs in the future a separate, official statement to describe its commitments and aspirations in this area. When that statement is prepared, special attention must be given to the distinctiveness of Judaism.”

Inter-Religious Task Force Timeline

November 2016	December 2016 – August 2017	September 2017	October 2017	November 2017	December 2017
Inaugural meeting of task force to define scope of work	First draft developed	Preliminary review by ELCA Conference of Bishops' Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Liaison Committee	Review by ecumenical and inter-religious partners	Second meeting of Task Force to revise second draft Review by ELCA Church Council Executive Committee	Review by ELCA Conference of Bishops and the Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Board

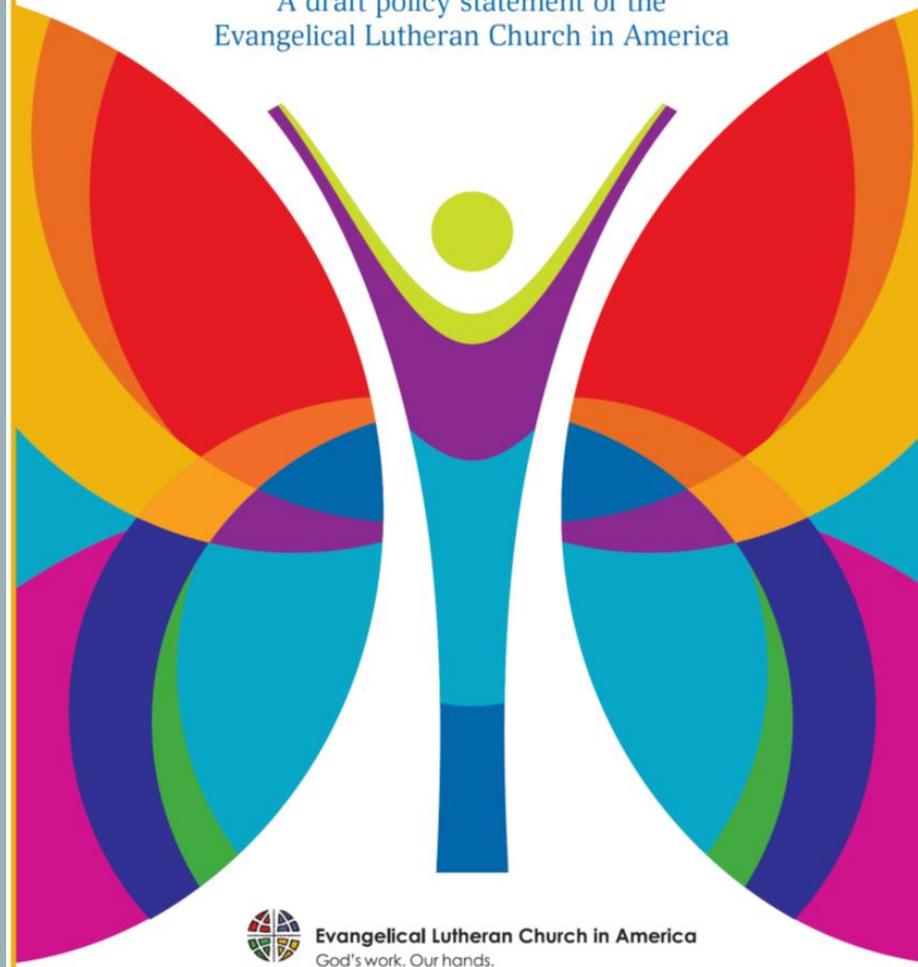
January 8 – June 30, 2018	July – August 2018	September 2018	October 2018	November 2018	January 2019	April 2019	August 2019
Review and online comment period Synod hearings and hearings with the ELCA Conference of Bishops and Church Council	Revisions to policy statement based on review period	Third meeting of Task Force to revise final draft	Document shared with Conference of Bishops	Document shared with Church Council for possible action	Task Force to finalize as needed	Document to Church Council again, if needed	Hearings and possible action by the Churchwide Assembly

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

- The public comment period is now open through June 30.
- The draft policy statement, online survey, & background materials can be found here: <http://bit.ly/elcainterreligious>
- The document includes a “Reader’s introduction and tips for individual and group study (p. 5 of the PDF).
- For environmental and budgetary reasons, we are not distributing hard copies of the draft or online survey.
- Individuals and/or groups can participate using the online survey.
- Please consider ways your synod can participate; LEIRN reps can provide support. You are invited to play a role in convening/hosting conversations.

A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment:

A draft policy statement of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

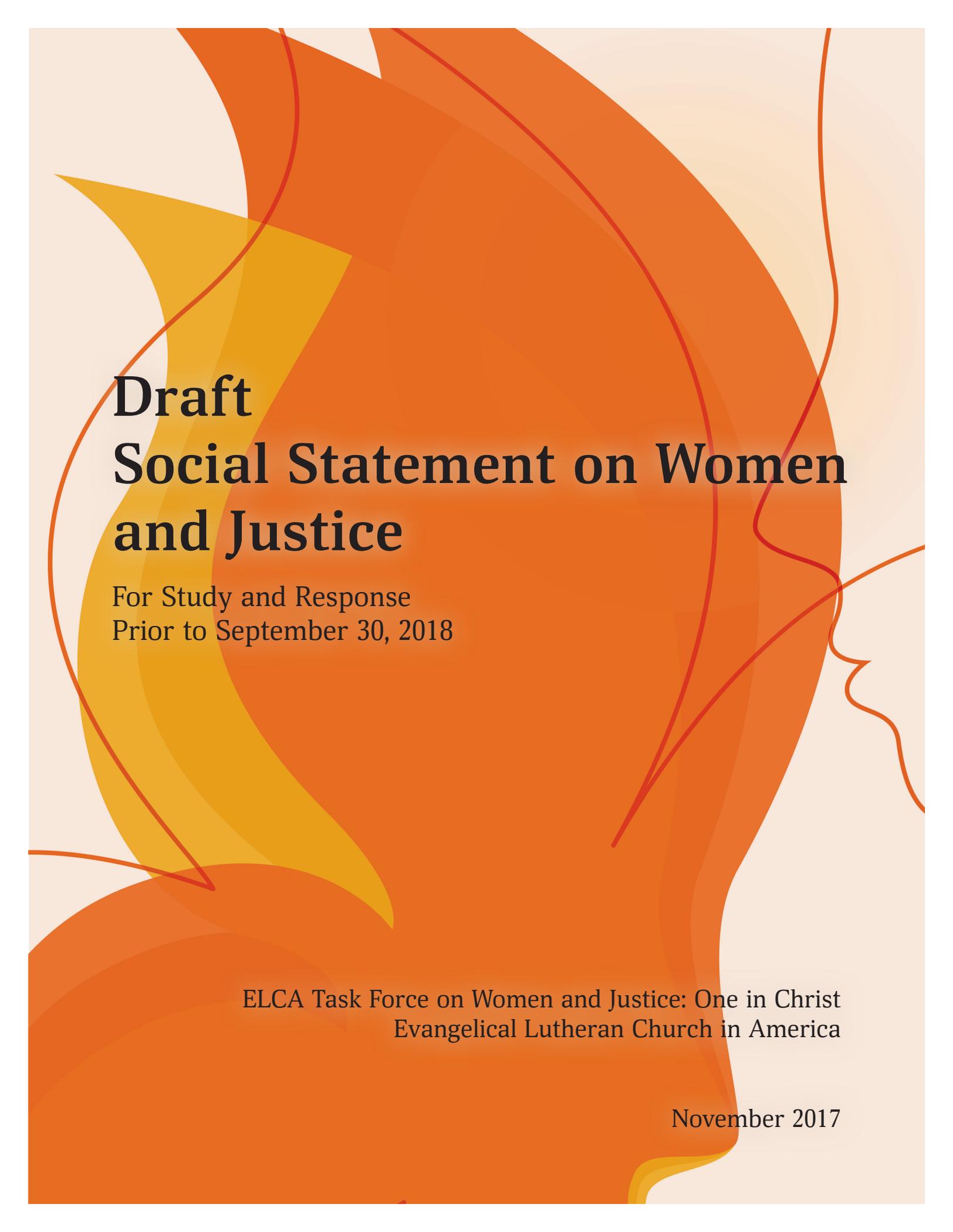


Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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<http://bit.ly/elcainterreligious>

DISCUSSION

- What do you think are the strengths of each section? Weaknesses?
- Is the structure of the document helpful?
- What else needs to be said? How should it be said differently?
- What will be most challenging for the people in your synod? What will be most encouraging?
- Does this accomplish the goal of reflecting the “distinct responsibility of the church to enter into conversations and reach greater understanding with people of other faiths”?
- What advice do you have for the task force?

The background features a large, stylized profile of a person's head in shades of orange and yellow. The profile is facing right. Overlaid on this are several abstract, flowing shapes in similar colors, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall aesthetic is modern and artistic.

Draft Social Statement on Women and Justice

For Study and Response
Prior to September 30, 2018

ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

November 2017

The ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ

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Reader's Introduction and Tips for Group Study

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is preparing a social statement on women and justice to be considered by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, as mandated by the 2009 assembly. This "Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice" is an invitation to everyone in the ELCA to join in conversation and discernment about this concern as people of faith.

There are several ways to participate in the process:

- *Study, discuss, comment:* You are invited to study, discuss and use the response form to share your thoughts in response to the draft. This can be done by individuals or as part of a study group. There is a response form at the back of this booklet or it can be filled out on line at bit.ly/womenandjusticedraft.
- *Participate in a hearing:* Many synods will be holding hearings, and you might attend one of those in your area. If you are interested, please speak to your synod office or send an email to womenandjustice@elca.org.

The due date to submit comments is **Sept. 30, 2018**. Information on how to respond or for acquiring additional copies may be found at the back of this booklet.

What is a draft social statement?

This document was prepared by the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ. It is the task force's draft of this social statement. As such, it is an invitation to discern what this church should teach about contemporary issues related to sexism and patriarchy in our society.

This draft represents the best thinking of the task force to date. Although not all task force members necessarily agree with every aspect of this draft, it comes with unanimous support for sharing with our church for discussion. It follows and grows out of the study issued by the task force in August of 2016 titled "Faith, Sexism and Justice: Conversations Toward a Social Statement." Responses from those who used the study were quite positive.

Your response to this draft, along with that of many others across this church, is vital to the process of developing a proposed social statement that will be considered by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Talking together is important in our life together as part of Christ's body. Your feedback will join the body of responses that inform the task force's thinking as it revises this draft to create a proposed social statement by January 2019. For more information about the task force and the process, please visit ELCA.org/womenandjustice.

What is a social statement?

ELCA social statements are teaching and policy documents that assist members in forming judgments and in guiding action on social issues. They also set policy for this church, guide advocacy efforts and support its public voice. Social statements are developed through an extensive process of deliberation involving the whole church and must be adopted by a two-thirds vote of an ELCA churchwide assembly.

Leading a discussion on this Draft

Significant responses to this draft will come through synodical hearings. In a hearing, participants work through the text line by line to identify concerns to be shared with the task force.

At the same time, the task force encourages group discussion of this draft of the social statement because it hopes to receive broad and thoughtful responses from across our church. This social statement is written in two interrelated sections: the Basic Statement and the Fuller Explanation. The Basic Statement contains the whole statement but from a big-picture vantage point. The Fuller Explanation allows readers to go deeper into the meaning with more details. Discussion leaders may want to plan for a couple of sessions, one or two that cover the Basic Statement and then several that go more deeply into the five major sections of the Fuller Explanation.

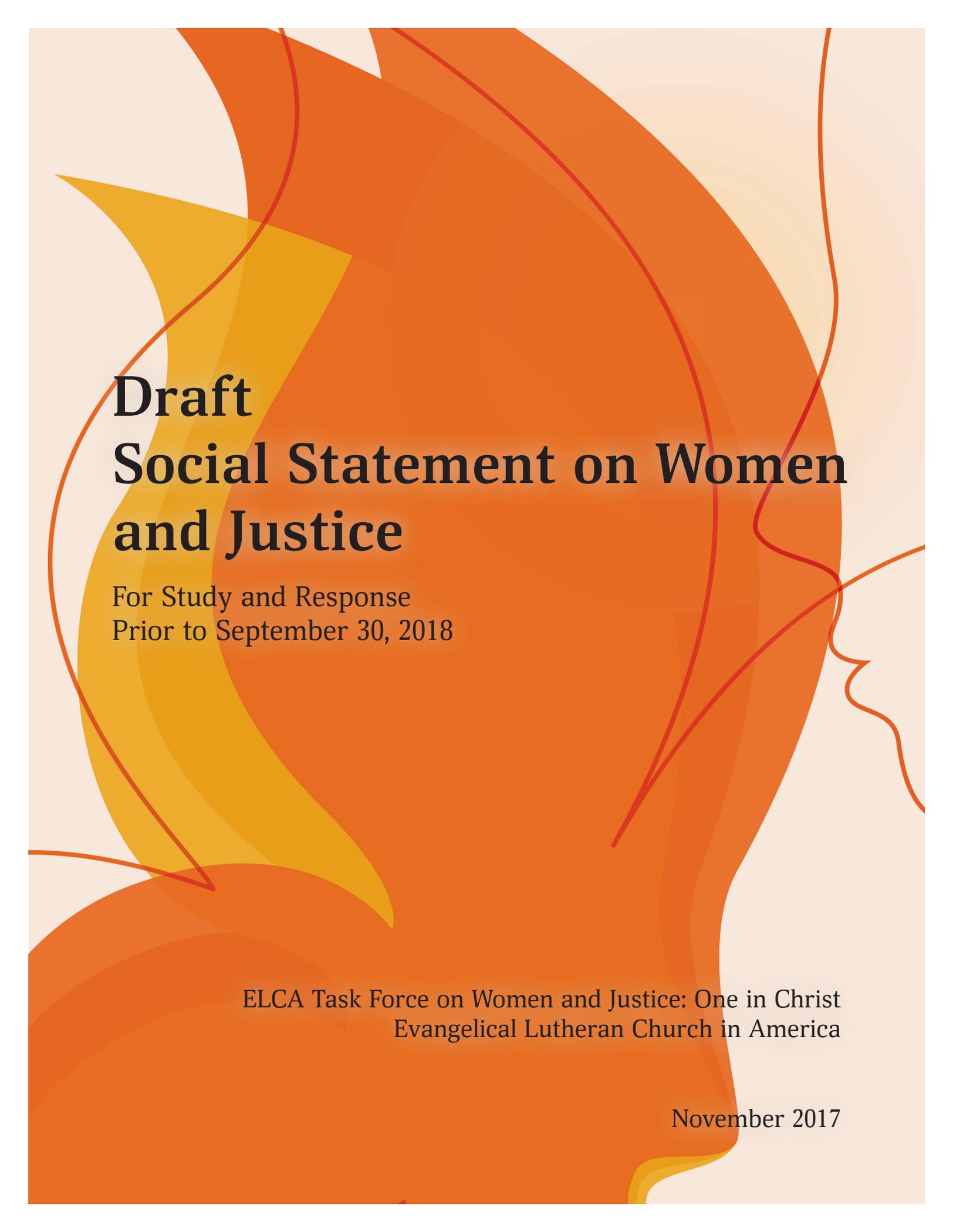
Preparing to lead discussion sessions:

Questions like these may help guide the discussion:

- What in each section speaks to your experience? In what ways?
- What do you think are the strengths of each section? Weaknesses?
- What else needs to be said? How should it be said differently?
- What advice do you have for the task force, keeping in mind that it is charged with writing a social statement for the whole ELCA?

Tips for leading the sessions:

- Keep in mind that discussing matters related to sexism often can touch on sensitive issues and painful personal experiences.
- Invite people of all genders, ages and perspectives to join the discussion. Sometimes people just need to be invited to feel welcome.
- Leaders do not need to be pastors. Discussion facilitators from within the congregation can be recruited and briefed.
- Read and become familiar with the content of the entire draft before beginning a study session.
- Be prepared to take some notes or assign a recorder to capture ideas and thoughts during the discussion. This may be especially helpful when you get to the Response Form found at the back of this booklet. It also is available online at bit.ly/womenandjusticedraft.

The background features a large, stylized profile of a person's head in shades of orange and yellow. The profile is facing right. Overlaid on this are several overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in various shades of orange and yellow, creating a layered, artistic effect. Thin, dark orange lines are scattered across the background, some following the contours of the profile and others as abstract, flowing paths.

Draft Social Statement on Women and Justice

For Study and Response
Prior to September 30, 2018

ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

November 2017



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Prepared by the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ

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ITEM #: ELCAOB1021

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Bible, © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission.

Available online at ELCA.org/womenandjustice.

Ordering a copy

A single copy of the draft can be obtained without cost by downloading it from the Women and Justice website (ELCA.org/womenandjustice) or by calling 800-638-3522.

Multiple printed copies may be ordered from the ELCA Online Resource Catalog for a nominal fee at ELCA.org/resources.

Sending your comments to the task force

You are invited to respond to the draft and send your comments to the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice. You may use the response form at the back of this document or write your comments in letter or essay form. Please send them to the task force by Sept. 30, 2018.

You may send your comments to:

Mail: ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice
Office of the Presiding Bishop
8765 W. Higgins Rd.
Chicago, IL 60631-4101

Email: womenandjustice@elca.org

Online: bit.ly/womenandjusticedraft

Participating in hearings

You are invited to participate in hearings on the draft, which will be held in many synods. Information and dates for these hearings will be posted on the website.

Please visit ELCA.org/womenandjustice.

Draft of the Social Statement on Women and Justice

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Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice

Basic Statement

Our Common Foundation

We believe God is the creator of all. We in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are, therefore, one with humankind made in the image of God, and one with the whole creation.

We believe God is the Word embodied in Jesus Christ who unites us through baptism with all Christians in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. As Lutherans, we are united in our confession that we are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and liberated to serve God's whole creation, seeking peace and justice.

We believe that God the Holy Spirit is always at work, transforming and inspiring new ways of living in this world toward God's promised, beloved, eternal community.

Grounded in this understanding of the Triune God, we believe God's intention for humanity is abundant life for all. This calls us to equity and justice for all with respect to issues of gender and sex. We confess that the world is broken by sin. Relying on God's promise in the Gospel, we are bold to declare that patriarchy and sexism are both sinful and found within our own faith tradition and our society.

We believe that we are called by the Holy Spirit to raise a faithful prophetic voice that distinguishes the central witness of the Scriptures from the misuses of the Scriptures found within the Christian tradition. We will resist patriarchy and sexism within church and society by relying on God's gifts of knowledge, reason, and scientific inquiry as we work together with all people of good will.

*Note: Underlined words indicate a glossary reference.

31 Grounded in this unity of faith, in this statement we commit ourselves to
32 the continual work of prayer, learning, reflection, discernment, and action to
33 resist patriarchy and sexism as we live together in community into the promised
34 abundant life God intends for all.

36 I. Core Convictions

37
38 1) We believe God's intention revealed through the Scriptures is that all people
39 flourish and have life abundantly.

40
41 2) We believe all people are created equally in the image of God. Every individual
42 is dependent upon God and all share in the God-given vocation to joyfully
43 contribute their gifts to help all of creation flourish. As members of this society,
44 we also affirm that all people are created equal and are endowed with certain
45 inalienable rights.

46
47 3) We affirm that God's creation is wonderful in its variety. We believe God
48 creates humanity in diversity, encompassing a wide variety of experiences,
49 identities, and expressions, including sex and gender.

50
51 4) While we affirm that God's intention is equity and fullness of life for
52 everyone, we confess that the sins of patriarchy and sexism, like all human
53 sin, disrupt God's intention. We recognize that the struggle to achieve sex
54 and gender equity is shaped and complicated by factors of race and ethnicity,
55 nationality and immigration status, sexuality, gender identity, economic means,
56 age, abilities, and education.

57
58 5) We confess that, as God's people, forgiven in Jesus Christ, we are at the same
59 time liberated and sinful. We are broken, and yet we are made new by grace
60 through faith. This good news is true even as we participate in cultures and
61 societies that are broadly patriarchal and sexist.

62 6) We confess that we are justified by God’s grace through faith. This promise
63 frees us from trying to earn God’s love or justify ourselves, so that we can
64 do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God and our neighbors. A
65 commitment to neighbor justice is key to our understanding of the ministry of
66 Jesus Christ and to our reading of the Scriptures. God’s act of redeeming love
67 evokes love in us for others who need justice in all areas of their lives. This call
68 to justice specifically means that we seek equity and justice for women and girls
69 and others who experience oppression due to sexism and patriarchy.

70
71 7) We believe that, redeemed and made new, the Church is called to live as the
72 Body of Christ in the world even while we struggle with the realities of patriarchy
73 and sexism. As Lutherans, we recognize that acting justly within the home, the
74 church, society, and civic life for the good of all is one of the vocations to which
75 God calls all people.

76 77 **II. Analysis of Patriarchy and Sexism**

78
79 8) We recognize patriarchy and sexism are “a mix of power, privilege, and
80 prejudice.”¹ They prevent all human beings from living into the abundant life
81 for which God created them. Patriarchy is a social system dominated by men,
82 identified with men, and centered on men’s actions, voices, and authority. In
83 patriarchal systems, men are typically viewed as better than women, given more
84 power than women, and have more authority than women. This patriarchal
85 worldview harms women and girls. Sexism is the reinforcement of male privilege.
86 It promotes silencing, controlling, and devaluing women, girls, and gender non-
87 conforming people. Everyone intentionally and unintentionally participates in a
88 patriarchal system, and it affects individuals in different ways.

89
90 9) We recognize that when society and church have spoken about women and
91 girls, the hidden assumption often has been that they are white and heterosexual.

¹ *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA], 1993), 4.

92 However, this statement’s references to women and girls are inclusive of all
93 women—women of color and white women, lesbians, transgender women, women
94 with disabilities, and immigrant women.

95
96 10) We believe that many individuals who suffer under the weight of patriarchy
97 and sexism also experience intersecting burdens. In addition to sex or gender
98 discrimination, they may also be treated in oppressive ways according to
99 their race, ethnicity, economic status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity,
100 immigration status, or ability, or because of the language they speak.

101
102 11) We reject patriarchy and sexism as sinful because they deny the truth that
103 all people are created equally in God’s image. Too often behaviors and decisions
104 rooted in patriarchy and sexism cause overt harm, inequities, and degradations.
105 Examples include gender-based violence (including physical and emotional violence
106 and coercion), pay inequality, human trafficking, restricted access to health care
107 and economic resources, inadequate research on health issues affecting women,
108 denial of educational opportunities, objectifying portrayals of women in media, and
109 failure to value and support elderly women, mothers, and children.²

110
111 12) We recognize that the problems experienced by women and girls are vast.
112 However, patriarchal structures that reinforce and perpetuate rigid sex and
113 gender expectations also harm men and boys, including gay and transgender
114 men. Men and boys are harmed when they are forced to conform to narrow
115 gender stereotypes, such as those that tell men and boys not to have traits or
116 roles that are like those associated with women and girls. People of all genders
117 who do not conform to gender-based roles and stereotypes can be made invisible
118 and oppressed.

119
120 13) We celebrate that humans are relational beings and that we live in social
121 systems. The dynamics and powers in these systems are greater than any one

² See ELCA social teaching documents that address many of these topics: ELCA.org/socialstatements
and ELCA.org/socialmessages.

122 individual, government, culture, or religious community, even though personal
123 responsibility is involved. Most instances of patriarchal harm flow from and into
124 commonly held beliefs and customs and can be found in specific laws, policies,
125 and practices within secular and church institutions. Our church's commitment to
126 neighbor justice compels us to expose how patriarchy and sexism are woven into
127 all aspects of individual, social, and religious life, causing harm to all of humanity.

128

129 **III. Resources for Resisting Patriarchy and Sexism**

130

131 14) The Scriptures show us a rich texture of justice that is central to God's
132 intention for human flourishing.³ This church has identified sufficiency,
133 sustainability, solidarity, and participation as the key principles of justice.⁴ Social
134 structures and institutions, including the ELCA as a human institution, must be
135 assessed and guided by these principles.

136

137 15) In faith, this church is empowered to confess that Christianity, in certain
138 beliefs, practices, and aspects of its history, is complicit in the sins of patriarchy
139 and sexism. At the same time, we believe God provides resources within the
140 Christian faith and the Lutheran tradition and is at work in human community
141 to bring forth new ways of living that challenge the harmful beliefs and effects of
142 patriarchy and sexism.

143

144 16) While God's Word of Law and Gospel speaks through the Scriptures, there
145 are words and images, social patterns, and moral beliefs in them that reflect the
146 patriarchal values of the cultures and societies in which they arose. Their continued
147 misuse contributes to maintaining hierarchies and patterns of inequity and harm.

3 See, e.g., Psalm 33:4-5; Proverbs 28:5; Luke 18:1-8; Galatians 6:1-10; I John 3:11-24.

4 See ELCA social statements *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice* (Chicago: ELCA, 1993); *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (Chicago: ELCA, 1999); and *Genetics: Faith and Responsibility* (Chicago: ELCA, 2011).

148 17) The Christian theological tradition also bears this dual character. In particular,
149 some doctrines affect our understanding about humanity and God more than
150 others. These teachings affect our use of language. The teachings about the
151 image of God, the Body of Christ, and the Trinity have sometimes been misused
152 to support patriarchal beliefs, attitudes, church practices, behaviors, and
153 structures. At the same time, these doctrines also provide liberating resources
154 for healing the effects of the sins of patriarchy and sexism.

155

156 18) The central Lutheran belief that we are justified by grace through faith
157 empowers this church to challenge the structures of patriarchy and sexism that
158 ascribe value based on human standards.

159

160 19) We recognize that significant progress has been made in society against
161 patriarchy and sexism; however, evidence demonstrates that more attention
162 is needed. Cultural and religious beliefs, practices, policies, and laws continue
163 to promote inequality and inequity and continue to degrade, lessen, and harm
164 people. We believe that Christians, together with many other partners, are able to
165 understand and advance equity. This happens through beliefs and ideas that are
166 gender-just and through laws and policies that support an equitable common good.

167

IV. Response to God's Work:

Call to Action and New Commitments in Society

169

170
171 20) This church teaches that the God who justifies expects all people to seek
172 justice in earthly structures and systems. Human reason and knowledge are
173 necessary here, and this church does not presume to have quick or easy
174 solutions for the deeply rooted and complex problems of patriarchy and sexism
175 that have permeated these structures. Our commitments, however, express this
176 church's firm hope that social relations can be ordered in better ways so that all
177 people may experience greater equity and justice.

178 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits to:

179

180 21) Seek, support, and advocate that diverse, gendered bodies be respected,
181 rather than objectified, abused, denigrated, or marginalized. First steps toward
182 this goal are laws that do not deprive anyone of their human and civil rights.

183

184 22) Seek, support, and advocate for the eradication of gender-based violence,
185 including rape and sexual assault, by acknowledging both personal responsibility
186 and the systemic aspects of such violence. (See the ELCA's social messages
187 "Gender-based Violence" and "Commercial Sexual Exploitation.")

188

189 23) Seek, support, and advocate for portrayals of people in entertainment, media,
190 and advertising that do not objectify or stereotype but rather show all people as
191 capable of the wide variety of human characteristics and roles.

192

193 24) Seek, support, and advocate for medical research, health care delivery, and
194 access to health care services, including reproductive health care, that recognize
195 how bodies differ and that eliminate discrimination due to gender or sexuality.
196 (See ELCA social statement *Health: Our Common Endeavor*.)

197

198 25) Seek, support, and advocate for economic policies, regulations, and practices
199 that enhance equity and equality for women and girls, with special concern for
200 raising up women who experience intersecting forms of oppression. (See the
201 ELCA's social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*.)

202

203 26) Seek, support, and advocate for services and legal reforms that attend
204 to the particular needs of women, girls, and boys who are physically and
205 economically vulnerable due to migration and immigration. (See the ELCA's
206 social message "Immigration.")

207 27) Seek, support, and advocate for multi-faceted understandings of social and
208 economic roles so that our human traits (such as courage or care) or callings
209 (such as business leader or stay-at-home parent) are not prescribed by gender
210 or sex. Encourage and empower all people to use their gifts for the sake of the
211 social good, whether in the home, at work, or in the public sphere.

212

213 28) Seek, support, and advocate for resources for families and communities that
214 empower parents, whether single or coupled, to nurture, protect, and provide
215 for their household in ways that do not reinforce gender-based stereotypes. In
216 particular, advocate for men to participate in all family roles associated with the
217 home, caregiving, parenting, and nurturing.

218

219 29) Seek, support, and advocate for an increase in women's participation in
220 local, state, and national politics, with special attention to raising up women who
221 experience intersecting forms of oppression.

222

223

V. Response to God's Work:

224

Call to Action and New Commitments Regarding the Church

225

226 30) This church recognizes that the Body of Christ is called to honor and support
227 women, girls, and people with diverse gender identities in ways more consistent
228 with life-giving theology and faith practices. Therefore, as a church, we commit
229 ourselves to celebrating and affirming the gifts and insights that women and girls
230 bring to congregations, institutions, and the church as a whole.

231

232 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits to:

233

234 31) Promote scriptural translation and interpretation that support gender justice,
235 acknowledge the patriarchal context in which the Scriptures were written, and reject
236 the misuse of Scripture to support sexist attitudes and patriarchal structures.

237 32) Promote theological reflection that is attentive to the gender-based needs of
238 the neighbor. Theologians need to be honest about how church teachings have
239 been misused to support patriarchy and sexism. All teachers of the faith should
240 express God's desire that all persons may thrive.

241

242 33) Use inclusive language for humankind and inclusive and expansive language
243 for God. Encourage the use of language for God that expands rather than limits
244 our understanding of God's goodness and mystery. In particular, we support
245 developing liturgies, hymns, prayers, and educational materials that broaden our
246 language beyond primarily male images. This practice follows the Scriptures'
247 witness that God is wholly other and transcends human categories of sex and
248 gender. Therefore, metaphors and images for God should be drawn from the lives
249 of women and men, from nature, and from humanity in all its diversity to speak
250 of the fullness and beauty of God.

251

252 34) Develop and support more extensive policies and practices within the ELCA
253 that promote the authority and leadership of all women within this church in all
254 its expressions.

255

256 35) Promote changes that are economically just, including equal pay, for women
257 in all ELCA institutions and organizations, with special attention to the situations
258 of people affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.

259

260 36) Seek and encourage faithful discernment and, where possible, joint action
261 with other members of the Body of Christ and inter-religious and secular
262 partners on issues of patriarchy and sexism. This includes the affirmation of the
263 Lutheran World Federation's Gender Justice Policy and continued dialogue with
264 national and global ecumenical and inter-faith partners.

Hope for Justice

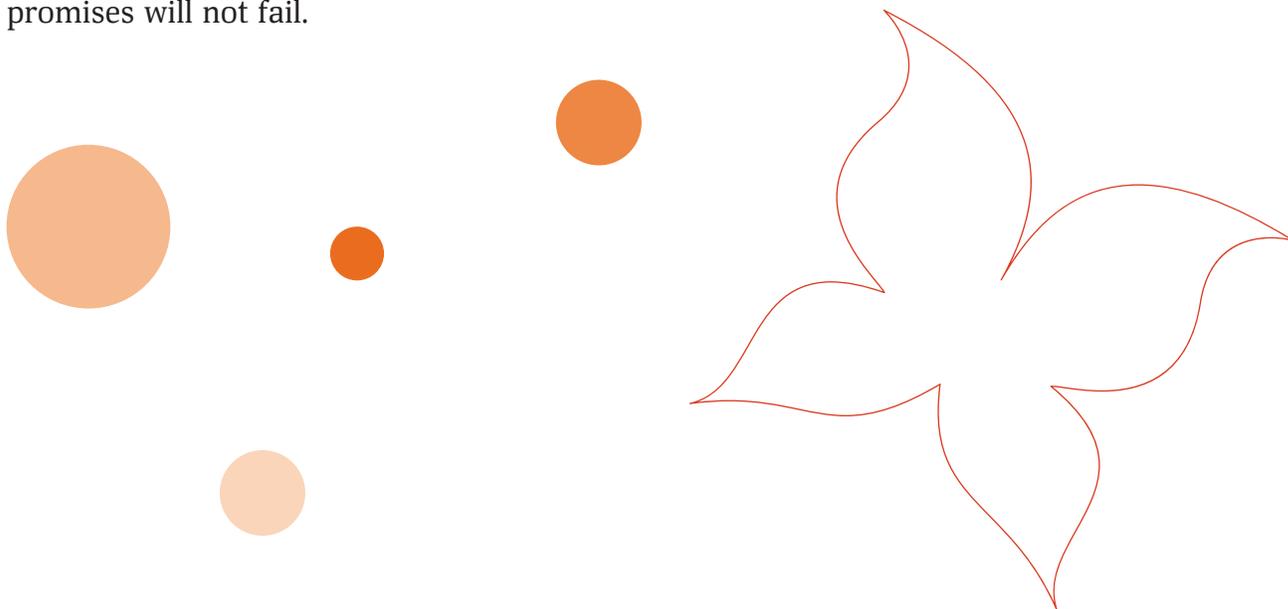
265

266

267 We of the ELCA share these convictions and commitments with thanks to the
268 Triune God whose love intends an abundant life for every person. We recognize
269 as God's gifts the society and the church of which we are part, even while an
270 analysis describes how patriarchy and sexism pervade our lives within them.
271 We give thanks for God's gracious promises to break the bonds of sin and to
272 empower our lives of hope to seek neighbor justice.

273 We rejoice that God is always at work to transform and inspire new ways
274 of living in human society, ways that lean more fully toward God's intention.
275 We are grateful that strides have been made in this society against patriarchy
276 and sexism, and we hear the summons to seek even fuller measures of justice
277 and equity for all. We do not presume to have quick, perfect or easy solutions
278 as we work together with all people of good will. We simply recognize that we
279 have both the freedom and the obligation for the neighbor to do much more, as
280 guided by these commitments.

281 We know that the Church of Christ in every age is beset by change, but as
282 Spirit led, is called to test and claim its heritage.⁵ We celebrate the Holy Spirit's
283 work in this church to urge ongoing reformation toward equity and equality for
284 all. Most of all, we live in hope because through Jesus Christ we trust that God's
285 promises will not fail.



⁵ See "The Church of Christ in Every Age" by Fred Pratt Green in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), #729.

Fuller Explanation

I. Core Convictions

1) We believe God’s intention revealed through the Scriptures is that all people flourish and have life abundantly.

“God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31a).

The Scriptures reveal God’s intention of abundant and sustainable life for creation, including for human beings. Creation stories tell of the goodness, flourishing, and majestic diversity that flow from God’s creative and sustaining power (e.g., Genesis 1 and 2, Psalms 8 and 104, and Job 38).

Israel’s exodus from Egypt shows God’s persistent action to free people who are shackled by slavery’s bondage of body, mind, and spirit. God’s gift of the Ten Commandments establishes a covenant that expresses how Israel’s new community can thrive.

The judges, like Deborah, and the prophets trumpet God’s demand for justice when communities are threatened or oppressed, and they proclaim hope when all seems lost. God lifts up individuals like Esther who risk everything so that community may thrive.

The Gospels underscore God’s desire for abundant life. Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, embodies and proclaims God’s desire. In the Gospel of John, Jesus declares, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b). Through association with social outcasts (Mark 2:15), advocacy for the disadvantaged, marginalized and unjustly treated (Matthew 25:35-40), compassion for and healing of the sick (Matthew 14:14), and criticism of those who neglect justice and mercy (Matthew 23:23), Jesus Christ witnessed to and lived out God’s desire for the well-being of all in the here and now and not only in the promised, future life. The Scriptures teach that the Spirit of God is the source of life (Psalm 104:30) and pours out power for new, fruitful ways of being in the world (Joel 2:28). The Book of Revelation speaks of the healing of the nations and closes with

318 a vision of a new heaven and earth as the ultimate outcome of God's intention.⁶
319 This church believes the Triune God intends creation to flourish and is ever at
320 work so that all people may thrive.

321

322 **2) We believe all people are created equally in the image of God. Every**
323 **individual is dependent upon God, and all share in the God-given vocation**
324 **to joyfully contribute their gifts to help all of creation flourish. As members**
325 **of this society, we also affirm that all people are created equal and are**
326 **endowed with certain inalienable rights.**

327

328 We believe humans are created equal by God, are equally dependent upon
329 God, and are equally loved by God. We believe humans are called to be co-creative
330 creatures with God, caring for the world and serving other humans and the entire
331 creation as God does. As the Scriptures witness, all of creation originates in God,
332 who sustains creation and will ultimately bring creation to its fullness.

333 In Genesis 1, God speaks creation into existence; by a word, humans are
334 created in the image of God. In Genesis 2, God makes humans by forming them
335 from the soil (*humus*). Humans did not live until God breathed into the first
336 human's nostrils. We are dependent upon God, the very one who gave us breath.
337 In both creation stories, the first human is neither male nor female but simply
338 human. A translation of the Hebrew text helps to explain this:⁷

339 "then Yahweh God formed the earth creature [hā- 'ā dām]
340 dust from the earth [hā- 'ā dām]
341 and breathed into its nostrils the breath of life,
342 and the earth creature [hā- 'ā dām] became a living being (*nephesh*)"
343 (Genesis 2:7).⁸

6 "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1-2).

7 In Genesis 1, God creates "humankind." In Genesis 2, the original Hebrew states "then Yahweh God formed the earth creature [hā-'ā dām]." See Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 78. English translations state that "Adam" is formed first and is referred to as a male.

8 Translation from *Ibid.* The interpretation offered here in general is common in current Lutheran theological teaching.

344 In Hebrew, Adam is not a proper name. This is not a text about a man being
345 created first.

346 We believe all people are created in the image of God (*imago Dei*). We
347 are made in the image of God, who calls us to use our creativity, freedom,
348 responsibility, and diversity for the fulfillment of creation. God uses wisdom,
349 understanding, and knowledge to create and nourish (Proverbs 3:19-29); humans
350 are to use these same means to serve all of creation. Like God's action in
351 creation, human use of power is meant to be good for all (Genesis 1:4-25). This
352 careful reading of Genesis 1-3 reminds us that while we are created in the image
353 of God, we are not God. No human is.

354 Human dignity flows from the reality that all humans are made in the image
355 of God. We honor the image of God in others when we do everything in our
356 collective and personal power to meet others' needs and to empower others
357 to flourish. God calls us to live in creative, life-giving relationships with all of
358 creation. In creation, no human is granted domination over another human.
359 Rather, all humankind is given the responsibility to care for creation (Genesis
360 1:26-31 and Genesis 2:15).⁹

361 Many Christians, in the past and still today, interpret the Genesis creation
362 stories to support the belief that females are secondary to males and more sinful
363 than males. One respected teacher of the faith (St. Augustine, 354-430) defined
364 women as malformed men. For centuries women were said to be so intellectually
365 and physically inferior that they should not serve as leaders in the faith. Our
366 reading of the biblical texts, however, shows that such patriarchal interpretations
367 of Genesis 1-3 are faulty. The differentiation of humankind into male and female,
368 expressed in Genesis 2, communicates the joy found in humans having true
369 partners, true peers: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"
370 (Genesis 2:23a). God creates community and family, not a hierarchy based on
371 race and ethnicity, ability, social or economic status, or sex (what our bodies look
372 like biologically) or gender (how people express themselves).

⁹ Care for creation includes the responsibility to address the effects of sin. See Kristen E. Kvam on Luther's reading of Genesis in "God's Heart Revealed in Eden: Luther on the Character of God and the Vocation of Humanity" in *Transformative Lutheran Theologies*, ed. Mary J. Streufert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 57-67.

373 As Lutherans, we also understand that God intends cultures and governments
374 to develop in ways that support cooperative sharing that enable all people to
375 flourish. Given our understanding of God’s desire for human flourishing, together
376 with other members of society, we assert that all people are created equal and
377 are endowed with certain inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of
378 happiness. We also hold the belief that all people have the responsibility to
379 safeguard these rights for others, as well as for themselves. Insofar as these
380 assertions are necessary so that everyone may flourish, the ELCA joins others,
381 both religious and non-religious, to advance a universal vision of the full and
382 equitable participation of all people in an equitable society.¹⁰

383

384 **3) We affirm that God’s creation is wonderful in its variety. We believe God**
385 **creates humanity in diversity, encompassing a wide variety of experiences,**
386 **identities, and expressions, including sex and gender.**

387

388 The Scriptures reveal the diversity and interconnectedness of creation. God
389 creates a teeming universe, filled with plants and animals, the fish of the sea and
390 the birds of the air. Likewise, humans are remarkably diverse. Contemporary
391 science also finds diversity within creation and among humans. Human genes
392 are a given; you are born with what you are born with. However, genetic activity
393 is influenced by what we do, what we think, what we learn, and how we live.
394 Neurological research has shown that humans are not born with brains that are
395 either “girl” or “boy” brains. Instead, humans learn to act, think, and speak in
396 certain ways; people are not “hardwired” to be exclusive opposites based on sex.
397 Studies of human bodies also reveal diversity, showing that they do not neatly
398 fall into two categories of “opposite” differences. In short, people have genetic
399 and physical variety; individual humans are not automatically placed on one end
400 or the other of a physical or psychological spectrum.¹¹

10 The ELCA acknowledges that sin has interfered with the expression of God’s will through human culture and governments and affirms the role of the church to criticize injustice in them. See *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (Chicago: ELCA, 1991).

11 See Cordelia Fine, *Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 176-177; 235-239.

401 **4) While we affirm that God’s intention is equity and fullness of life for**
402 **everyone, we confess that the sins of patriarchy and sexism, like all human**
403 **sin, disrupt God’s intention. We recognize that the struggle to achieve**
404 **sex and gender equity is shaped and complicated by factors of race and**
405 **ethnicity, nationality and immigration status, sexuality, gender identity,**
406 **economic means, age, abilities, and education.**

407
408 We believe that God creates human beings not just in marvelous diversity but
409 also with the intention of equity, including gender equity. Equity is fairness or
410 justice in the way people are treated according to their needs. For example, an
411 elderly woman with few economic resources who lives with a chronic illness has
412 different needs than a young woman with wealth who is expecting her first child;
413 therefore, they require different laws, policies, and social support to flourish.

414 Within human history, as well as within the Christian tradition, humans have
415 often created hierarchies where one group has power over another because of
416 their differences. The church has often taught there are only two types of people,
417 male and female, dominant and subordinate. Strong and pervasive views remain
418 among Christian communities in this country and around the world that people
419 are naturally opposites with attributes characterized by sex and gender, for
420 example that females are inherently caring and that males are inherently logical.
421 Many Christians continue to teach this sex and gender complementarity; they
422 believe that a person’s identity, self-understanding, vocation, and social roles are
423 fixed at birth--willed by God.

424 These gendered views are further complicated by intersections with other
425 forms of systemic oppression, such as racism, classism, ableism, ageism,
426 heterosexism, and nationalism.

427 Stereotypes about human characteristics, such as skin color and ability, cause
428 harm because they shape our understandings of ourselves and others from a
429 very early age. These stereotypes and biases then shape how we act. Boys learn
430 not to cry in public, and girls learn that they must dress and act a certain way to
431 be accepted. These learned behaviors then reinforce existing stereotypes.

432 Expectations and stereotypes for men and boys usually socialize them to step
433 into roles with power, means, and visibility. They benefit from male privilege.
434 Expectations and stereotypes for women and girls often socialize them for roles
435 that give them less access to power, agency, and visibility. People who do not
436 comply with these or other stereotypes often become powerless and invisible.
437 Many live on the margins of society and even fear for their lives.

438 Sexist beliefs and patriarchal systems often portray bodies in ways that,
439 intended or not, objectify, regulate, devalue, marginalize, politicize, and dominate
440 some bodies more than others. The Christian Church as an institution,
441 including the Lutheran tradition, has been complicit in these sins. In particular,
442 this church confesses its long complicity in the acceptance of the so-called
443 “natural inferiority” of people who are not of European descent. For example,
444 this devaluing of people is evident in the ELCA’s own failure to encourage and
445 support people of color to pursue ordination. The first woman of color was only
446 ordained in a predecessor church of the ELCA in 1980, 10 years after the first
447 white woman. Society reflects this same sin. In the United States, many women
448 and girls were sterilized against their will because they were considered less
449 valuable than white or able-bodied women.¹²

450 Social roles and policies are essential for living together in society, but fixed
451 gender roles and the power attached to them are inequitable. Limiting certain
452 roles to people according to gender or other characteristics interferes with the
453 expression of their full humanity and thus limits social communities, as well.

454 The bodies of all people, in their diversity, are gifts of the Creator and are
455 held by God in equal value; indeed, all bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (I
456 Corinthians 6:19). Paul confirmed this when he described how our particularities
457 are, in Christ, no longer a source of division: “There is no longer Jew or Greek,
458 there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of
459 you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Humans are wondrously diverse in
460 character, experiences, joys, sorrows, passions, and vocations and God intends

12 Lisa Ko, “Unwanted Sterilization and Eugenics Programs in the United States,” Public Broadcasting System, January 29, 2016, pbs.org/independentlens/blog/unwanted-sterilization-and-eugenics-programs-in-the-united-states/ (accessed September 5, 2017).

461 equity in that diversity. Therefore, people of faith are called to support civil laws
462 and church policies that treat all people equitably.

463

464 **5) We confess that, as God’s people, forgiven in Jesus Christ, we are at the**
465 **same time liberated and sinful. We are broken, and yet we are made new**
466 **by grace through faith. This good news is true even as we participate in**
467 **cultures and societies that are broadly patriarchal and sexist.**

468

469 The Lutheran Confessions explain sin fundamentally as the self-centered
470 failure to fear and trust God.¹³ As a result of this broken trust in God, human
471 relationships also become broken and distorted. Because God’s law was
472 given to guide human relationships, anything that breaks and distorts human
473 relationships is sinful and unjust.

474 Sexism and patriarchy are sinful because they foster attitudes and actions
475 that distort relationships, violate God’s law, and result in injustice. When we do
476 not ensure the physical and sexual safety of women, girls, and others oppressed
477 by patriarchy, whether in relationships, homes, churches, or anywhere in public,
478 then we sin. When we use derogatory names, we do psychological harm and
479 perpetuate injustice. When we participate in sinful systems of patriarchy and
480 sexism that harm our neighbor, knowingly or unknowingly, we sin.

481 Sin is not just individual acts. Sin is also found and expressed in organizations
482 and institutions. It is a sin that women are not paid an equal wage for the same
483 work or must pay more for health care. It is an injustice to women and girls to
484 demand physical perfection and to portray women and girls as sexual objects,
485 and it is a sin to profit from such expectations. Sexism and patriarchy in church
486 and society prevent women and girls from affirming, celebrating, and expressing
487 their individuality as God’s good creatures.

¹³ “Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article II” in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 112.

488 **6) We confess that we are justified by God’s grace through faith. This**
489 **promise frees us from trying to earn God’s love or justify ourselves, so**
490 **that we can do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God and our**
491 **neighbors. A commitment to neighbor justice is key to our understanding**
492 **of the ministry of Jesus Christ and to our reading of the Scriptures. God’s**
493 **act of redeeming love evokes love in us for others who need justice in**
494 **all areas of their lives. This call to justice specifically means that we**
495 **seek equity and justice for women and girls and others who experience**
496 **oppression due to sexism and patriarchy.**

497

498 We believe that we do not have to do anything for God to be gracious to us. The
499 gift of salvation is a divine work, not a human work. God’s justification of us upends
500 both our own attempts to justify ourselves and our own injustice.¹⁴ “For we hold that
501 a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law” (Romans 3:28).

502 Although we have been called into the freedom of the Gospel, we remain
503 sinners. We are freed in Christ to love and serve others, but our efforts to live
504 out the righteousness we have received are always imperfect. Nevertheless, we
505 continue to respond to the divine call to love God, self, and neighbor and to the
506 struggle for justice.

507 Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, God’s mercy covers God’s people and
508 serves to renew our weary souls. (See Psalm 103.) God calls us to grant mercies
509 to others: “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness
510 and mercy to one another” (Zechariah 7:9). And God’s faithful people hope to
511 be judged by God’s merciful justice. (See Psalm 119.)

512 The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-33) teaches us that our
513 neighbors are not just those who are like us. The call to love the neighbor
514 extends to everyone, even those we might think of as enemies, as Jews in Jesus’
515 time regarded Samaritans. Commenting on this parable, Martin Luther defined
516 the neighbor this way: “Now our neighbor is any human being, especially one

¹⁴ See e.g., Ted Peters, *God – The World’s Future: Systematic Theology for a New Era*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 433.

517 who needs our help.”¹⁵

518 The parable of the good Samaritan also teaches us that love of neighbor
519 requires concrete action on the neighbor’s behalf. Depending on the neighbor’s
520 needs, this may require not only direct service in response to an immediate
521 situation, but also working more broadly for justice.

522 When we read the Scriptures through the lens of neighbor justice, we are
523 empowered to hear and respond to cries for justice, no matter for whom or
524 from where. A neighbor-justice reading of both the biblical text and of our
525 contemporary context compels us to ask: Who is the neighbor? And what does
526 justice look like for the neighbor? Because we are called to love our neighbor
527 as ourselves, we can also ask, who can help me find justice in my life, work,
528 family, and community? A neighbor-justice approach also helps us ask questions
529 about justice not only for individuals, but also for congregations, institutions,
530 governments, and societies.

531 God’s faithfulness, love, and justice are evident when we read the Bible with
532 a neighbor-justice approach. A neighbor-justice reading helps us challenge
533 and uproot sexism and patriarchy. Striving for justice for the neighbor and for
534 ourselves encourages Christians to live, worship, and work in ways that empower
535 all people to live lives of dignity, responsibility, equity, and justice. God in Christ,
536 through the power of the Holy Spirit, frees the Church.

537

538 **7) We believe that, redeemed and made new, the Church is called to live as**
539 **the Body of Christ in the world even while we struggle with the realities of**
540 **patriarchy and sexism. As Lutherans, we recognize that acting justly within**
541 **the home, the church, society, and civic life for the good of all is one of the**
542 **vocations to which God calls all people.**

543

544 As Christians, we confess that Jesus Christ is the true image of God. Through
545 our baptism, all Christians are unified in Christ and equal members of the
546 Body of Christ. The apostle Paul compared the early Christian community to

¹⁵ Martin Luther, “Letters to Galatians, 1535,” *Luther’s Works (LW)* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-1986), 27:58.

547 the human body. He wrote that Christians are united in the Body of Christ, that
548 this body has many diverse parts, and that the members of the body need one
549 another. (See Romans 12:4-5 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-18.)

550 In the face of ever-present sexism and patriarchy in the church and the
551 world, we look to God's Word to affirm the goodness of our own bodies, minds,
552 and spirits and those of our neighbors. The Gospels testify to the full, embodied
553 humanity of Jesus, who was born, walked, ate, slept, and wept. Indeed, the
554 Hebrew Bible, the Gospels, and the New Testament letters teach that human
555 bodies are a good gift of God.

556 Because we are equal members of the Body of Christ, we should not objectify
557 others, diminish their worth, or define them by sex or gender stereotypes. As
558 this church seeks to value the bodies of all people and recognize that we depend
559 upon one another, we will not dominate or politicize other people but respect
560 them, promote their health and well-being, and suffer and rejoice together as we
561 strive for justice for all bodies.

562 As Lutheran Christians, our work to stop the harm that sexism and
563 patriarchy cause to bodies also springs from our understanding of Baptism and
564 Holy Communion. Our heritage teaches that when the water, bread, and wine are
565 combined with God's word, God is really present: "Baptism is not simply plain
566 water. Instead it is water enclosed in God's command and connected with God's
567 Word."¹⁶ When we feel the baptismal water and when we taste the bread and
568 drink the wine, God is present in our diverse individual bodies and in the unity
569 of the Church that is the Body of Christ. Luther taught that the Lord's Supper
570 unites us together into one body: "[S]o that by this sacrament ... and through this
571 mutual love there is one bread, one drink, one body, one community."¹⁷

572 We must continue the task of embracing our unity and diversity so we
573 welcome and uplift people of every sex and gender—indeed, *every body*—in our
574 work together as the Body of Christ in the world. God's love feeds the Body of
575 Christ so that it might live in love.

¹⁶ "Small Catechism" in *Book of Concord*, 359.

¹⁷ Martin Luther, "A Treatise Concerning the Blessed Sacrament and Concerning the Brotherhoods," cited in *A Compendium of Luther's Theology*, ed. Hugh Kerr (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1943), 176.

II. Analysis of Patriarchy and Sexism

8) We recognize patriarchy and sexism are “a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice;”¹⁸ they prevent all human beings from living into the abundant life for which God created them. Patriarchy is a social system dominated by men, identified with men, and centered on men’s actions, voices, and authority. In patriarchal systems, men are typically viewed as better than women, given more power than women, and have more authority than women. This patriarchal worldview harms women and girls. Sexism is the reinforcement of male privilege. It promotes silencing, controlling, and devaluing women, girls, and gender non-conforming people. Everyone intentionally and unintentionally participates in a patriarchal system, and it affects individuals in different ways.

Looking clearly at women’s and girls’ experiences leads to an analysis of patriarchy and sexism because we believe we need to get to the roots of the problems. An honest assessment of patriarchy can be hard to hear, and it can feel as if people are too easily assigning blame to individuals for what is a complex social reality. Patriarchy does not mean that males are bad and females are good, or that only males support this unfair system. Harm and injustice do not result simply from some individual choices or as the result of a few biased policies and laws. Although the acts of a single individual or group can harm others, injustice is often the result of policies, laws, attitudes, customs, habits, religious beliefs and practices, words, and images that inform and sanction individual and group actions.

As a society, we have fostered patriarchal values that have permeated and impaired our social organization, the distribution of goods and services, the application of justice, and the division of labor. The sin of sexism affects understandings of gender, employment, economics, immigration policies, and gender-based violence. It results in human trafficking, the politicization of the female body and health care, including reproductive health care.

¹⁸ See the definition of racism in *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* (Chicago: ELCA, 1993), 4.

606 *Everyone* participates in a patriarchal social system in some measure,
607 sometimes in obvious and intentional ways and sometimes in subtle and
608 unconscious ways. In the language of faith, we have all “fallen short of the glory
609 of God.” Only by naming sin are we boldly able to confess it and, through the
610 grace and strength of God, seek understanding and take wise action.

611

612 **9) We recognize that when society and church have spoken about women
613 and girls, the hidden assumption often has been that they are white and
614 heterosexual. However, this statement’s references to women and girls
615 are inclusive of all women—women of color and white women, lesbians,
616 transgender women, women with disabilities, and immigrant women.**

617

618 The word “women” has generally been used to refer to white women. The
619 life stories, challenges, hopes and gifts of women of color, lesbian women,
620 transgender women, women with disabilities, and immigrant women have
621 been ignored—and sometimes maligned—by government agencies, political
622 organizations, Christian communities, and even by women’s groups.

623 This statement acknowledges both the usefulness and the complexity of the
624 phrase “women and girls.” On one hand, the term “women” can be useful. It
625 names the way that social, cultural, economic, and political groups use the term
626 “women” to describe women’s experiences that differ from the experiences of
627 many men. For example, almost two-thirds of women are considered low-wage
628 earners. Using the category “women” helps name the reality that they are paid
629 less for their work, and it empowers women to demand economic justice.

630 On the other hand, “women and girls” should not be used in ways that
631 ignore the particular experiences and gifts of women of color, lesbian women,
632 transgender women, women with disabilities, elderly women, and immigrant
633 women. For example, the fact that women of different races and ethnicities are
634 often paid differently must not be lost when we refer to women being paid less
635 than men. In this statement, the term “women” is used to help women and girls
636 obtain justice, and it is not assumed that all women have the same experiences,
637 life stories, challenges, hopes and gifts.

638 **10) We believe that many individuals who suffer under the weight of**
639 **patriarchy and sexism also experience intersecting burdens. In addition to**
640 **sex or gender discrimination, they may also be treated in oppressive ways**
641 **according to their race, ethnicity, economic status, age, sexual orientation,**
642 **gender identity, immigration status, or ability, or because of the language**
643 **they speak.**

644

645 We recognize that each person is uniquely created in God's image and that
646 every person's identity is made up of different elements. One individual might be
647 a mother, middle class, an employee, a Christian, able-bodied, a college-graduate,
648 heterosexual, Spanish-speaking, and Latina. Some identities are seen or treated
649 in the dominant culture as ideal (white, able-bodied, and heterosexual). Other
650 identities often carry burdens (person of color, elderly, or lesbian).

651 This statement uses the term intersectionality¹⁹ to name the way certain
652 elements of a person's identity combine and overlap, often causing greater
653 discrimination and burden. The concept of intersectionality helps express the
654 multiple discriminations many women face daily because of the combination of
655 identities they carry.

656 For example, many women face sexism in the workplace, but a woman of
657 color's experience in the workplace is compounded by racism. If she is also
658 transgender, data show staggering levels of discrimination and violence.²⁰ Such
659 experiences of multiple oppressions are widespread for many women. In one
660 individual, multiple negative experiences can intersect, even if in varied ways.

661 It is important to note that patriarchy and sexism affect women and men
662 within marginalized communities differently. Men within a similar community
663 benefit from male privilege and often fare better than women in the same
664 community. Intersectionality affects people differently.

19 Crenshaw, Kimberlé, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140 (1989): 139-167.

20 See Sandy E. James, Jody L. Herman, Susan Rankin, Mara Keisling, Lisa Mottet, and Ma'ayan Anafi, *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016).

665 **11) We reject patriarchy and sexism as sinful because they deny the truth**
666 **that all people are created equally in God’s image. Too often behaviors and**
667 **decisions rooted in patriarchy and sexism cause overt harm, inequities, and**
668 **degradations. Examples include gender-based violence (including physical**
669 **and emotional violence and coercion), pay inequality, human trafficking,**
670 **restricted access to health care and economic resources, inadequate**
671 **research on health issues affecting women, denial of educational**
672 **opportunities, objectifying portrayals of women in media, and failure to**
673 **value and support elderly women, mothers, and children.**²¹
674

675 The effects of patriarchy and sexism diminish, damage, and often destroy
676 people. Some obvious examples are gender-based violence, economic inequality,
677 and inequitable access to leadership, health care, and education.

678 As a society, we often blame women for what happens to them because
679 of gender-based oppression, and we often excuse their oppressors. A prime
680 example lies in sexual violence and this society’s culture of rape. Rape culture is
681 evident in our society in the media we consume, the games we play, the male role
682 models we idolize, the jokes we tell, our perceptions of sexuality, the prominence
683 of dehumanizing stereotypes, and the hyper-masculinity we tolerate among men
684 and boys. It is further evident in low conviction and penalty rates in rape cases
685 and the high number of untested rape kits across this country.

686 Dominant social and religious beliefs, ideas, and attitudes reinforce a
687 patriarchal reality and are themselves reinforced through laws, policies, and
688 rules. Male-oriented language in religion and in society more broadly promotes
689 bias against females and protects male privilege. As a result, people not
690 only suffer the direct effects of patriarchy and sexism but may suffer from
691 internalized self-hatred fostered by patriarchal and sexist views, particularly in
692 the entertainment industry, the beauty industry, and the media.

²¹ Various ELCA social teaching documents address many of these topics: ELCA.org/socialstatements and ELCA.org/socialmessages.

693 **12) We recognize that the problems experienced by women and girls are**
694 **vast. However, patriarchal structures that reinforce and perpetuate rigid**
695 **sex and gender expectations also harm men and boys, including gay and**
696 **transgender men. Men and boys are harmed when they are forced to**
697 **conform to narrow gender stereotypes, such as those that tell men and**
698 **boys not to have traits or roles that are like those associated with women**
699 **and girls. People of all genders who do not conform to gender-based roles**
700 **and stereotypes can be made invisible and oppressed.**

701

702 Men and boys suffer when swept up in this tide of dehumanization that
703 sexism and patriarchy foster. They live in the falsehood of superiority when
704 they participate, and they are often punished when they try to resist. If they
705 do not match the ideal model of masculinity, they can be targets of hatred,
706 harassment, bullying, and violence. Cut off from emotions, activities, and
707 careers stereotyped as “feminine,” men and boys are also unable to experience
708 the fullness of life that is a gift from God.

709

710 **13) We celebrate that humans are relational beings and that we live in**
711 **social systems. The dynamics and powers in these systems are greater**
712 **than any one individual, government, culture, or religious community,**
713 **even though personal responsibility is involved. Most instances of**
714 **patriarchal harm flow from and into commonly held beliefs and customs**
715 **and can be found in specific laws, policies, and practices within secular**
716 **and church institutions. Our church’s commitment to neighbor justice**
717 **compels us to expose how patriarchy and sexism are woven into all**
718 **aspects of individual, social, and religious life, causing harm to all**
719 **of humanity.**

720

721 Social systems are necessary because we are relational beings. When
722 social systems are detrimental to well-being, the Scriptures refer to them as
723 evil “powers.” (See Ephesians 6:12 and Romans 8:38.) These powers are forces
724 greater than any one individual, community, government, or culture, and they

725 distort human flourishing. In our liturgy, we name this systemic reality in the
726 confession: “We are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.”

727 Every instance of harm, violation,
728 coercion, or cruelty, by groups
729 or individuals, is supported by
730 commonly held beliefs and customs
731 and plays out according to laws,
732 policies, and practices.

733 Scriptural references to sin
734 illuminate how the power of a
735 patriarchal social system can be largely
736 invisible. It is so invisible that everyone
737 contributes in some measure. We may
738 even hold attitudes and beliefs, and
739 we may support laws, policies, and
740 practices that harm ourselves. This is
741 how powerful sin is.

742 This church recognizes the systemic
743 character of patriarchy as linking social
744 ideas and attitudes, religious beliefs,
745 laws, policies, and practices that lead to the injustice individuals and groups of
746 people experience. (The connections are depicted in the adjacent graphic and
747 explained in greater detail in the sidebar.)

748 The underlying theme is that many social ideas and religious beliefs share
749 the basic view that men and boys are the intellectual, emotional, and physical
750 opposites of women and girls and are “ordered” higher.²² Current laws, policies,
751 and practices continue to reflect this view insofar as women and girls do not
752 experience sustainability, sufficiency, solidarity, and participation equitably with
753 men and boys. (See Thesis 14)



²² This view is an ancient problem rooted in philosophical ideas and in some religious teachings. On this point, see David Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Codes in 1 Peter* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1981).

754 A graphic cannot fully depict the complexities of sexism and patriarchy,
755 but it offers a basis for discerning the actual interconnections that contribute
756 to harm and injustice. Many factors weave together into a patriarchal system,
757 creating the problems affecting women, girls, and people who do not conform to
758 the expectations of the familiar gender binary of masculine and feminine. Our
759 church's faith and a commitment to justice require that the discussion about
760 and explanation of patriarchy and sexism address each element of this circle
761 in order that we might understand the problems and seek renewed, life-giving
762 partnerships and approaches to an equitable society.

763

764 III. Resources for Resisting Patriarchy and Sexism

765

766 **14) The Scriptures show us a rich texture of justice that is central to God's**
767 **intention for human flourishing.²³ This church has identified sufficiency,**
768 **sustainability, solidarity, and participation as the key principles of justice.**
769 **Social structures and institutions, including the ELCA as a human**
770 **institution, must be assessed and guided by these principles.**

771

772 While we recognize that perfect worldly justice is not possible, this church
773 holds that efforts toward justice should be focused through the principles of
774 sufficiency, sustainability, solidarity, and participation.²⁴ These principles guide
775 the movement from injustices against women and girls, to justice for all those
776 affected by patriarchy.

777 **Sufficiency** The principle of sufficiency addresses the basic needs (physical,
778 emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual) of women, girls, and those hurt
779 by sexism. Sufficiency as a principle of justice means the basic needs of all
780 women and those who depend on them should be met. It means society must
781 work to ensure, for example, safety from gender-based violence and equitable
782 opportunities in education and employment. The principle of sufficiency

23 See, e.g., Psalm 33:4-5; Proverbs 28:5; Luke 18:1-8; Galatians 6:1-10; I John 3:11-24.

24 These principles are present throughout ELCA social teaching and policy. Examples include *Caring for Creation, Economic Life, and Genetics*, but are found in others as well.

783 supports not only passive respect, but also advocacy in matters of health care,
784 immigration, violence, sexuality, human trafficking, and the workplace.

785 **Sustainability** The principle of sustainability compels society to provide an
786 acceptable quality of life for all generations of women. This principle applies to
787 both the emotional and material aspects of life. Both church and society should
788 evaluate how their structures ensure—or do not ensure—that livelihood and the
789 means for well-being actually sustain all people.

790 **Solidarity** Solidarity is a commitment with others and a way of seeing, being,
791 and acting. Solidarity means seeing and experiencing one’s own well-being
792 as connected to the well-being of others and the communities to which they
793 belong. It often involves people aligning themselves with others who do not have
794 the same experiences. The principle of solidarity compels respect for the lived
795 experience of women and girls and encourages people to share not only in their
796 suffering but also to participate in their liberation.²⁵

797 **Participation** This principle endorses the idea that communities should be
798 structured so that women participate equitably in the decisions that affect their
799 lives in the personal, local, and governmental spheres. All people need to be
800 involved in what affects their lives. The range of decisions to which anyone has
801 access should not be limited by gender.

802

803 **15) In faith, this church is empowered to confess that Christianity in**
804 **certain beliefs, practices, and aspects of its history is complicit in the**
805 **sins of patriarchy and sexism. At the same time, we believe God provides**
806 **resources within the Christian faith and the Lutheran tradition and is at**
807 **work in human community to bring forth new ways of living that challenge**
808 **the harmful beliefs and effects of patriarchy and sexism.**

809

810 In our corporate confession, we recognize that we sin individually and
811 collectively, in word and in deed, by what we have done and by what we have

25 Martin Luther in “An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants, 1525,” LW 46:78 writes “[Y]ou must share the community’s burdens, dangers, and injuries, even though not you, but your neighbor has caused them. You must do this in the same way that you enjoy the peace, profit ... and security of the community, even though you have not won them or brought them into being.”

812 left undone. We do not always live and act as God intends. The recognition of
813 our sin leads us to confession. When we confess, we give up trying to justify
814 ourselves and our actions. By grace, God forgives us and frees us from the sin
815 that alienates us from God, neighbors, and ourselves.

816 Patriarchy and sexism in the Christian Church have a long history. Although
817 women were followers of Jesus and leaders both in Jesus' lifetime and in the very
818 early church, women were excluded and vilified as Christianity grew in status
819 and wealth. Early church theologians were often misogynistic; they repeated
820 the idea that women were "the devil's gateway" and rebuked women as "a feeble
821 race, untrustworthy and of mediocre intelligence."²⁶ Throughout much of the
822 history of the Christian Church, women were therefore excluded from Christian
823 leadership, including ordained leadership; taught to be submissive in marriage,
824 church, and society; and coerced to endure violence.

825 Similar interpretation and teaching continues within global Christianity.
826 Many Christian churches continue to support the subservience and obedience
827 of women and girls to men. And Christian leaders and members worldwide
828 continue to use ill-gotten power and authority to violate women and girls and to
829 suppress their cries for justice.

830 The traditions of this church have also incarnated the sin of patriarchy and
831 sexism into the Body of Christ. For example, although there have been women
832 in ordained Lutheran ministry in the United States since 1970, there remains
833 a deep-seated assumption that leadership and the organization of the church
834 should be male-oriented.²⁷

835 We confess that our actions often reflect Christian theology and faith that
836 portray women as subservient and inferior to men. As a church, we confess our
837 complicity in the exclusion, exploitation, and oppression of those who are not
838 male. We confess not only overt complicity, but also the complicity of silence and
839 passive acceptance of patriarchal and sexist beliefs and practices.

26 Tertullian, *De Cultu Feminarum*, Book 1, Chapter 1, and Epiphanius, *Panarion*, sect 79.1, respectively.

27 For up-to-date information in recurring church studies on these issues, see the website for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. To date, reports exist from the 25th, 35th, and 45th anniversaries of the ordination of women.

840 **16) While God’s Word of Law and Gospel speaks through the Scriptures,**
841 **there are words and images, social patterns, and moral beliefs in them that**
842 **reflect the patriarchal values of the cultures and societies in which they**
843 **arose. Their continued misuse contributes to maintaining hierarchies and**
844 **patterns of inequity and harm.**

845

846 Within the ELCA, we read the Bible in ways that are grounded in our
847 heritage and that can reform sexist uses of the Scriptures. The Word of God is
848 first and foremost Jesus Christ, God incarnate. Secondarily, we encounter the
849 Word as Law and Gospel in preaching and teaching. The Canonical Scriptures
850 are the written Word of God, which proclaims God’s grace and sustains faith in
851 Jesus Christ.²⁸

852 The Word of God is living and active, and we take the written form of the
853 Word of God as the authoritative source and norm for faith. In its use as Law, it
854 provides guidance and reveals human brokenness. In its use as Gospel, it reveals
855 God’s love and promise. Christians treasure the Scriptures because in them we
856 hear the message of God’s wondrous, saving acts—especially the liberation of
857 God’s people from slavery in Egypt and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—
858 and God’s promise of new creation in Christ.

859 We recognize that many biblical texts originated in patriarchal cultures and
860 say things about women and girls that are problematic. In Genesis 3:16, God
861 is pictured as telling Eve: “[A]nd he shall rule over you.” Other Old Testament
862 texts illustrate chilling actions such as a host offering his unmarried daughter
863 to a mob of men who wanted to rape a Levite (Judges 19). Many Christian
864 communities struggle with how to interpret such texts.²⁹

865 The New Testament also reflects a thorough-going patriarchal culture
866 through its rules and ideals about women. “[Women] will be saved through
867 bearing children, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with
868 modesty” (1 Timothy 2:15). (See also 1 Corinthians 11:6.)

28 The Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2.02.

29 See *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to Biblical Theology) by Phyllis Trible, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

869 We recognize that the Scriptures have been interpreted within our own
870 tradition in ways that accept such legalistic limits on women and girls and
871 sanction relationships of power and domination. Likewise, these interpretations
872 grant men roles that afford them agency, decision-making power, leadership, and
873 prominence in communities and societies while denying such roles to women.

874 Our tradition's complicity in patriarchy and sexism is connected to such
875 biblical interpretation and to the nature and focus of some of the Lutheran
876 theological tradition. We confess that there are problems within the Scriptures
877 themselves and that our theological tradition has led to a theological
878 understanding of humankind that is overly male-identified. These problems even
879 become idolatrous as deeply rooted but false beliefs.

880 Today this misuse of the Scriptures continues to deny equity among people
881 based on gender, as well as race and sexuality, and subverts the abundant life
882 God intends. In this sense, Christian complicity in patriarchy and sexism has
883 unhealthy roots in the misuse of the Scriptures.

884 For instance, even today some interpret it to be scripturally authoritative and
885 "natural" to deny positions of leadership in the church or in society to women.
886 They appeal to the Scriptures: "[W]omen should be silent in the churches. For
887 they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate For it is shameful
888 for a woman to speak in church" (1 Corinthians 14:34-35).

889 However, we believe God calls Christians into a different vision of unity. Jesus
890 Christ has fulfilled God's Law for us and called us to a new kind of freedom in
891 service to God and neighbor. This is not a revision of the Lutheran tradition
892 but a reaffirmation of its core emphasis. Out of the Gospel promise, we in this
893 church interpret Scripture.³⁰ This emphasis on the Gospel as God's promise and
894 the recognition of the importance of context distinguish a Lutheran reading of
895 Scripture from a literal, legalistic view that insists all passages in the Bible apply
896 to all people in all times and places.

897 When scriptural passages are unclear or even in conflict, this Lutheran
898 reading suggests that Christ, as God's gift of forgiveness, reconciliation, and new

³⁰ "The Gospel itself is our guide and instructor in the Scriptures." Martin Luther, "A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels, 1522," LW 35:123.

899 life, is the lens through which such passages are to be read. Our church, for
900 instance, places more weight on Galatians 3:28 (“[T]here is no longer male and
901 female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”) than on 1 Timothy 2:12 (“I permit
902 no woman to teach or to have authority over a man.”)

903 We recognize that some passages were given to God’s faithful people in
904 specific historical contexts that are quite different from our own.³¹ This is why,
905 for example, Christians no longer feel bound by certain Old Testament laws,
906 such as kosher dietary principles, or by New Testament instructions concerning
907 women’s hairstyles, jewelry, and clothing (1Timothy 2:9). The fact that many
908 passages in the Scriptures reflect the patriarchal structures and values of their
909 time does not mean that God has prescribed patriarchal structures and values,
910 and has done so for all time.

911 We seek to read the written Word guided by Christ the living Word speaking
912 today. We do so for the sake of proclaiming a life-giving word for all people. This
913 approach interprets the Scriptures with an emphasis on what the Word does and
914 frees us to read them in such a way that God’s Word can be known as genuinely
915 “good news.”

916

917 **17) The Christian theological tradition also bears this dual character. In**
918 **particular, some doctrines affect our understanding about humanity and God**
919 **more than others. These teachings affect our use of language. The teachings**
920 **about the image of God, the Body of Christ, and the Trinity have sometimes**
921 **been misused to support patriarchal beliefs, attitudes, church practices,**
922 **behaviors, and structures. At the same time, these doctrines also provide**
923 **liberating resources for healing the effects of the sins of patriarchy and sexism.**

924

925 We confess that God is infinite mystery beyond human comprehension.
926 To insist on male language can make an idol of maleness. It restricts words
927 about God, who is beyond gender, to one human category. This insistence may
928 be rooted in a false understanding of human beings as existing in a hierarchy

31 See “How Christians Should Regard Moses, 1525,” LW 35:170-172.

929 of gender opposites. This church commends all Christians to retrieve and
930 reform theological language, images, and themes so that they support faithful
931 proclamations of God’s grace in Jesus Christ that are inclusive of all persons.

932 Theological images and themes are used in multiple ways. The same concept
933 can be understood and applied in ways that either reinforce a patriarchal status
934 quo or in ways that support gender justice.

935 The concept of “the image of God” has often been used problematically.
936 Sometimes it has been used to describe males as a “fuller” image of God and
937 women as a “lesser” image of God. Understandings like this have led to and still
938 reinforce actions that devalue women.

939 It is more fruitful to read the creation stories as focusing on relationality.
940 God says, “Let us make humanity in our own image.” There is relationality
941 within God’s own self, there is relationality between the first humans God
942 creates, and there is relationality between God and the humans. This provides
943 a more generous and more fluid image that is not limited by either binary or
944 hierarchical views of gender.³²

945 The maleness of Jesus has also been used as a warrant for sexism, particularly
946 in the church. Many Christian traditions have claimed that women cannot be
947 ministers because ministers represent Jesus, and Jesus was male. Sometimes the
948 description of the church as the bride of Christ has contributed to this line of
949 thinking: Since the church is imaged as female, gender complementarity reinforces
950 the idea that those representing Christ must be male.

951 We must reject the idea that the maleness of Jesus is somehow related to
952 redemption. In the original Greek, the Nicene Creed makes clear that God the
953 Son became human (*anthropos*), not male (*aner*), “for us and for our salvation.”
954 The long-time “generic” use of the word “man” in English translations has
955 obscured the original meaning of the Nicene Creed and has fed patriarchal biases
956 and assumptions stemming from Jesus’ maleness.

957 This church’s understanding of the Body of Christ goes beyond the literal,
958 physical body of Jesus. As Galatians 3:28 reminds us, the Body of Christ is

32 See Thesis 2 for more discussion on the meaning of Genesis.

959 inclusive; identity markers that we have regarded as opposites, in Christ no
960 longer hold meanings that divide us. Just as “Jew or Greek” are not the only ethnic
961 identities joined to and in Christ, so “male and female” do not limit the gender
962 identity of those joined to and in Christ. Understanding the unity in Christ of
963 persons of various identities frees us from an idolatry of the maleness of Christ.

964 Maleness has also been wrongly assigned to the persons of the Triune God.
965 While the Scriptures often refer to God as Father, and while Jesus was historically
966 male, God as such is beyond gender. When Christians rely almost exclusively
967 on male images and language for God, the images and language become literal
968 understandings of God. This is poor theology because God always exceeds
969 human understanding. Taking male images of God literally can also lead to
970 idolatry, meaning we idolize or hold onto only the male images. Our impressions
971 of God are thus limited by patriarchal ideas, for God in the Scriptures is also a
972 woman searching for a coin and a mother in labor, while also a rock, a hen, and a
973 bear.³³ Yet God is not literally any of these, either.

974 The use of almost exclusively male-identified language and images is not
975 only theologically problematic but also pastorally harmful. Taking God literally
976 as male cultivates the unwarranted idea that maleness has more in common
977 with God than femaleness and that women and girls are farther away from God
978 than men and boys are. And where does this leave people who are not male or
979 female? This is poor theology about humans.

980 Using predominantly male images of God also affects how we live together in
981 human community. If God is male, and women are less than men, then patriarchy
982 and sexism must be God’s will. But Scripture tells of something entirely different.

983 Although most Christian liturgy uses predominantly androcentric language
984 and imagery, expansive language and imagery are both scripturally rooted and
985 theologically faithful. The paradoxes and multiplicity of language and images
986 about God communicate the mystery and intimacy of the Triune God.

987 Just as we read the Scriptures within their historical contexts, we also need
988 to read Luther and the Lutheran Confessions within their historical contexts.

33 See, e.g., Luke 15:8-10, Isaiah 42:14, Psalm 89:26, Matthew 23:37, and Hosea 13:8.

989 Some of Luther's writings, as well as his personal interactions with women, were
990 more progressive than his peers, but he remains a product of his 16th-century
991 hierarchical context. Just as our fidelity to the Scriptures does not require us to
992 conform to the social practices of the ancient Near East, being faithful Lutherans
993 does not require us to imitate 16th-century social practices.

994

995 **18) The central Lutheran belief that we are justified by grace through faith**
996 **empowers this church to challenge the structures of patriarchy and sexism**
997 **that ascribe value based on human standards.**

998

999 A robust understanding of justification by grace enriches a Christian
1000 commitment to gender justice. We remember that justification motivates us
1001 toward justice.³⁴ Faith, active in the form of love of neighbor, is not our own doing
1002 but God's gift. We respond to and exercise God's gift by loving others. Responsive
1003 love in the world means we listen to neighbors. In society, this responsive love
1004 takes the form of justice for the neighbor in an unjust world.³⁵ Justice, then, is
1005 bound to faith because it flows from justification and is itself an expression of
1006 love of neighbor in society. This love includes gender justice.³⁶

1007 There are three aspects of a Lutheran expression of the doctrine of
1008 justification that underscore gender justice as a concern of faith.

1009 First, justification is wholly God's work through Christ. No particular group of
1010 humans is superior. Justification as God's act challenges the self-centeredness of
1011 self-justification, including self-justifying notions of male privilege. No particular
1012 group of humans is superior.

1013 Second, justification frees us from bondage. Being freed in Christ involves
1014 being freed from all that tries to replace Jesus Christ as Lord in our lives,
1015 including systems of patriarchy. Instead, we are freed to recognize God's work
1016 in creation through human variation, human imagination, and human expression

34 See ELCA *Church in Society* (Chicago: ELCA, 1991), 2.

35 Ted Peters, *Sin Boldly! Justifying Faith for Fragile and Broken Souls* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress), 404. See Carl Braaten, *Principles of Lutheran Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 132-133.

36 See also *The Lutheran World Federation Gender Justice Policy* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2013), which expresses a Lutheran global faith-based commitment to gender justice.

1017 through gender. We are enabled to see that humans are not simply gender-based
1018 opposites and that we are not created in a hierarchy.

1019 Third, justification reminds Christians of our collective human brokenness
1020 and that God's righteousness comes to us from outside ourselves. Before God, we
1021 are all imperfect, yet God's love covers us. Remembering that this is how we are
1022 with God can affect how we see ourselves and others. We can hear and see what
1023 others need. We can be more concerned with seeing each other in all our variety
1024 and less concerned with following gender-based rules. Justification helps us to
1025 see gender justice from the perspective of faith.

1026

1027 **19) We recognize that significant progress has been made in society**
1028 **against patriarchy and sexism; however, evidence demonstrates that more**
1029 **attention is needed. Cultural and religious beliefs, practices, policies, and**
1030 **laws continue to promote inequality and inequity and continue to degrade,**
1031 **lessen, and harm people. We believe that Christians, together with many**
1032 **other partners, are able to understand and advance equity. This happens**
1033 **through beliefs and ideas that are gender just and through laws and**
1034 **policies that support an equitable common good.**

1035

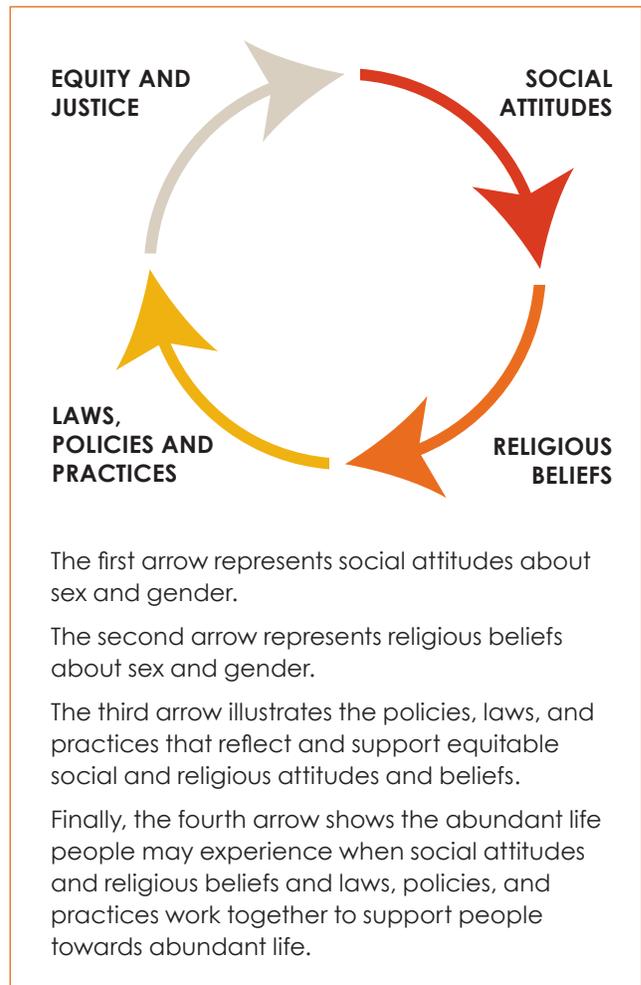
1036 Significant progress has been made in U.S. society despite the continuing
1037 prevalence of patriarchy and sexism. Changes in laws have positively affected
1038 social and religious views. Contrary to cultural and Christian beliefs that women
1039 are intellectually weak and need to follow male leadership, during the 20th
1040 century, women increasingly gained rights as citizens.

1041 History also shows that positive social and religious views about gender
1042 influence laws. For example, the women's movement argued that women should
1043 not be raped within marriage. Finally, in 1993, it was illegal in all states for a
1044 spouse to rape a spouse.

1045 This country and this church have seen and supported many positive changes
1046 in attitudes and laws that have helped women and girls to thrive, but there is still
1047 more work to be done to support neighbor justice.

1048 The circle of attitudes, beliefs,
1049 and policies indicates that change is
1050 possible and offers a strategy for this
1051 church’s commitments to and actions
1052 toward justice. Working together, we
1053 can begin to transform the circle of
1054 injustice into a circle of justice.

1055 Individuals and groups can
1056 challenge harmful social assumptions
1057 and practices, reject sexist religious
1058 beliefs, and work to change laws and
1059 policies that justify and reinforce
1060 patriarchy. When enough people—
1061 especially people of faith—work, pray,
1062 stand, and struggle together, attitudes,
1063 beliefs, laws, policies, and practices can
1064 be transformed so that all people of all
1065 genders and sexes enjoy God’s vision of
1066 abundant life.



1067

1068 IV. Response to God’s Work: 1069 Call to Action and New Commitments in Society

1070

1071 **20) This church teaches that the God who justifies expects all people to seek**
1072 **justice in earthly structures and systems. Human reason and knowledge**
1073 **are necessary here, and this church does not presume to have quick or easy**
1074 **solutions for the deeply rooted and complex problems of patriarchy and**
1075 **sexism that have permeated these structures. Our commitments, however,**
1076 **express this church’s firm hope that social relations can be ordered in**
1077 **better ways so that all people may experience greater equity and justice.**

1078 The Bible is clear that the God who justifies is the same God who insists that
1079 “justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”
1080 (See Amos 5:21-24.) The ELCA affirms that God’s Law, in its civil use, permeates
1081 and undergirds basic structures of human society to support life and protect all
1082 people in a world that remains under the sway of sin. God works through shared
1083 human endeavor and intends that all people join the work to deter evil and to
1084 seek justice.

1085 Lutheran Confessional teachings identify the overarching structures of
1086 human society—ministry, family, civil authority, and economic arrangements—as
1087 God’s gifts. Justice is the measure by which God’s law in its civil use assesses
1088 basic structures of human society with the goal of enabling people both to thrive
1089 and to be protected in a sinful world. Social structures and their institutions that
1090 fail to do justice are not fulfilling the end for which God has created them, and
1091 they must be held accountable and changed. It is a matter of great urgency when
1092 they fail to do justice and are not held accountable.

1093 Historically, and among some Christians today, these structures, and their
1094 specific gender-assigned roles and characteristics, are understood to be largely
1095 fixed and unchanging. However, this church holds that these structures are
1096 intended for the sake of human well-being and are provisional. The intent of
1097 these structures anticipates the arrival of God’s promised future, but they require
1098 continual reassessment³⁷ if we are to realize a greater measure of gender justice.

1099 In seeking the well-being of the human community, the Lutheran heritage
1100 places a strong reliance on the judgments of human reason. For the ELCA, this
1101 includes a reliance upon human reason and knowledge as tested and exercised
1102 through the sciences and social analysis.³⁸ The exercise of human reason
1103 sometimes breaks forth in social movements that, despite their own failings, can
1104 be expressions of God’s work through the Law to bring about greater measures
1105 of justice and social liberation. The women’s movement, broadly understood, is
1106 one of these.

³⁷ *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (Chicago: ELCA, 2009), 7.

³⁸ *Caring for Creation* (Chicago: ELCA, 1993), 3; *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* (Chicago: ELCA, 2013), 16.

1107 In identifying areas that require attention, this church does not presume
1108 to have quick or easy solutions for the deeply rooted and intertwined complex
1109 problems of sexism and patriarchy that have permeated earthly structures. With
1110 systemic problems, the changes necessary for attitudes, laws, and structures
1111 require time and continual effort. It is both a clear biblical teaching and a matter
1112 of urgency that God’s people contribute to holding governing authorities and
1113 worldly structures accountable to their purpose—ensuring greater equity and
1114 justice for all.³⁹

1115

1116 **The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits to:**

1117

1118 **21) Seek, support, and advocate that diverse, gendered bodies be respected,**
1119 **rather than objectified, abused, denigrated, or marginalized. First steps**
1120 **toward this goal are laws that do not deprive anyone of their human and**
1121 **civil rights.**

1122

1123 The ELCA is on record in support of civil and equal rights for all people.⁴⁰ While
1124 members hold differing views on gender identity, this church is nevertheless united
1125 in holding that the objectification, abuse, and control of women’s, girls’, and gender
1126 non-conforming persons’ bodies must be challenged and rejected. This stance is
1127 rooted in an affirmation of respect and welcome for all people as children of God.

1128 Recognizing and honoring the goodness of diverse gendered bodies helps orient
1129 the changes and challenges addressed in the various theses that follow. First steps
1130 are laws that do not deprive people of their civil and equal rights.

1131

1132 **22) Seek, support, and advocate for the eradication of gender-based violence,**
1133 **including rape and sexual assault, by acknowledging both personal**
1134 **responsibility and the systemic aspects of such violence. (See the ELCA’s social**
1135 **messages “Gender-based Violence” and “Commercial Sexual Exploitation.”)**

³⁹ *Church in Society*, 4.

⁴⁰ “Gender Identity Discrimination,” (Chicago: ELCA social policy resolution (SPR), 2013).

1136 All people deserve safety and protection from violence, along with due
1137 process and aid when violence is inflicted. While anyone may experience gender-
1138 based violence, women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals suffer
1139 the overwhelming percentage of incidents. While the violence may occur within
1140 intimate settings like the family, gender-based violence includes physical, sexual,
1141 psychological, emotional, or other personal harm inflicted on someone for any
1142 gender-based reason in any setting.⁴¹

1143 Although individuals are ultimately responsible for their actions, gender-
1144 based violence is rooted in systemic sin. A patriarchal social system affirms,
1145 even if implicitly, that women and girls should be controlled or subordinated. In
1146 this way, it underwrites the justification of, or at least provides permission for,
1147 individual acts of violence. Moreover, patriarchy reinforces and often protects
1148 attitudes and values that undergird harmful action.

1149 The wide scope of theological, pastoral, and societal matters related to
1150 gender-based violence is addressed in the ELCA's social message "Gender-based
1151 Violence" (2015).⁴² In it, this church calls upon itself—and likewise calls upon
1152 society—to engage everyone to challenge and change harmful attitudes, beliefs,
1153 and the systems involved. This social statement is consistent with the analysis,
1154 insights and commitments expressed there.

1155

1156 **23) Seek, support, and advocate for portrayals of people in entertainment,**
1157 **media, and advertising that do not objectify or stereotype but rather show**
1158 **all people as capable of the wide variety of human characteristics and roles.**

1159

1160 The power of entertainment and media to shape individual thought and
1161 cultural beliefs is immense and often underestimated. This church expects that
1162 entertainment and media should seek to be gender just. Far too often, what
1163 is available on screen and in print, whether in film, advertisements, or social
1164 media, continues to be centered on men and boys. Furthermore, entertainment

41 "Gender-based Violence" (Chicago: ELCA, 2015), 2, 6-7, and "Foundational documentation for a social message on Gender-based Violence" (Chicago: ELCA, 2015), 6.

42 Ibid.

1165 and media often devalue or degrade females, often through unrealistic physical
1166 expectations. These expectations are frequently amplified by the beauty industry.
1167 Often unrealistic physical expectations are also put on men and boys. Media also
1168 tends to make invisible those who do not identify within the gender binary.

1169 The work of entertainment is to provide release and enjoyment, and the work
1170 of art is to offer an interpretation of human experience as seen through the eyes
1171 of the artist that enlightens human understanding. In both cases, fixed guidelines
1172 as to what depictions degrade and what simply depict are impossible. However,
1173 this church encourages entertainment that portrays gender diversity and
1174 demonstrates that all kinds of people are capable of the widest variety of human
1175 characteristics and status. Guided by a concern for gender equality, we will ask
1176 searching questions about available entertainment and media such as:

- 1177 a) Who is portrayed in what ways and by whom? What are the predominant
1178 messages being delivered about gender roles?
- 1179 b) In what ways are other forms of identity interwoven with gender? Are
1180 these represented in life-giving and positive ways?
- 1181 c) How often are some genders or types of people portrayed as “good and
1182 strong” and others as “bad and weak”?
- 1183 d) Do those who create the predominant images and messages represent
1184 gender diversity and are they committed to edifying art?
- 1185 e) In what ways do we all participate in media representation?
- 1186 f) In what ways can our participation be consistent with our faith-based values?

1187

1188 **24) Seek, support, and advocate for medical research, health care delivery,**
1189 **and access to health care services, including reproductive health care,**
1190 **that recognize how bodies differ and that eliminate discrimination due to**
1191 **gender or sexuality. (See ELCA social statement *Caring for Health: Our***
1192 ***Shared Endeavor.*)**

1193 The ELCA teaches that a just society provides equitable access to health care
1194 for all.⁴³ Health is a shared endeavor, requiring both personal responsibility and
1195 social commitment. “Health care is the kind of good most appropriately given on
1196 the basis of need.”⁴⁴

1197 The U.S. medical system is widely recognized as a global leader in amazing
1198 advances in research, prevention, and treatment. For all this we are grateful.
1199 At the same time, U.S. health care has carried a bias against women despite its
1200 advances and its practice.

1201 Historically, research and practice has assumed that the male body could
1202 be generalized to all bodies. While some researchers and practitioners have
1203 begun to challenge this assumption, it remains common that male and female
1204 differences are not factored in. For instance, the entire evaluation and delivery
1205 system of heart care has been based on the male body, even though more
1206 women experience heart attacks than men, with different symptoms than men.

1207 The bias is evident also in that U.S. health care for prenatal and maternal
1208 care, as of this writing, ranks 33rd in the world, despite being the world’s
1209 wealthiest economy.⁴⁵ Comparatively, women and their children, especially those
1210 who are poor or people of color, receive a reduced quality of care.

1211 The examples of bias could be multiplied, but the need to redress the injustice
1212 of a male-oriented health care system is clear. This church gives thanks for those
1213 who have drawn attention to these problems and urges that everyone in medical
1214 research and health care delivery recognize the legitimate needs of all people,
1215 taking sexual and gender diversity into consideration. The goal is to eliminate
1216 discrimination in the health care system because of gender, sex, sexuality,
1217 economic resources, ethnicity, or race.

1218 This statement affirms previous ELCA teaching on reproductive health care;
1219 it is most appropriately given on the basis of need,⁴⁶ and this church opposes any
1220 effort to roll back its delivery. While questions about how best to organize and

43 *Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor* (Chicago: ELCA, 2003), 18.

44 *Ibid.*

45 Save the Children, *State of the World’s Mothers 2015* (Fairfield, Connecticut: Save the Children, 2015), 55-64.

46 *Caring for Health* (Chicago: ELCA, 2003).

1221 finance mechanisms of care leave room for legitimate discernment, the mandate
1222 for equitable access to reproductive care for all remains compelling.

1223 The ELCA social statement *Abortion* has addressed at length in a nuanced
1224 way one critical, complex, and controversial aspect of reproductive health care.⁴⁷
1225 It teaches that the life and decisions of a woman *and* the developing life in a
1226 womb both must be respected and protected through a complex assessment of
1227 moral and social factors.

1228 On that basis, this church teaches that abortion ought to be an option of last
1229 resort⁴⁸ while opposing laws that deny access to safe and affordable services
1230 for abortions.⁴⁹ It urges this society to reduce the need to turn to abortion as
1231 the answer to unintended pregnancy and commits our community of faith to
1232 support both laws and practices that foster abundant life in all its dimensions.

1233

1234 **25) Seek, support, and advocate for economic policies, regulations, and**
1235 **practices that enhance equity and equality for women and girls, with**
1236 **special concern for raising up women who experience intersecting forms**
1237 **of oppression. (See the ELCA's social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable***
1238 ***Livelihood for All*.)**

1239

1240 Through human decisions and actions, God intends economic arrangements
1241 to enable human thriving. This church's benchmark on economic arrangements
1242 is that they should provide "sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all."⁵⁰ In terms of
1243 the U.S. economic system's delivery for women over the last 40 years, there has
1244 been important movement in this direction that must be applauded.

1245 However, economic inequality between males and females, especially when
1246 overlapping or intersecting social identities are included, remains stark. This
1247 is most evident in pay discrepancy. The current system of distribution harms
1248 women and their families.

47 *Abortion* (Chicago: ELCA, 1991).

48 *Ibid*, 4.

49 See *ibid*, 6-10.

50 *Sufficient, Sustainable, Livelihood for All* (Chicago: ELCA, 1999), 3.

1249 There are various ways to think about the problem of economic inequality
1250 and how to redress it. Some approaches stress the importance of regulations
1251 aimed at equity, and other approaches emphasize the importance of market
1252 freedom. Regardless of how the problem of injustice is viewed, one fact remains:
1253 Unequal distribution is evident in our economic practices. How we address the
1254 problem of economic inequality will affect both the nature of society and the
1255 lives of women as providers and citizens.

1256 This church expects people to be paid equitably for equitable work. There
1257 should be no discrepancies in pay or in access to capital in business and
1258 investments, and no discrepancies in access to Social Security or pensions based
1259 upon gender, sex, and sexuality, or any of the ways that factors such as race,
1260 ethnicity, and ability exacerbate the problems. When people receive lower pay
1261 because of gender identity, they are being denied the opportunity to thrive in and
1262 contribute economically to God's good world. Ultimately, all people should be
1263 paid equitably as a matter of equal rights.

1264

1265 **26) Seek, support, and advocate for services and legal reforms that attend**
1266 **to the particular needs of women, girls, and boys who are physically and**
1267 **economically vulnerable due to migration and immigration. (See the ELCA's**
1268 **social message "Immigration.")**

1269

1270 This statement affirms previous ELCA teaching and policy regarding
1271 immigration and refugees, addressed most comprehensively in the social
1272 message "Immigration" (1998).⁵¹ The ELCA's attention to the need for U.S. policy
1273 reform also has prompted numerous social policy resolutions anchored by the
1274 themes of compassionate, just, and wise reform.⁵² Those resolutions prioritize
1275 addressing the root causes of mass migration, the unification of families, and just
1276 and humane enforcement, among others.

51 "Immigration" (Chicago: ELCA, 1998). See also *For Peace in God's World* (Chicago: ELCA, 1995).

52 Since 2009, actions include "Toward Compassionate, Just, and Wise Reform" (ELCA SPR, 2008); "AAMPARO Strategy" (ELCA SPR, 2016); "Dream Act," (ELCA SPR, 2011); "Uniting American Families Act," (ELCA SPR, 2013); "Welcoming and Advocating for Refugees," (ELCA SPR, 2016). These and others can be viewed at ELCA.org/Resources/Faith-and-Society.

1277 The unique plight of undocumented women and girls also must be
1278 highlighted here. Undocumented women and girls are especially vulnerable
1279 to rape and other forms of violence or degradation. This is true during their
1280 journey, when they are held within the U.S. immigration and customs system,
1281 or when laboring or living in U.S. communities. Their lack of legal standing
1282 dramatically heightens their vulnerability.

1283 In all cases, their status as undocumented must not be an obstacle to
1284 the safety and well-being all humans need. On the contrary, their status as
1285 sojourners in this society invokes the biblical injunctions for special care and
1286 concern (Leviticus 19:34).

1287

1288 **27) Seek, support, and advocate for multi-faceted understandings of social**
1289 **and economic roles so that our human traits (such as courage or care) or**
1290 **callings (such as business leader or stay-at-home parent) are not prescribed**
1291 **by gender or sex. Encourage and empower all people to use their gifts for the**
1292 **sake of the social good, whether in the home, at work, or in the public sphere.**

1293

1294 In affirming the goodness of being embodied creatures and of social
1295 structures and social roles, this church does not hold that structures and roles
1296 are either utterly fluid or immutably defined by God or by nature for all time.
1297 The teaching of complementarianism (See glossary and Thesis 4.) remains
1298 common. The historical evidence is clear that many of the injustices and power
1299 inequities visited upon women have followed from that teaching.

1300 As social beings, humans do need social structures and guidance for the
1301 roles we live out, some of which are tied to biology. Yet, social changes of the last
1302 century, like the admission of women to medicine, law, or the military, continue
1303 to demonstrate that fixed gender-assigned roles are neither immutable nor

1304 fruitful for the common good.⁵³ The appropriate question is whether and how
1305 roles and structures serve God’s intent that human community flourish.

1306 There is no one principle, but the general aim is for individuals in community
1307 to seek the most life-giving balance within the structures of church, family,
1308 work or government. This church applauds when females find their place of
1309 responsibility as either the head of a corporation or as a full-time homemaker.
1310 Both are means to express one’s creativity and to contribute to society’s
1311 good.⁵⁴ We encourage males to explore similar versatility. Because there are
1312 many phases in each person’s life journey, we also honor roles that are not
1313 compensated, such as retirement or volunteerism.

1314 Toward this end, the ELCA urges that society’s laws and policies be constructed
1315 to support versatility. Thankfully, courts and legislatures no longer assume
1316 that it is only the domestic sphere that belongs to the domain and function of
1317 womanhood. Laws today are generally supportive of women’s vocations outside
1318 the home, and include rights to be paid equivalently to men for the same job and
1319 to be free from discrimination based on sex, including pregnancy.

1320 But laws alone are not enough. For one thing, attitudes and fears about cost
1321 often stand in the way of practicing equity or of effective legal remedy. Where
1322 legal reforms are under consideration, however, the ELCA advocates for those
1323 laws that foster the opportunity for women as well as men to express their
1324 individual vocations and to be compensated equitably.

53 The 1872 Supreme Court, for instance, upholding the exclusion of women from law practice, cited civil law, divine ordinance and nature itself: “the civil law, as well as nature herself, has always recognized a wide difference in the respective spheres and destinies of man and woman. Man is, or should be, woman’s protector and defender. The natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently unfits it for many of the occupations of civil life. The Constitution of the family organization, which is founded in the divine ordinance as well as in the nature of things, indicates the domestic sphere as that which properly belongs to the domain and functions of womanhood. The harmony, not to say identity, of interest and views which belong, or should belong, to the family institution is repugnant to the idea of a woman adopting a distinct and independent career from that of her husband.” *Bradwell v. Illinois*, 83 U.S. 130, 141 (1872) (Bradley, J., concurring).

54 *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (Chicago: ELCA, 1999), 7.

1325 **28) Seek, support, and advocate for resources for families and communities**
1326 **that empower parents, whether single or coupled, to nurture, protect, and**
1327 **provide for their household in ways that do not reinforce gender-based**
1328 **stereotypes. In particular, advocate for men to participate in all family roles**
1329 **associated with the home, caregiving, parenting, and nurturing.**

1330

1331 The ELCA continues to regard the family as “an indispensable social
1332 institution because of its role in establishing conditions of trust and protection of
1333 the vulnerable.”⁵⁵ We also recognize that families are formed in many ways and
1334 that the primary concern is how well families meet their indispensable purpose.

1335 Historically, in this society men have assumed the “headship” of the home
1336 and have been expected to be strong, to provide, to protect, and to have final
1337 authority. Typically, women have been expected to be submissive, to accomplish
1338 necessary domestic chores, and to fulfill roles considered subordinate that
1339 provide care and nurture.

1340 In support of this, Christians in the past, and many today, cite as God-
1341 assigned the so-called “Household Codes” (Ephesians 5:22-6:9 and Colossians
1342 3:18-4:1) that were borrowed and adapted by some New Testament writers from
1343 the household codes prevalent in the pagan social order of the first century.⁵⁶
1344 Indeed, gender-based rules are even presented in one letter as a form of works
1345 righteousness (1 Timothy 2:15). In non-Christian homes, male hierarchy has been
1346 (and often still is) maintained by other social or religious beliefs and customs.

1347 This church sees, by contrast, God’s intention for the structure of families as
1348 full and equitable partnerships of those responsible for the family, partnerships
1349 that can be arranged in various ways. In such partnerships, all members of the
1350 family benefit in the greatest way, as social science research indicates.⁵⁷

1351 The answer does not lie with fixed gender roles that always structure a
1352 household with a male as the head. Rather, the goal is to enable parents to

55 *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (Chicago: ELCA, 2009), 22 and following.

56 See David Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981).

57 Don S. Browning, *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers, in Modern Societies* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 285ff.

1353 share equitably in authority and to engage in roles that allow everyone to
1354 thrive. This necessarily means balancing personal strengths and interests with
1355 both the needs of work and income and the need to care for children and
1356 others in the extended family or household.

1357 Society's economic and social structures should provide generously for
1358 parents' needs in order to support such arrangements. This includes, for
1359 example, parental leave for parents who do not give birth, as well as adequate
1360 leave for parents who do give birth. It is critical in U.S. society that we find ways
1361 to increase paid parental leave for the care of family members and increased
1362 support for child care. Additionally, parents returning to work after raising
1363 children need profession-specific attention for support and advancement.

1364

1365 **29) Seek, support, and advocate for an increase in women's participation in**
1366 **local, state, and national politics, with special attention to raising up women**
1367 **who experience intersecting forms of oppression.**

1368

1369 This church holds that God institutes governing authorities to serve the good
1370 of society.⁵⁸ When women are underrepresented in this country's political offices
1371 and public leadership, that good is not served. This church calls for changes
1372 in social beliefs and attitudes about women that are often at the root of their
1373 exclusion from political life and public leadership. This church likewise calls for
1374 mentoring, education, and services to families that enable women to serve. The
1375 need is especially acute for encouraging and supporting women of color and
1376 others in marginalized groups to serve in political and leadership roles.

⁵⁸ *Church in Society* (Chicago: ELCA, 1991), 4.

1377 **V. Response to God’s Work:**

1378 **Call to Action and New Commitments Regarding the Church**

1379

1380 **30) This church recognizes that the Body of Christ is called to honor and support**
1381 **women, girls, and people with diverse gender identities in ways more consistent**
1382 **with life-giving theology and faith practices. Therefore, as a church, we commit**
1383 **ourselves to celebrating and affirming the gifts and insights that women and**
1384 **girls bring to congregations, institutions, and the church as a whole.**

1385

1386 This section draws out the implications of this statement’s insights for
1387 promoting and supporting life in the church that fosters life-giving challenges
1388 and changes. Challenges and change rarely come quickly or easily, but together,
1389 as a church, we can address urgent needs with determination, discernment, and
1390 prayer for the Spirit’s guidance. Such efforts inevitably employ the judgments
1391 of reason in discerning what changes are needed and how such changes are to
1392 be implemented. The particulars of desired changes are always open to further
1393 development and correction.

1394 Naming these areas for discernment and action expresses our church’s firm
1395 hope that life within the ELCA can be ordered in fresh ways so that all people
1396 may experience greater equity and justice. While we pursue this hope, we
1397 acknowledge the brokenness within ourselves and within the Body of Christ of
1398 which we are a part.

1399

1400 **The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commits to:**

1401

1402 **31) Promote scriptural translation and interpretation that support gender**
1403 **justice, acknowledge the patriarchal context in which the Scriptures were**
1404 **written, and reject the misuse of Scripture to support sexist attitudes and**
1405 **patriarchal structures.**

1406

1407 Drawing deeply from its Lutheran heritage, the ELCA promotes an
1408 understanding of Scripture that both honors its primary purpose and

1409 acknowledges its historical sources and contextual origin over a “supposed”
1410 literal reading. (See Thesis 17.) This approach understands that God speaks to us
1411 through Scripture primarily to sustain Christian faith and community for service
1412 to the neighbor in the world.

1413 Mindful of the Bible’s historical context and the misuse of Scripture to
1414 support patriarchal structures and sexist attitudes, this church will promote
1415 scriptural interpretation that seeks the Holy Spirit’s life-giving word⁵⁹ rather
1416 than a literal reading of the text that deals harm and degradation. Scriptural
1417 texts in which females are degraded, terrorized, debased, or valued less than
1418 males should be interpreted in the light of God’s intention for abundant life for
1419 all people. The neighbor-justice reading should also guide the interpretation of
1420 passages that may be less obvious but implicitly impart ancient cultural beliefs
1421 and practices with respect to the status and roles of people in society.

1422

1423 **32) Promote theological reflection that is attentive to the gender-based**
1424 **needs of the neighbor. Theologians need to be honest about how church**
1425 **teachings have been misused to support patriarchy and sexism. All teachers**
1426 **of the faith should express God’s desire that all persons may thrive.**

1427

1428 This church affirms its rootedness in the Christian theological tradition
1429 while pursuing a neighbor-justice critique of language and ideas that have been
1430 roadblocks. They have been obstacles to the proclamation of the liberating grace
1431 of God through Jesus Christ and the work of God in society to bring forth greater
1432 measures of justice and equality. We encourage continued scholarly research and
1433 church discernment regarding the faithful use of:

- 1434 • teaching about God and gender, especially the use of Trinitarian language
1435 and images that make clear that God is beyond gender even while
1436 recognizing that the limitations of human understanding require inclusive
1437 and expansive symbols and words;

59 There are many different translations of the Scriptures from the original languages into different languages that are not of equal value in how they use language. Martin Luther was concerned to focus on the grace proclaimed in the Scriptures when he wrote, “You must keep your eye on the word that applies to you, that is spoken to you.” “How Christians Should Regard Moses, 1525,” LW 35:170.

- 1438 • teaching about Jesus Christ and gender;
1439 • teaching about creation and gender; and
1440 • teaching and preaching about justification and the theology of the cross,
1441 mindful of how violence and suffering motifs have sometimes played into
1442 their explanation and application, particularly with respect to women.

1443

1444 **33) Use inclusive language for humankind and inclusive and expansive**
1445 **language for God. Encourage the use of language for God that expands**
1446 **rather than limits our understanding of God’s goodness and mystery. In**
1447 **particular, we support developing liturgies, hymns, prayers, and educational**
1448 **materials that broaden our language beyond primarily male images.**
1449 **This practice follows the Scripture’s witness that God is wholly other and**
1450 **transcends human categories of sex and gender. Therefore, metaphors and**
1451 **images for God should be drawn from the lives of women and men, from**
1452 **nature, and from humanity in all its diversity to speak of the fullness and**
1453 **beauty of God.**

1454

1455 The God revealed in Christ is beyond our human capacity to name or fully
1456 describe. Still, we must use words to pray and praise, and our experience of
1457 God is affected by the language we use. We affirm our commitment to language
1458 for God that expands rather than limits our understanding of God’s goodness
1459 and mystery.

1460 The movement away from male-oriented wording for human beings is
1461 necessary to counter patriarchy and sexism. The use of inclusive language is
1462 at the same time more precise and shapes how we think about each other as
1463 humans.⁶⁰ The selection of particular words is powerful. The ELCA teaches that
1464 inclusive language about human beings should be the goal in both worship and
1465 everyday use.⁶¹

60 See Kate Swift and Casey Miller, *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing: For writers, editors and speakers*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln, Neb.: iUniverse.com, Inc., 2000). See also Krista Tippett with Jean Berko Gleason, “Unfolding Language, Unfolding Life,” On Being, podcast audio, February 4, 2016 (Public Broadcasting System), onbeing.org/programs/jean-berko-gleason-unfolding-language-unfolding-life/ (accessed October 4, 2017).

61 *ELCA Style Guide* (Chicago, ELCA, Fall 2014), 48.

1466 Religious language and imagery, likewise, matter because exclusive language
1467 and imagery have contributed significantly to patriarchal religious beliefs and
1468 practices. Because words and images *are* religious symbolism, they carry deep
1469 and unconscious meanings.⁶² Changes to religious symbolism may be both
1470 unsettling and life-giving.⁶³

1471 For instance, while God has no gender or sex, the use of either father or
1472 mother images for God may be liberating for one person but evoke deep
1473 emotional pain for another. Words and images about God express how we
1474 understand God and affect how we understand ourselves. They simultaneously
1475 carry personal, communal, historical, and ecumenical implications.

1476 Ecumenically and within our church some people think the correct way to
1477 speak of God is as “Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” Other people think it is essential
1478 to use expanded alternatives. This church recognizes that the Trinitarian formula
1479 is an issue for the universal church that requires prayer, scholarship, and
1480 extensive discernment. At the same time, this church calls upon our leadership
1481 and members to enlarge the dialogue about and practice of expansive language
1482 and images for God.

1483 Without setting fixed requirements, this church encourages people of faith
1484 to explore the rich variety of language recorded in the Scriptures and the rich
1485 imagery in religious art and the Christian theological tradition.

1486 In the same spirit, we encourage the continued exploration and development
1487 of expansive language for liturgies, hymnody, and worship resources. This work
1488 must always be grounded in the faithful message of God’s graciousness and
1489 God’s call for justice that seeks to enable all people to thrive.

62 For the effects of language, see Jean Berko Gleason and Nan Bernstein Ratner, eds. *The Development of Language*, 8th ed., Allyn & Bacon Communication Sciences and Disorders Series (Boston: Pearson Education, 2012) and Jean Berko Gleason and Sandra Weintraub, “The Acquisition of Routines in Child Language,” *Language in Society* 5 (2), (Cambridge University Press: 1976), 129–136, jstor.org/stable/4166866 (accessed April 4, 2016). See also Gail Ramshaw Schmidt, “*De Divinis Nominibus*: The Gender of God,” in *Worship* (March 1982): 127 and H. Frederick Reisz Jr., “Language and God: Theological and Pastoral Issues,” in *Women and Men in the Body of Christ: A Report by the Advisory Committee for the Study of Women on Women and Men in the Body of Christ* (Lutheran Church in America, 1987), 84.

63 See Lois Malcolm, “On Not Three Male Gods: Retrieving Wisdom in Trinitarian Discourse,” in *Dialog* 49 (Fall 2010): 238-247.

1490 **34) Develop and support more extensive policies and practices within the**
1491 **ELCA that promote the authority and leadership of all women within this**
1492 **church in all its expressions.**

1493

1494 In the 1970's the LCA, ALC and AELC,⁶⁴ the predecessor churches of the
1495 ELCA, made decisions to ordain women for the public ministry of Word and
1496 Sacrament. While multiple viewpoints were argued, the final decisions were
1497 largely based on the conclusion that Scriptures presented a mixed case regarding
1498 ordination and that nothing definitive prevented allowing women into this office.

1499 Since that time, the vast experience of this church has demonstrated how those
1500 decisions honored God's intention expressed in the Pentecost story of Acts where
1501 the Spirit falls equally on male and female in every leadership role. Yes, personal
1502 journeys have been difficult for many and the communal journey since 1970 has
1503 been agonizingly slow. Female participation, however, in ministries of Word and
1504 Sacrament and Word and Service and in lay leadership has borne powerful witness
1505 to the Gospel and enlivened this church's ministry in abundant ways.

1506 In light of this experience, this church gives thanks, rejoices, and remains
1507 committed to developing and supporting additional policies and practices
1508 that promote women's authority and leadership within this church. Given
1509 the continual struggles of women of color for leadership roles, the ELCA's
1510 commitments to them need special attention.⁶⁵

1511 This commitment to recognize continuing sexism and to find ways to expand
1512 female authority and leadership falls to the entire church: call committees,
1513 boards and councils, the election of bishops and other leaders, formal and non-
1514 formal mentoring and succession planning, educational practices in seminaries,
1515 colleges and universities, pre-schools and grade schools, the ELCA Lutheran
1516 Youth Gathering, and youth ministry. Together this church can joyfully open
1517 itself to the work of the Spirit by using the gifts and contributions of women

64 The Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, respectively.

65 See 45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women (Chicago: ELCA, 2016), download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/45th_Anniversary_of_the_Ordination_Women_Ordained_Full_Report.pdf?_ga=2.5082804.664826014.1507055211-471709994.1462479885 (accessed October 4, 2017).

1518 who have clearly demonstrated that they can enable and empower the various
1519 ministries of this church.

1520

1521 **35) Promote changes that are economically just, including equal pay, for**
1522 **women in all ELCA institutions and organizations, with special attention to**
1523 **the situations of people affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.**

1524

1525 In support of women's authority and leadership, this church must continue
1526 to seek new ways to promote changes that redress the economic injustice that
1527 shows, slowly, signs of abating.⁶⁶ As of this writing, women ordained to Word
1528 and Sacrament ministry in the ELCA earn on average more than the national
1529 average of ordained women, but their pay remains inequitable. Attention to the
1530 issue of equitable benefits and pay is needed across the entire ELCA, not only
1531 in congregations.

1532 Secondly, greater support for women's ministry and leadership entails the
1533 development of more adequate arrangements related to pregnancy, parental
1534 leave, and lactation for ELCA rostered leaders and for employees of ELCA-
1535 related organizations and institutions. Such arrangements would support both
1536 leadership and commitments to families.

1537

1538 **36) Seek and encourage faithful discernment and, where possible, joint**
1539 **action with other members of the Body of Christ and inter-religious and**
1540 **secular partners on issues of patriarchy and sexism. This includes the**
1541 **affirmation of the Lutheran World Federation's Gender Justice Policy**
1542 **and continued dialogue with national and global ecumenical and**
1543 **inter-faith partners.**

1544

1545 Governed by the framework established in this social statement, we in this
1546 church acknowledge our responsibility to continue addressing our own actions
1547 and attitudes, policies and practices as one member in Christ's visible church. At

⁶⁶ Ibid.

1548 the same time, we recognize that seeking theological understanding and faithful
1549 action through the Holy Spirit for church and society is an ongoing project of
1550 Christ's whole church. It is a project in which we are to "hear, understand, and
1551 consider with love and graciousness everyone's judgment, opinion, and beliefs."⁶⁷
1552 In that spirit, this church is committed to faithful discernment, together with
1553 fellow members and churches of Christ's Body, in the areas identified here, and
1554 we invite them to join us in common action when possible.

1555 While the ELCA rightly attends to the issues of patriarchy and sexism
1556 domestically, we know that the global nature of these problems affects women
1557 across the world. The examples are many. For instance, while women are 40
1558 percent of the world's work force, they own 1 percent of the world's wealth.⁶⁸
1559 Some 28.7 million are forced into sexual slavery,⁶⁹ and in many places women
1560 cannot hold political office.

1561 In a world of expanding globalization, ELCA leaders in official capacities
1562 and ELCA members in their everyday lives encounter cultural commitments
1563 and perspectives quite different from those taught by this statement. In facing
1564 these differences, there is a challenge to be clear regarding ELCA concerns
1565 about sexism and patriarchy, to hear the call for ongoing renewal from all
1566 quarters of global Lutheranism, and, at the same time, to build relationships of
1567 understanding. The ultimate point is to engage in discernment together as God's
1568 people and to challenge each other to greater justice while accompanying women
1569 and girls in their own context.

1570 In this regard, the ELCA is grateful for the guidance provided by the
1571 Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and affirms the Gender Justice Policy created
1572 and affirmed by the federation. While this statement grows out of our cultural
1573 context, this church regards the foundation, principles and methodology in the
1574 LWF policy as a global benchmark for conversation and efforts toward common

67 Preface of "Augsburg Confession" in *Book of Concord*, 30.

68 The World Bank, "Gender Equality and Development," in *World Development Report 2012*, (Washington, D.C.: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2011).

69 This figure includes forced labor, forced marriage and commercial sexual exploitation. See "Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage," (Geneva, Switzerland: International Labor Organization, September 2017), 9-11, http://www.alliance87.org/global_estimates_of_modern_slavery-forced_labour_and_forced_marriage.pdf (accessed October 10, 2017).

1575 practice. In a spirit of mutual accountability consistent with the Lutheran
1576 heritage's commitment to "mutual conversation and consolation,"⁷⁰ we look
1577 forward to mutual support and accompaniment in implementing the LWF Gender
1578 Justice Policy with the global Lutheran community.

1579 In a similar spirit, we invite ecumenical partners, especially full communion
1580 partners, to journey with us on the road to gender justice in church and
1581 society. The fundamental biblical commitment to justice for women, even when
1582 understood in different ways, should undergird and guide our common attention
1583 to concerns about patriarchy and sexism. Our hope is for conversation that
1584 is transformative, providing a foundation for common actions toward justice,
1585 equity, and equality for all. In those areas where we are not of one mind in our
1586 discernment, we will continue to walk together in the bond of Christian unity,
1587 seeking afresh the Spirit's leading.

⁷⁰ "Smalcald Articles," *Book of Concord*, 319.

Glossary

Androcentric: Male-centered.

Complementarity: The idea that men and women have inherently separate roles and purposes.

Equity: Fairness or justice in the way people are treated that accounts for different contexts and factors to ensure each person is not inadvertently disadvantaged.

Freedom (Christian): This is a freedom for serving the neighbor in need empowered by God's grace as we trust that we do not have to justify ourselves and do not need to earn God's love through actions or behaviors.

Gender: How someone acts and looks; categories into which cultures and societies separate behaviors and characteristics that are usually linked to a person's biology. The most common gender identities are woman and man, but other identities exist.

Gender binary: The concept that there are only two genders which are distinctly different in inherent ways.

Gender identity: How a person understands their gender; one's internal sense of one's gender.

Gender just: Describes something that promotes justice in matters related to gender.

Gender justice: Removing power imbalances among people on individual and societal levels and discrimination against people who do not adhere to stereotypes associated with men and women.

Gender non-conforming: Refers to people whose gender identity and/or biological characteristics do not completely fit with the dominant and expected ways of acting as a man or a woman. There are many identities and experiences included under the umbrella of gender non-conforming, for example, transgender people, those born with ambiguous genitalia, or those who do not express their gender in traditional, expected ways.

Gender-based violence: Physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or other personal harm inflicted on someone for gender-based reasons, including but not limited to intimate partner violence or violence among family members. This can include things like catcalling women or bullying boys who are not perceived as "adequately manly."

Heterosexism: The systematic discrimination, exclusion and oppression of people who are not heterosexual.

Human trafficking: Also known as modern-day slavery, people who are trafficked are coerced, abducted and/or imprisoned for forced labor, often of a sexual nature.

Hyper-masculinity: A term for exaggerated masculine behavior or traits that emphasize physical strength, aggression and sexuality and deemphasize emotions related to caring and vulnerability.

Idoltrous/Idolatry: Given to placing something as more important than God.

Inclusive and expansive language: Inclusive language refers to the inclusion of all genders when referring to humanity or God, for instance, using “humans” to talk about humanity, rather than “men.” Expansive language for God also includes language and imagery that is not limited to humanity.

Intersecting/intersectionality: Human identities that are tied to systemic privilege and oppression can intersect with one another and shape the unique ways that people experience aspects of life. These identities have to do with sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, race, ethnicity, nationality/citizenship, social class, economics and religion, to name a few. All human identities and all forms of privilege and oppression are made up of many intersections.

Justice: Generally, justice refers to an underlying sense of fairness, right treatment and reciprocity. Various forms of justice include: retributive justice, corrective justice, distributive justice, restorative justice, structural justice, fair or equal treatment under the law, ending oppression based on power differences. In this statement, the term justice emphasizes the last three meanings but always with the biblical emphasis on justice as right relationship with God and within community.

Law and Gospel: Central principles in the Lutheran Confessions and other teaching to interpret and apply the Scriptures. Both law and gospel are God’s Word. The terms refer not only to the content of the Scriptures but to how God’s Word affects us when we read or hear it. God’s law addresses us in two ways or “uses.” One exposes our sinfulness and puts the old creature to death; the other provides direction for how we are to live in society. The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ, which we receive through faith as the gift of forgiveness and new life.

Lutheran Confessions: Documents written by Lutheran reformers during the 16th century that provide a foundation for Lutheran theology and practice. One example is the Small Catechism.

Misogyny: The hatred of women.

Neighbor justice: A concept proposed in this draft for scriptural interpretation that emphasizes seeking the neighbor’s good for the sake of justice for all.

Objectification: Thinking of or portraying a person as an object, erasing their humanity, emotions and rights.

Patriarchy: The social, institutional, legal, political, educational, economic, religious and interpersonal systems of society that benefit men and the interests of men with status and power. While all people within a patriarchal system participate in it, the system functions with men at the center. This means that, sometimes unconsciously, people participate in systems that control and oppress people who do not fit society’s ideas of maleness and masculinity.

Privilege: Advantage or special treatment of a group or individual that is unearned but comes from the fact that their identity is perceived as “normal” or “better.”

Rape culture: An environment in which the objectification and assault of human bodies is normalized and tolerated, particularly in a sexual way. Rape culture primarily harms women and girls.

Reproductive health care: Health services related to the reproductive system at all stages of life for all genders, including the menstrual cycle, fertility and cancer.

Sex (biological sex): Refers to physical characteristics of genitals and gonads.

Sexism: That which promotes and perpetuates male privilege.

Sexuality: The romantic and/or sexual attraction experienced by a person, often categorized by the genders to which they are attracted. The ELCA views sexuality as a gift from God.

Theology of the cross: Martin Luther's conviction that God is revealed in the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Transgender: Describes a person whose gender is different from their assigned or identified sex at birth.

Vocation: In Lutheran theology, vocation (or calling) refers to God's call to all people to live responsibly in their roles within the world God has made, serving their neighbors within the areas of family, work and community life. All people have multiple callings that are lived out in various settings and relationships.

Works righteousness: The idea that a person is made right with God because of actions they do, often called good works.

Response Form

If you would like more room to fill out the questions, please feel free to attach additional sheets or fill out the survey online at bit.ly/womenandjusticedraft.

What did you think of the draft statement overall?

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The draft statement reflects what I think the ELCA should say about women and justice.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

Comments (Please refer to specific line numbers as you are able.):

The Basic Statement of the draft (pages 1-9) is clear and easy to read.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

Comments (Please refer to specific line numbers as you are able.):

The Fuller Explanation section of the draft is a valuable deeper look at the Basic Statement.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

Comments (Please refer to specific line numbers as you are able.):

The draft statement equips ELCA communities to address gender justice issues in their ministries.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

Comments (Please refer to specific line numbers as you are able.):

Where did the text speak most powerfully or directly to you and your life experience? (Please include line numbers as you are able.)

Is there anything you think should be added to strengthen the draft statement?

Is there anything you think should be removed to strengthen the draft statement? (Please include line numbers as you are able.)

What did you think of each section of the draft?

Please rate how valuable each section of the draft statement was.

Basic Statement:

	<u>Not at all valuable</u>				<u>Very valuable</u>	<u>Didn't read</u>
Our Common Foundation (lines 1-34)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I. Core Convictions (lines 36-75)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
II. Analysis of Patriarchy and Sexism (lines 77-127)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
III. Resources for Resisting Patriarchy and Sexism (lines 129-166)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IV. Response to God's Work: Call to Action and New Commitments in Society (lines 168-221)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
V. Response to God's Work: Call to Action and New Commitments Regarding the Church (lines 223-264)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hope for Justice (lines 265-285)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments (Please include line numbers as you are able.):

Fuller Explanation:

	<u>Not at all valuable</u>				<u>Very valuable</u>	<u>Didn't read</u>
I. Core Convictions (lines 288-575)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
II. Analysis of Patriarchy and Sexism (lines 576-762)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
III. Resources for Resisting Patriarchy and Sexism (lines 764-1066)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IV. Response to God's Work: Call to Action and New Commitments in Society (lines 1068-1376)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
V. Response to God's Work: Call to Action and New Commitments Regarding the Church (lines 1377-1587)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments (Please include line numbers as you are able.):

To what extent did you find this format, The Basic Statement followed by the Fuller Explanation, useful? Not at all Very

Were there any terms in the draft which should be more clearly defined or added to the glossary?

No

Yes – What are they?

Who are you? (This helps us better understand from whom we're hearing so that we can ensure we hear a wide range of voices.)

Age

- 19 or younger
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70-79
- 80 or older

Education: What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.

- Eighth grade
- High school diploma, GED or Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate degree

Gender

- Woman or girl
- Man or boy
- Gender non-conforming
- Not listed above – Please specify below

ZIP code				

- | | | | | |
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| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |

Ethnicity or Race

- African American / Black
- African National / African Caribbean
- American Indian / Alaska Native
- Arab / Middle Eastern
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Latinx / Hispanic
- Multiracial
- White



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Ordering Information

Prepared by the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ

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ITEM #: ELCAOB1021

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This document is available online at ELCA.org/womenandjustice.

To order a single, complimentary printed copy of this document, call 800-638-3522. Multiple printed copies may be ordered from the ELCA Online Resource Catalog for a nominal fee at ELCA.org/resources.

You are invited to share your response to the draft in two ways.

1. You may use the response form near the back of this booklet, or share your comments in letter or essay form. Please send them to the task force at the address below by Sept. 30, 2018.

ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice
Office of the Presiding Bishop
8765 W. Higgins Rd.
Chicago, IL 60631-4101

2. You may, instead, respond online at bit.ly/womenandjusticedraft or email your comments to womenandjustice@elca.org.

You also are invited to participate in hearings on the draft, which will be held in many synods. Information and dates for these hearings will be posted at ELCA.org/womenandjustice. You also may contact your synod office for further information.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

ELCAOB1021



DRIFT

CALLED FORWARD TOGETHER IN CHRIST

ELCA Strategic Directions 2017-2025 13 November 2016
discussion at the ELCA Church Council meeting

future@elca.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Foreword

Symbolically and strategically it would be great to have a foreword jointly signed by Presiding Bishop Eaton, Bishop Gafkjen, chair of the Conference of Bishops, and William Horne, ELCA vice president. This would help communicate joint commitment and the importance of shared leadership responsibility.

This could be written together after the Church Council discussion.

DRAFT

Introduction

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with more than 3.8 million members in over 9,000 congregations across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. The ELCA formed in 1988 through a merger of three Lutheran churches – The American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the Lutheran Church in America. However, the ELCA proudly traces its roots back through the mid-17th century, when early Lutherans came to America from Europe, settling in the Virgin Islands and the area that is now known as New York. Well before that, Martin Luther, along with others, sought reform for the church in the 16th century, laying the framework for our beliefs.

As a church deeply rooted in the scriptures, and in Christ, this church continues to be shaped by the changing face of our communities, by new migration patterns and national and global trends impacting religion and society.

In 2017 the ELCA, together with Lutherans around the world, will observe the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. This significant milestone provides an opportunity for this church to look back with joy to our deep theological roots and faith traditions, on our history of being a reformed and reforming church and to a future filled with abundant hope and possibilities.

Propelled by commitment to the ELCA's Lutheran heritage and to being a community of faith that is always forming and being renewed, the presiding bishop, Church Council and Conference of Bishops initiated Called Forward Together in Christ in late 2015. The process sought to engage the ELCA in conversation about future directions so that the Church Council might reach decisions that help this church journey faithfully and more effectively together in the years ahead.

Strategic Directions 2025 is the outcome of that process. Participants in Called Forward Together in Christ – from congregations, synods, the churchwide organization and a wide range of ELCA ministries – resoundingly lifted up similar hopes, concerns and ideas about what should be given importance. The goals and priorities that emerged are not entirely new. They reflect what many in the ELCA already see to be important and draw from other discussions in recent years on ELCA's strategic direction, especially Living into the Future Together (LIFT)¹.

Called Forward Together in Christ has delivered a strategic framework that will serve shared leadership across the ELCA to realize common aspirations and better face the challenges this church faces.

¹ The Living into the Future Task Force (LIFT I, 2009-2011 and Lift II, 2011-2014)

Our strategic directions

The ELCA's Strategic Directions 2017-2025 are presented in three parts: The ELCA – who we are: What unites us; Our strategic directions – goals and priorities for the church we are becoming. Together they tell the story of the church we are becoming – a church that is confident about who we are in Christ and what God is calling us to do.

1. The ELCA – who we are

Called, gathered and sent into the world to embody the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection, we exist to be a reforming, renewing and reconciling expression of God's grace through life-giving relationships and communities of worship, mercy, justice and service.

We are church

We are what God has made us – people whom God has created by grace to live in union with Jesus Christ and has prepared to live faithful, fruitful lives by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:8-10). In Jesus Christ, God has reconciled us to God and to each other. As we gather around word and sacraments, this life in Christ is what defines, shapes and guides us as a community of faith, the church.

By God's grace we can and do live confidently and generously in this community of faith and in service of others, amidst the mysteries and paradoxes of this life in Christ – including our human limitations and failings, and the ambiguities, uncertainties and suffering that we experience.

We are Lutheran

We are a church that walks by faith, trusting God's promise in the gospel and knowing that we exist by and for the proclamation of this gospel word. We proclaim Jesus Christ crucified and raised from the dead for the life of the world. As the apostle Paul wrote (Romans 1:16-17), and we echo in our Constitution (2.02), we are not ashamed of this gospel ministry because it is God's power for saving all people who trust the God who makes these promises. "We are to fear and love God, so, that we do not despise preaching or God's word, but instead keep that word holy and gladly hear it and learn it". (Small Catechism)

God's word, specifically God's promise in Jesus Christ, creates this liberated, confident and generous faith. God gives the Holy Spirit who uses gospel proclamation – in preaching and sacraments, in forgiveness and in healing conversations – to create and sustain this faith. As a Lutheran church, we give central place to this gospel message in our ministry.

We understand to be Lutheran is to be ecumenical – committed to the oneness to which God calls the world in the saving gift of Jesus Christ, recognizing the brokenness of the church in history and the call of God to heal this disunity.

We are church together

Just as God has joined us to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in baptism, we are also joined to others, not only in the ELCA and The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), but in all communities of Christian faith around the world. In Christ none of us lives in isolation from others. Jesus is our peace and has broken down the walls that divide us – walls of judgment, hatred, condemnation and violence – and has made us into one, new human community (Ephesians 2:14-15). This spiritual communion depends only on God's mercy that comes to us in the word and sacraments. That alone is enough for unity, and so we yearn for this communion with all Christians at the Lord's table.

Because God gives us our unity in Christ, we are able to see and respect the diversity within Christ's body. We receive it as a gift and embrace it, rather than treating it as a threat or a problem to be solved (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). We respect and honor the diversity of histories, traditions, cultures, languages and experiences among us in the ELCA and in the larger Christian community of faith. We seek full participation of all in the life and work of this church and will strenuously avoid the culture of any one group becoming the norm for all in the ELCA. And we strive to address the ways that racism, sexism, classism and other forms of injustice limit participation and harm people, communities and the whole body of Christ.

In all these relationships the ELCA serves reconciliation and healing with other Christians, while repentantly acknowledging its failings and wrongs, trusting in God's forgiving mercy.

We are church for the sake of the world

Christ has freed us from sin and death, even from ourselves, so that we can live as ministers of reconciliation in loving and generous service of our neighbors (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). In Jesus Christ, all of life – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

Freed by the transformative life of Christ, we support ELCA members as they give themselves freely in transforming service with the neighbor. Through a wide range of daily vocations and ministries, we nurture faith, build alliances and gather resources for a healed, reconciled and just world. As church together, we faithfully strive to participate in God's reconciling work, which prioritizes disenfranchised, vulnerable and displaced people in our communities and the world. We discover and explore our vocations in relation to God through education and moral deliberation. We bear witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ through dialogue and collaboration with ecumenical partners and with other faiths. In all these ministries God's generosity flows through us into the life of the world.

2. What unites us as church

Our shared purpose

Together in Jesus Christ we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully.

Our vision

A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ makes for all people and creation.

Our values

Our values are grounded in faith, in our biblical and Lutheran confessional sources and our love of God and neighbor. They speak to the way this church lives and practices our faith, and they will guide how we journey forward in Christ as church together.

Forgiveness and reconciliation – We are reconciled to God by God's forgiving mercy. Forgiveness and reconciliation flow from what God has made us to be in Jesus Christ and what God is doing with us in the world. As a people of God, we embody forgiveness in speech, action and relationships, and our ministry in reconciliation is foundational.

Dignity, compassion and justice – Each person is created in God’s image. We respect this God-given right to dignity and, inspired by the life of Jesus, show love and compassion for all people. Through proclamation of the gospel, through worship and as servants of God working for healing and justice in the world, we uphold and seek to protect the dignity and human rights of all people.

Inclusion and diversity – As Christ’s church, we value the richness of God’s creation and offer a radical welcome to all people, appreciating our common humanity and our differences. We are a church that does not view diversity as a barrier to unity. We recognize and will challenge dynamics of power and privilege that create barriers to participation and equity in this church and society – for women, people of color, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, people who marginalized or living in poverty, and the LGBTQ community.

Courage and openness to change – Because we trust in God’s promise and understand faith to be a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, we are emboldened to embrace learning and change in our spiritual and institutional journey as church. This means we are open to new ways and willing to take risks to discover God’s plan for this church.

Faithful stewardship of God’s creation and gifts – As church together, faithful stewardship is about holding to God’s purpose and ensuring the responsibilities and resources that God has entrusted to us are used with great care and with accountability to God, to each other and those served by this church.

Our most important ministries

In today’s competitive society that creates unrealistic expectations of finding worth through human accomplishments, the most important ministries of this church in the years ahead are:

“Christians live not in themselves, but in Christ and in their neighbor. Otherwise they are not Christians. They live in Christ through faith, in their neighbor through love.” *Martin Luther, “On Christians Freedom” (Luther’s Works, vol. 31, pl. 371*

Worship, word and sacraments – Rooted in evangelical proclamation and sacramental celebration we are a church gathered around worship experiences that are meaningful, authentic and responsive to community contexts

Faith formation and discipleship – Honoring our rich traditions, we are a church grounded in the Lutheran confessions inspiring biblical and theological literacy, gospel fluency and daily vocation and ministry through shared experience and life-long learning

Leadership development – We are a church strongly committed to formation, education and continuing development and care of lay leaders and rostered ministers.

Children, youth and young adults – We are a church dedicated to ministries that engage and affirm children, youth and young adults as an integral part of this church, now and for the future.

Ministries addressing human suffering and injustice – In communities and around the world we are an informed church, actively utilizing our many gifts in witness and service in response to human need in our communities, countries and the world

3. Our goals and priorities

The goals and priority areas for action set out here are based in a shared trust and hope that the future is in God's hands.

They express what this church has collectively said is important into the future. Identifying priority areas for action provides a focus for shared leadership of this church so it can be more effective in serving God's mission and attending to institutional challenges that stem from being church today.

The "why" of our goals is in the gospel, in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and deeply embedded in our Lutheran theology and traditions.

In a radically individualistic society, we seek to create and sustain life-giving relationships and communities that connect us to God and to one another.

In a society that is changing and increasingly secular and a world facing continuing interreligious and national tensions, we seek to proclaim the gospel and share the story of Jesus as a source of hope, inclusion, peace and reconciliation.

In a world that misuses power and authority and struggles with conflict and growing inequality, we seek to follow Jesus who publicly spoke up for those who were oppressed and marginalized.

The church we are becoming

- 1. A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people*
- 2. A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church*
- 3. An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity in our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings*
- 4. A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in our communities and around the world.*
- 5. A well-governed, connected and sustainable church*

Goal one: A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people

Priority areas for action

- ❖ **Church identity** – Develop a deeper and more shared understanding of who we are as a Lutheran church and equip leaders and all the baptized to communicate our theology and beliefs in accessible and compelling ways.
- ❖ **Renew and strengthen evangelism** – Through all expressions of this church, and in accompaniment with global companions, foster new approaches to evangelism that are compatible with being Lutheran and generationally, technologically and contextually relevant and effective.
- ❖ **Church leaders** – Adopt a more strategic and coordinated approach to formation, education and continuing development of lay leaders and rostered ministers, with emphasis on theological fluency and equipping leaders for evangelism and vocations in a wide range of contexts and ministries.

Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 2:9-10, Matthew 28:16-20, Romans 1:16

- ❖ **Renewal and formation of congregations and worship communities** – Support and empower congregations and communities of worship through mission planning and development, encouraging a culture of deepening faith, hope and openness to change.
- ❖ **Ecumenical dialogues and relationships** – Continue to be a church deeply engaged in ecumenical dialogue, relationships and partnerships for the sake of Christian unity.

Goal two: A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church

Priority areas for action

- ❖ **Baptismal vocation** – Form and equip the baptized to express their faith through their life and witness as followers of Jesus.

Philippians 2:4-11, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Romans 6:3-4, Mark 10:13-16

- ❖ **Faith formation and practice** – Support and provide resources for life-long faith formation and practice – within households, workplaces and communities – and share learnings about the approaches that deepen faith and bring Jesus into people’s daily lives.
- ❖ **Youth and young adults in mission** – Provide space, support and opportunities for youth and young adults to participate in ministries and pursue their calling.

Goal three: An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings

Priority areas for action

- ❖ **An outwardly focused church** – Support congregations and worship communities in actively reaching out to people in their neighborhoods through relationships, in service and with an openness for mutual learning.

1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 2:14-20, Acts 10, Galatians 3:26-28

- ❖ **Theological and cultural competence of leaders** – Build confidence and competence among lay leaders and rostered ministers to provide an authentic welcome to people from different cultures and circumstances and embrace the ideas and experience they bring.
- ❖ **Church leadership profile** – Pursue a leadership profile that reflects the diversity to which the ELCA aspires and endeavor to match the gifts and experience of leaders to communities and ministries where those gifts are needed.
- ❖ **Addressing discrimination and oppression** – Equip and support leaders at all levels of the church to understand, speak out and act against discrimination based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation and social status.

Goal four: A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world

Priority areas for action

- ❖ **Poverty and hunger** – Continue to encourage and harness resources for local, national and global ministries to alleviate poverty and hunger and improve the way this church tells these stories of God’s work in the world – internally and externally.
- ❖ **Response to disasters and humanitarian crises** – Continue to be a church supporting and taking action in local and international response to natural disasters, violence and conflict and assisting the growing number of people affected by displacement and forced migration.
- ❖ **Lifting up the work of ELCA related social ministries** – Build awareness across this church of the important work of ELCA-related social ministry organizations and understanding their work as central to the life of this church.
- ❖ **Advocacy and action on economic justice, racial justice, gender justice and climate justice** – Be a visible witness and agent of change for justice and creation care.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21,
John 13:12-15, Isaiah 58:1-11

Goal five: A well-governed, connected and sustainable church

Priority areas for action

- ❖ **Leadership in governance** – Re-examine and strengthen governance of the ELCA to provide for clarity in roles and authority, strong relationships and shared leadership and a culture of willing accountability.
- ❖ **Church structures** – Review church structures to ensure their fit with future needs of the ELCA, with a focus on responsibilities, functions and resourcing of synods and the churchwide organization and how best to support and resource congregations.
- ❖ **Resources for mission** – Develop and take forward a church strategy to grow resources for mission and ministry and ensure distribution and use of resources aligns with roles, expectations and priorities for the whole church.
- ❖ **Communication** – Improve communication across this church in support of proclaiming the gospel, new forms of evangelism, connecting the church as one part of the body of Christ and sharing success stories, experience and learning.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 2 Corinthians
4:1-2, Micah 6:8, 2 Corinthians 9

En Bloc Items

I. Board Development Committee

II. Budget and Finance Committee

A. Audit Committee Report

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve the [report of the ELCA Audit Committee](#) describing its review of the audited financial statements, management letter, and response of management for the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust's year ending December 31, 2017.

B. 2018 and 2019 Synod Mission Support Plans

The Church Council has responsibility for reviewing and acting on synod mission support plans as an interdependent partner with congregations and synods in implementing and strengthening the financial support for the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA Constitution, 8.15 and 10.71).

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

As a grateful church that affirms the partnership of congregation, synod and churchwide expressions, we affirm the percentage of sharing of 2018 Mission Support by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries:

Eastern Washington/Idaho, Rocky Mountain, Western Iowa synods;

As a Church Council, we 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.

We will steward these gifts to maximize their impact in mission for the sake of God's Work. Our Hands. in the world.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To acknowledge with appreciation the action of the following synods to maintain the percentage of sharing of 2018 Mission Support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries but estimating an adjustment in the projected amount to be shared:

Eastern North Dakota, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Northern Great Lakes, Pacifica;

To further affirm that we will steward these gifts to maximize their impact in mission for the sake of God's work. Our hands, in the world.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

As a grateful church that affirms the partnership of congregation, synod and churchwide expressions, we affirm the percentage of sharing or dollar amount of sharing of 2019 Mission Support by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries:

Alaska, Allegheny, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Caribbean, Central/Southern Illinois, Central States, Delaware-Maryland, Eastern North Dakota, Eastern Washington-Idaho, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Florida-Bahamas, Grand Canyon, Greater Milwaukee, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, Indiana-Kentucky, La Crosse Area, Lower Susquehanna, Metropolitan Chicago, Metropolitan Washington D.C., Metropolitan New York, Minneapolis Area, Montana, Northern Great Lakes, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Northwest Washington, North/West Lower Michigan, Northeastern Iowa, Northeastern Ohio, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Northeastern Minnesota, Nebraska, New England, New Jersey, North Carolina, Northern Illinois, Northwestern Ohio, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Northwestern Minnesota, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, Oregon, Pacifica, Rocky Mountain, Southern Ohio, Southwestern Washington, Southwestern Texas, Southeastern Iowa, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Southeast Michigan, Southeastern Minnesota, Sierra-Pacific, Slovak Zion, South Carolina, South Dakota, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Southeastern, Saint Paul Area, Southwest California, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Southwestern Minnesota, Upper Susquehanna, Upstate New York, Virginia, Western North Dakota, West Virginia-Western Maryland, Western Iowa synods;

As a Church Council, we 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; and

We will steward these gifts to maximize their impact in mission for the sake of God's work. Our hands, in the world.

C. Synod-Specific Goals for Mission Support

At its April 2015 meeting, Church Council acted on recommendations from the Bishop's Think Tank on Mission Funding. This think tank was assembled by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton who invited one bishop from each of the nine regions of this church in a "mission funding think tank," convened in 2014 by Bishop Julian Gordy, Southeastern Synod. An excerpt from the actions is:

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

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

[CC15.04.11]

Ms. Victoria Flood, director for mission support, met with the Conference of Bishops at their March 2018 meeting to discuss various processes. Budget and Finance Committee will hear an update on the proposed process and provide a recommendation for council's consideration.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To affirm that the process for determining Synod Specific Mission Support Goals is consistent with the actions taken by the Church Council at its April 2015 meeting;

To thank all bishops and churchwide staff who participated in the formulation of this process in a contextually sensitive, substantive, and collaborative spirit; and

To request that the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council continue to receive the results of synod consultations and synod-specific Mission Support goals.

D. Change of Authorization on Churchwide Endowments

The Church Council is asked occasionally to establish or authorize changes to churchwide endowment funds. Changes to funds usually reflect any new organizational structure and/or nomenclature due to restructuring or changes in position titles. The purpose of this request is to realign existing endowment agreements with the current churchwide operations and structure for The Native American Community Mission Endowment Fund.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To revise all existing ELCA Endowment Authorizations for which the Church Council is the governing authority as follows:

Strike the words, ‘executive director of the Commission on Multicultural Ministries’, and replace with the words ‘director of American Indian Alaska Native ministry’;

Strike the words, ‘or appropriate designee’, and replace with the words ‘the director of Ethnic Specific Multicultural Ministries’;

Strike the words, ‘executive director’ of the ELCA Foundation, and replace with the word ‘president’ of the ELCA Foundation.

E. Revisions to Resolutions Regarding Authority to Act in Financial Matters

In November 2016, the Church Council adopted CC16.11.46c1, regarding the Appointment of Assistant Officers. A revision is being proposed to update the appointments. The proposed revisions are as follows:

1. Appointment of Assistant Officers

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant vice presidents of this corporation: M. Wyvetta Bullock, Walter S. May, Marcus R. Kunz, Kathryn M. Lohré, and Jodi L. Slattery, to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the Presiding Bishop;

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant treasurers of this corporation: Cecilia Favela, Christina Jackson-Skelton, Christopher Carpenter, and Annette Roman, to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the Treasurer;

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing or attesting, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant secretaries of this corporation: Thomas A. Cunniff, Sue E. Rothmeyer, Phillip H. Harris and Aja M. Favors to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the Secretary.

RESOLVED, that prior resolutions adopted by this Council, including CC15.04.31b and the prior actions identified in CC15.04.31b, addressing the appointment of assistant officers are hereby rescinded and replaced by this action.

F. Establishment of a Church Council Designated Fund

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve a Church Council Designated Fund in the amount of \$2,750,000 representing the excess revenue over expenses from fiscal year 2017 to be released to fund the post-retirement medical benefit obligations of the churchwide organization.

III. Executive Committee

IV. Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

A. Designation of Churchwide Organization Representatives at Synod Assemblies

In accordance with S7.23, the Church Council is to designate official representatives of this church who will have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Bishop Eaton has named the official representatives for the synod assemblies. The grid that identifies each representative to a respective synod assembly can be found [here](#).

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To designate the persons identified in the “2018 Synod Assemblies by SYNOD” 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.

B. Approval of Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago Constitution and Bylaws

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) has proposed amendments to its constitution and bylaws. The amendments can be found [here](#).

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve the revised constitution and bylaws of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

C. Approval of ELCA Continuing Resolutions

ELCA continuing resolutions 15.15.A17. is being amended to reference the ELCA Foundation name. Continuing resolution 19.01.A15. is being amended to allow for an identification process for the election of the secretary.

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.

15.15.A17. replace with 15.15.A18. Responsibilities of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA

The Endowment Fund of the ELCA—also known as the ELCA Foundation—shall:

- a. *offer, promote, administer, and oversee endowment, deferred giving, life-income, and similar planned giving programs for individual donors, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and related institutions and agencies in support of ELCA ministries;*
- b. *offer pooled investment services for endowment funds of this church and its congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and related institutions and agencies;*
- c. *manage assets of endowment, deferred giving, life-income agreements, donor-advised funds, and funds held for external participants;*
- d. *oversee the administration of earned-income payments to donors and to remainder beneficiaries as regulated by life-income, trust, and other fiduciary donor agreements;*
- e. *determine annual endowment fund distribution rate;*
- f. *set fees associated with endowment and deferred giving programs;*
- g. *hire and oversee such managers, service providers, consultants, advisors, and sub-advisors as it deems appropriate;*
- h. *develop and approve an annual budget that will be financed through revenue from its gift planning and investment activities and programs;*
- i. *coordinate programs and ministries with the priorities of the ELCA and other stewardship and financial-resource development activities of this church; and*
- j. *act in accordance with constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 11.34.01., 14.21.02., 14.21.03., 14.21.06., and 14.21.07.*

19.01.A15. replace with 19.01.A18.

19.01.A18. *In a year when the vice president or secretary shall be elected, the voting members elected to serve at of the Churchwide Assembly shall be invited to identify the names of up to three persons who might be considered for election as vice president or secretary. Names shall be submitted to the Office of the Secretary at least four months prior to the assembly. The Office of*

the Secretary shall contact those persons identified and request biographical information. At least 60 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members.

V. Planning and Evaluation Committee

VI. Program and Services Committee

A. Approval of Human Rights Social Criteria Investment Screen

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly passed a memorial on “Peace with Justice in the Holy Land” [CA16.06.31] that requested the CSR table “to develop a human rights social criteria investment screen based on the social teachings of this church.” In reviewing the social teachings of this church, it was determined that a social message on human rights was needed prior to developing a screen. At its November 2017 meeting, Church Council approved a Human Rights Social Message.

At the last Program and Services Committee meeting, the committee received a first reading of the human rights social investment criteria screen, based on the proposed social message on human rights. Since that first reading, the Conference of Bishops provided feedback and the [human rights social criteria investment screen](#) is now being presented for final consideration.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve the “Political and Civil Human Rights: Equal Access and Participation” Social Criteria Investment Screen; and

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

B. Revisions to Social Message on Immigration

ELCA social teaching documents necessarily are written in a particular social context and time period. As the years pass, some of the specific references and information in them, especially in ELCA social messages which are more practically oriented, naturally become dated to the point of being incorrect.

Quite often readers simply recognize the datedness of information and adapt their reading accordingly as they seek the biblical themes, theological features, moral values and Christian commitments in ELCA teaching. On occasion, however, references and information can become dated to the point of significant inadequacy and misdirection for those seeking to be guided by these documents.

In the judgment of leaders with responsibility for immigration work within the ELCA, this has become the case for the social message on Immigration (1998) after the adoption of the ELCA’s strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO) at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. While AMMPARO is grounded in the biblical and theological themes, values and overall commitments of the social message on Immigration, the information provided in 1997 that direct members to action is now quite incomplete or misdirected. Since the social message is frequently used or sought out in support of ELCA immigration work, the problem is acute.

The Church Council is being asked to remedy this problem by adopting necessary editorial updates to the [Immigration social message](#) that are reflected in AMMPARO. Editorial updates so adopted by the council will be reflected in the message on the ELCA website immediately and be used when a second printing of the social message is called for.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To adopt the identified changes to the social message on Immigration (1998) as an editorial update that will provide accurate information from the ELCA's strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities. (AMMPARO).

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 8.31.03. outlines basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries. Pursuant to 14.15. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the Church Council is also to elect nominees to a vacancy on a board or committee of the churchwide organization.

Biographical information is provided in [Biographies](#).

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To elect to the board of directors of the Publishing House of the ELCA — 1517 Media — for a term ending in August 2019: Mr. Joel Peterson.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To re-elect to the board of directors of The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago for a three-year term expiring in 2021: Ms. Rebecca R. Pallmeyer.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To nominate to the advisory council of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary as part of Lenoir-Rhyne University for a term coterminous with his service as chair: The Rev. Lowell G. Almen.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To nominate to the advisory council of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University for a term coterminous with her service as chair: Ms. Judy K. Leidy; and

To nominate to the advisory council of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University for a three-year term expiring in 2021: Ms. Barbara J. Burgie and Mr. Roderick G.W. Chu.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a three-year term expiring in 2021: Mr. Andrew N. Nuffer;

To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a four-year term expiring in 2022: Ms. Elizabeth Lucht Jones; and

To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a five-year term expiring in 2023: The Rev. Mary B. Froiland.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To elect to the board of trustees of United Lutheran Seminary for a three-year term expiring in 2021: The Rev. R. Guy Erwin, Mr. David A. Russell and The Rev. Mark K. Tyler; and

To authorize the Executive Committee to elect trustees to fill, until the November 2018 meeting of the Church Council, vacancies in the board of trustees of United Lutheran Seminary.

B. Church Council Appointments

At its November 2017 meeting, the Church Council appointed participants to the Strategic Task Force for Authentic Diversity. Additional appointments are needed for the task force.

Background information can be found [here](#).

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To appoint the Rev. Logan Vang and Ms. Kelly Sherman-Conroy to the Strategic Task Force Towards Authentic Diversity; and

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to make additional appointments as necessary.

Entrance Rite Discernment Group Update

Over the past few months, the Entrance Rite Discernment Group (ERDG) has focused on providing additional resources to engage the larger church in conversation, as well as drafted a recommendation regarding the entrance rite for Ministers of Word and Service, appropriate symbols for ministers of Word and Service, and representational principles.

An email update was sent to all rostered ministers on February 18, 2018 that included an update of the work of the ERDG, and links to a second [FAQ](#) and [additional resources](#).

A draft recommendation accompanies this report for the review of the Church Council. It is the hope of the ERDG that, with the affirmation of the Church Council, this recommendation can be shared more broadly to encourage conversation in the larger church, before a final recommendation is brought to the Conference of Bishops and Church Council in the fall of 2018.

Members of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group include:

- The Rev. Robert Driesen and Bishop Mark Narum, co-chairs
- Bishop James Dunlop
- Sister Elizabeth Colver, Deacon
- Cynthia Gustavson (Church Council representative)
- The Rev. Dr. Kathryn Kleinhans
- Deacon Dr. Lake Lambert
- Dr. John Litke (lay leader)
- Dr. Susan McArver
- Deacon Louise Williams

Churchwide Office staff include:

- Krista Anderson
- Chris Boerger, secretary
- Kevin Strickland, assistant to the presiding bishop, executive for worship
- Greg Villalon, director, leadership for mission/candidacy
- Kathryn Johnson, director, ecumenical and inter-religious relations, serving as ecumenical consultant
- Julia Vega, administrative assistant, providing administrative support.

Email sent to rostered ministers February 19, 2018

Dear rostered minister,

Jan. 1, 2018, marked one year since the beginning of the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service. During this past year, the candidacy process has been updated, the Facebook group [ELCA Ministers of Word and Service](#) has been established for deacons to connect, gatherings for deacons are underway in many of our regions, and 25 new deacons were consecrated and many others installed into new positions.

Conversations with partners across the church continue as we live into the partnership between the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service.

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group has continued in a variety of ways. In September, an email was sent to rostered ministers sharing additional resources and inviting feedback and conversation. The invitation to engage in conversation and provide feedback continues. In addition to a Bible study, Entrance Rite FAQ, [introduction to papers](#), papers, and a feedback form previously available on the ELCA website under [Word and Service Resources](#), an additional paper, "[Initiatory Rituals for Public Ministry](#)," and a second [Entrance Rite FAQ](#) are now available.

A few of the frequently asked questions you can find are:

- What did Martin Luther say about the diaconate?
- What language do our ecumenical partners use for setting apart those in diaconal ministry?
- Why would a community decide to call a rostered deacon?
- If ordination is recommended as the appropriate entrance rite for ministers of word and service, will those currently rostered be ordained?

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group, charged with making recommendations regarding the entrance rite for the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service, representational principles and appropriate symbols, will be submitting a draft proposal to the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council in the spring of 2018.

The group's final recommendation will be sent to the Conference of Bishops and Church Council in the fall of 2018. The Church Council will forward a final proposal to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for the members of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group, please send them to Krista.M.Anderson@elca.org.

In Christ's name,

Deacon Krista Anderson
Program Director, Support of Rostered Ministers and Candidacy Leadership Manager, Region 3
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group

The Rev. Robert Driesen and Bishop Mark Narum, co-chairs
Sister Elizabeth Colver, deacon
Bishop James Dunlop
Cynthia Gustavson (Church Council representative)
The Rev. Dr. Kathryn Kleinhans
Deacon Dr. Lake Lambert
Dr. John Litke
Dr. Susan McArver

Deacon Louise Williams

ELCA churchwide organization staff

Deacon Krista Anderson, program director, support of rostered ministers,
candidacy leadership manager – Region 3

The Rev. Wm. Chris Boerger, secretary

The Rev. Kevin L. Strickland, assistant to the presiding bishop/executive for Worship

The Rev. Gregory Villalon, director, ELCA Leadership for Mission/Candidacy

Report and Recommendations of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group

Background

From 1993 through 2016, the ELCA maintained four public ministry rosters: the roster of ordained ministers and three official rosters of laypersons - associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers. Beginning in 2007, regional consultations, study, and dialogue examined the work and ministry of the three lay rosters, and these conversations eventually led the ELCA Church Council to appoint a Word and Service Task Force in 2012. [CC12.11.33].

The Word and Service Task Force recognized and affirmed the essential value of diaconal service to the mission of the people of God in the ELCA. Through its work, the task force came to an understanding that this calling would be strengthened by the convergence of the three former lay rosters of the ELCA into a single redefined roster. Based on the recommendation of the Word and Service Task Force, the 2016 Churchwide Assembly authorized the establishment of a roster of ministers of Word and Service, called deacons, effective January 1, 2017. [CA16.05.11]. The assembly also directed that the rite of consecration be used as the entrance rite for this new roster during an interim period of additional study, since two of the three rosters that combined to form the new roster of Ministers of Word and Service had used consecration as their entrance rite. [CA16.05.11]

Early in its work, the Word and Service Task Force recommended that the question of a permanent entrance rite for this new roster be considered separately. The Church Council appointed an Entrance Rite Discernment Group [CC13.11.65] to consider this question and to bring a recommendation to the Church Council for action by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Subsequently, the Church Council, responding to memorials offered at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, also requested that the Entrance Rite Discernment Group provide recommendations on appropriate diaconal symbols and whether or not the constitutional language on representational principles [5.01.f] should be altered.

Recommendation and Rationale for the Rite

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends the use of *ordination* as the rite of setting apart both ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service.

Theology and Practice

Baptism establishes our Christian identity. Through baptism, each Christian is called to a life of loving service in response to God's gift of grace.

Throughout the life of the church, some persons have been called to live out that loving service as a diaconal minister or deacon. While that diaconal ministry has taken many forms through the history of the church, it has always been marked by a call to service. As the *Occasional Services for the Assembly* companion volume to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* notes, "Those called to the diaconate speak God's word to God's world, and in turn they speak also for the needs of God's world to the church."¹

The church has historically set apart such persons through a public rite for this ministry. By doing so, it does not confer a higher status upon these persons than baptism does, but rather witnesses that some individuals are called and appointed to specific public ministry. All deacons on the roster of the ELCA, wherever they serve in the church and the world, are responsible to empower, equip and encourage the

¹ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2009), 200, cited in Gordon W. Lathrop, "Diaconal Ministry: The Entrance Rite Question Reflections from a Consideration of Symbolic Meaning and Ritual Practice," 1. Word and Service Roster, last modified March 2017, http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Diaconal_Ministry_Entrance_Rite_Question.pdf?_ga=2.208097814.525212187.1518102037-561441743.1518102037

whole people of God for their own daily baptismal vocation of service to the neighbor and care of creation.²

Since 2014, the Entrance Rite Discernment Group has studied the history and theology of ordination and consecration, the history and theology of *diakonia*, liturgical materials, and the practices of our global and ecumenical partners.

The New Testament does not present a single theology of a rite called ordination. Instead, it describes a pattern of the church setting individuals apart for specific leadership roles through the laying on of hands with prayer and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.³

The central actions in the rites named ordination, consecration, and commissioning in this church are the laying on of hands with prayer and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, along with a charge to and promises by the candidate. While there are slight differences in the wording of the *current* rites, the intention is the same: to set persons apart for public ministry on behalf of the church.

North American Lutherans have typically limited the rite of ordination to ministers of Word and Sacrament and have especially associated ordination and inclusion on the ordained roster with the authorization to preside over the sacrament of Holy Communion. This narrow usage of the term, however, is not common among our ecumenical partners or among global Lutheran churches.

The final report of the 2005 Lutheran World Federation consultation on *The Diaconal Ministry in the Mission of the Church* recommended ordination for diaconal ministers, in order to “reflect that the diaconal ministry is an integral part of the one ecclesial ministry. Through the act of ordination, the church recognizes the ministry of the deacon and prays to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit.”⁴ At the same time, the statement also affirms the “‘deaconhood of all believers’; that is, the calling of all the baptized to be involved in *diakonia*.” It also points to the importance of “seeing the diaconal and pastoral ministries as mutual and complementary, while having different emphases.”⁵

Many churches throughout the global Lutheran community ordain deacons, including the Lutheran churches in Germany, Sweden, Brazil, Estonia, Iceland, and Indonesia. In addition, many of our six full-communion, partners use the term ordination to set apart deacons for public leadership roles in the church. Both the United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church, the two partner churches with deacons whose roles roughly parallel those in the ELCA, ordain deacons. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Reformed Church in America ordain deacons who hold primary duties in ministries of service and compassion. In the United Church of Christ, congregations may choose to ordain deacons and other leaders for service in the local congregation only, while the Moravian Church in America ordains its deacons as one of the three traditional orders of ministry (deacon, presbyter, bishop).⁶

² "Report and Recommendations of the Word and Service Task Force." *ELCA 2016 Pre-Assembly Report*, ELCA, 2016,

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.guidebook.com/upload/p8aWh9vqY2iSfM4NcXE63BHJ5PwCQxn7/zOMeY5N2y0TCZV6p5L4tQYjlqzI6Z5xocYg.pdf>, 1.

³ Mark Oldenburg, "Initiatory Rituals for Public Ministry," 1-2, Word and Service Roster, last modified March 2017,

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Initiatory_Rituals_for_Public_Ministry.pdf?_ga=2.220028701.525212187.1518102037-561441743.1518102037

⁴ "The Diaconal Ministry in the Lutheran Churches," in *The Diaconal Ministry in the Mission of the Church*, ed. Reinhard Boettcher, LWF Studies 2006 (Geneva, Switzerland: Lutheran World Federation, 2006), 85.

⁵ E. Louise Williams, "Ecumenical and Global Perspectives on the Diaconate," 4. Word and Service Roster,

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Ecumenical_and_Global_Perspectives.pdf

⁶ For further examples and discussion, see William Gafkjen, "Here a Deacon, There a Deacon, Everywhere a Deacon, Deacon," Word and Service Roster, last modified July 2014,

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Deacon_Descriptions.pdf?_ga=2.209148822.525212187.1518102037-561441743.1518102037

Recognizing that ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service are both engaged in ministries that are essential to the life of the church and its work in the world, the Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends the consistent use of *ordination* as the rite of setting apart both ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service.

Roles and Responsibilities

The ELCA Constitution (7.20 and 7.50) specifies the distinctive roles and responsibilities of those on each roster. Ministers of Word and Sacrament hold primary responsibility for preaching the Word, administering the sacraments, conducting public worship and providing pastoral care. (7.31.02). Ministers of Word and Service live out a life of prophetic *diakonia* that gives particular attention to the suffering places in God's world, equip the baptized for ministry in God's world in ways that affirm the gifts of all people, and are grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation (7.61.02). Those called as ministers of Word and Service thus proclaim the word of God to the world and interpret the needs of the world to the church in ways that equip the baptized in their vocation of loving and serving the neighbor. Both rosters share in the responsibility to share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider work, identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the gospel, and to speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world (7.31.02 and 7.61.02).

Whether one serves as a minister of Word and Sacrament or a minister of Word and Service, ordination confirms the individual's internal sense of call, affirms the external call of the church, commits the individual to faithfully carry out their responsibilities, and affirms the commitment of the church to accompany and support these ministers as they live out their public ministry. In addition, the term ordination is easily recognizable by, and can strengthen our conversation and collaboration with, our global and ecumenical partners.

Those previously commissioned or consecrated already have been entranced into the ministry of Word and Service. Ordination, commissioning and consecration are all valid and appropriate "entrance rites" for those beginning public ministry in the church. Since those already on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service have already "entered" the roster, no further rite is necessary. In addition, all rostered deacons, both those already on the roster and those who will enter in the future, may rightly use the symbols recommended and deemed most appropriate.

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 rostered deacon of the ELCA has a two-fold focus 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 pastors of the ELCA."⁷

The recommendation reflects 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."⁸

⁷ Gaffken, 2.

⁸ Duane Larson, "A Theology for One Lutheran Diaconate in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," 6. Word and Service Roster, http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Theology_One_Lutheran_Diaconate.pdf?_ga=2.215007123.525212187.1518102037-561441743.1518102037. Larson's essay contains a more expansive theological discussion of this topic.

Recommendation and Rationale regarding “Representation Principles”

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends that for all purposes related to the implementation of the “representational principles” of this church, neither ministers of Word and Sacrament nor Word and Service be included in the category of “laypersons.”

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group affirms the importance of allowing laypersons significant participation in the decision-making processes of this church, particularly as manifest by Constitution 5.01.g, which states that “at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons.” Because pastors and deacons are *rostered* ministers of this church, the Discernment Group recommends they be counted together. We encourage all entities within this church, including synods, to establish processes that will ensure that both ministers of Word and Service and ministers of Word and Sacrament are included in leadership positions appropriate to their contexts.

Recommendation and Rationale for Appropriate Symbols of the Roster

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends that the ordination rite for ministers of Word and Service include the presentation of a deacon’s stole and a cross.

Deacons in the ELCA serve in widely varying ways. They may serve in the ministries of a congregation, synod or churchwide agency in areas such as teaching, administration, music or service, or they may serve in social services agencies or other ministries in the world. Historically, however, whatever their specific ministry, the service of the deacon has been rooted in the worship of the church.

All Christians are fed through the Word and sacraments of the Christian assembly and are thus strengthened for their service in the world. For much of Christian history, deacons held important liturgical responsibilities in its worship life. The World Council of Church document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982) notes that in particular, “by struggling in Christ’s name with the myriad needs of societies and persons, deacons exemplify the interdependence of worship and service in the Church’s life”.⁹

Liturgical renewal in the 20th century brought a welcome re-emphasis on the participation of the laity in worship leadership, and laity now often assist in many congregations with the responsibilities formerly traditionally assigned to deacons. With the formation of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, congregations may wish to consider inviting deacons to serve in some capacity alongside the laity in some form of worship leadership, providing yet another opportunity to highlight the intersections of church and world, while additionally lifting up and recognizing both ancient and contemporary practice. While deacons will live out their connection with the worshipping assembly in different ways, that relationship is essential to the understanding and witness of the deacon as public leader of the church.¹⁰

Because they are called to serve in two contexts, the Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends the use of two symbols.

Diaconal stoles are an ecumenically recognized symbol of the diaconate. The deacon’s stole, worn diagonally across an Alb, emphasizes the importance of connecting worship and service, and emphasizes that deacons are public ministers of the church.

Outside the assembly’s worship, the cross is an appropriate symbol and identifies the deacon as a presence of the servant Christ in the world. The Entrance Rite Discernment Group suggests that the appropriate ELCA staff facilitate a conversation among deacons about a unified cross design.

⁹ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 1982), 27.

¹⁰ For a deeper consideration of the connection between the deacon and the worshipping community, see Lathrop.

Recommendations

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends that the ELCA:

1. Establish the rite of ordination as the entrance rite for deacons entering the roster of Ministers of Word and Service;
2. Define the symbols of this ministry as a deacon's stole and a cross, both to be presented at the entrance rite;
3. Direct the worship staff of the ELCA to develop an appropriate rite and rubrics for the ordination of deacons;
4. Direct the worship staff of the ELCA to share information about the appropriate use of the deacon stole and to facilitate a conversation among deacons regarding a unified cross design;
5. Charge the Secretary to propose appropriate amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of this church that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be persons who are not on the rosters of Word and Service or Word and Sacrament;
6. Review the ELCA Candidacy process for appropriate modifications as necessary;
7. Charge 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;
8. Call upon this church to increase opportunities for lifting up, recognizing, fostering and encouraging recognition of the ministers of Word and Service for the mission and witness of the church in the world;
9. Continue funding for transition events and ongoing leadership and formation events to ensure growth and understanding of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service;
10. Continue the preparation of appropriate and informative materials for the church's ongoing study; and
11. Refer the resulting amending/amended documents to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for approval as necessary.

Hopes and Dreams Going Forward

When introducing the proposal for a unified diaconal roster to the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, Bishop William Gafkjen noted that we were not commending to the church just a change in church governing documents, but

an "adaptive" change... rooted in what we believe and think about who we are and how we live and work together for the sake of God's mission in the world. It's about how we are equipped and called to live and serve together as God's cross-marked Spirit sealed believers, bearers and "embodiers" of good news, the best news, in a torn, tumultuous and terrified world.¹¹

The change in church rosters is a commitment to and hope for a renewed ministry of all the baptized, particularly as witnessed by diaconal lives. What then do we hope and dream will be the substantive changes to our faith communities?

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group envisions a future where ministers of Word and Service and ministers of Word and Sacrament come to be equally valued and important in the life of the church, sharing one ministry of the Gospel. As we mature into a church with a strengthened diaconal leadership and more ardent diaconal witness, we also hope for a realized collegiality among all serving for the sake of the gospel, rostered and not.

¹¹ William Gafkjen, "Presentation: Word and Service Roster Recommendation" (unpublished typescript, August 8, 2016), 2.

Consequently, this change... will touch and transform how we understand and live into the vocation of every baptized person to follow Jesus in the way of the cross to care for and serve the neighbor, every neighbor.¹²

We hope and dream for extended leadership, in new places and contexts, that is not only visible in communities of faith but also visible in the world.

[In 1993, the ELCA] adopted the document Together for Ministry. This fine document describes with clarity the missional movement of the church as church for the sake of the world. It lifts up the call of all the baptized to ministries of service in the world.... We made these decisions on the front edge of the unimaginable acceleration of the changes, cultural and otherwise, that have placed parts of the body of Christ like the ELCA in unfamiliar, even precarious, positions, wondering how God is calling us to be church in new and shifting landscapes.¹³

We thus hope for renewed congregational vitality that is understood to be rooted in an outward facing community.

We hope and dream that incorporating diaconal witness and leadership will deepen this church's understanding of diaconal commitment as an essential part of faith. Faith is a relationship that is not just confidence in God, often manifest by creeds and confessions, but also commitment to God's call expressed by a way of living.

This future will not just happen but will require this church to consciously grow into it. We pray this church will resolve to reflect on these matters and act on these dreams for the sake of the gospel witness of the church in the world.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

ELCA Ethnic Associations

Conversation with Church Council Spring 2018

Agenda

- ▶ **Opening Meditation** (Rev. Lamont Wells)
- ▶ **Multicultural Follow-up summit.**
(Rev. Dr. Russell Meyers)
- ▶ **Report from each Ethnic Association President.**

Talking Circles

Facilitator:

Rev. Joann Conroy

We will have two rounds of conversation. A recorder will be assigned at each table. We will go around the circle 2X with the same question. Everyone will answer the question the first time.

Question(s)

- ▶ How can the voices of the ethnic associations be more representative during Church Council?
- ▶ What will it take for that to happen?
(Optional second question if there is time).

Reporting Out

(Rev. Martin Lopez Vega)

01

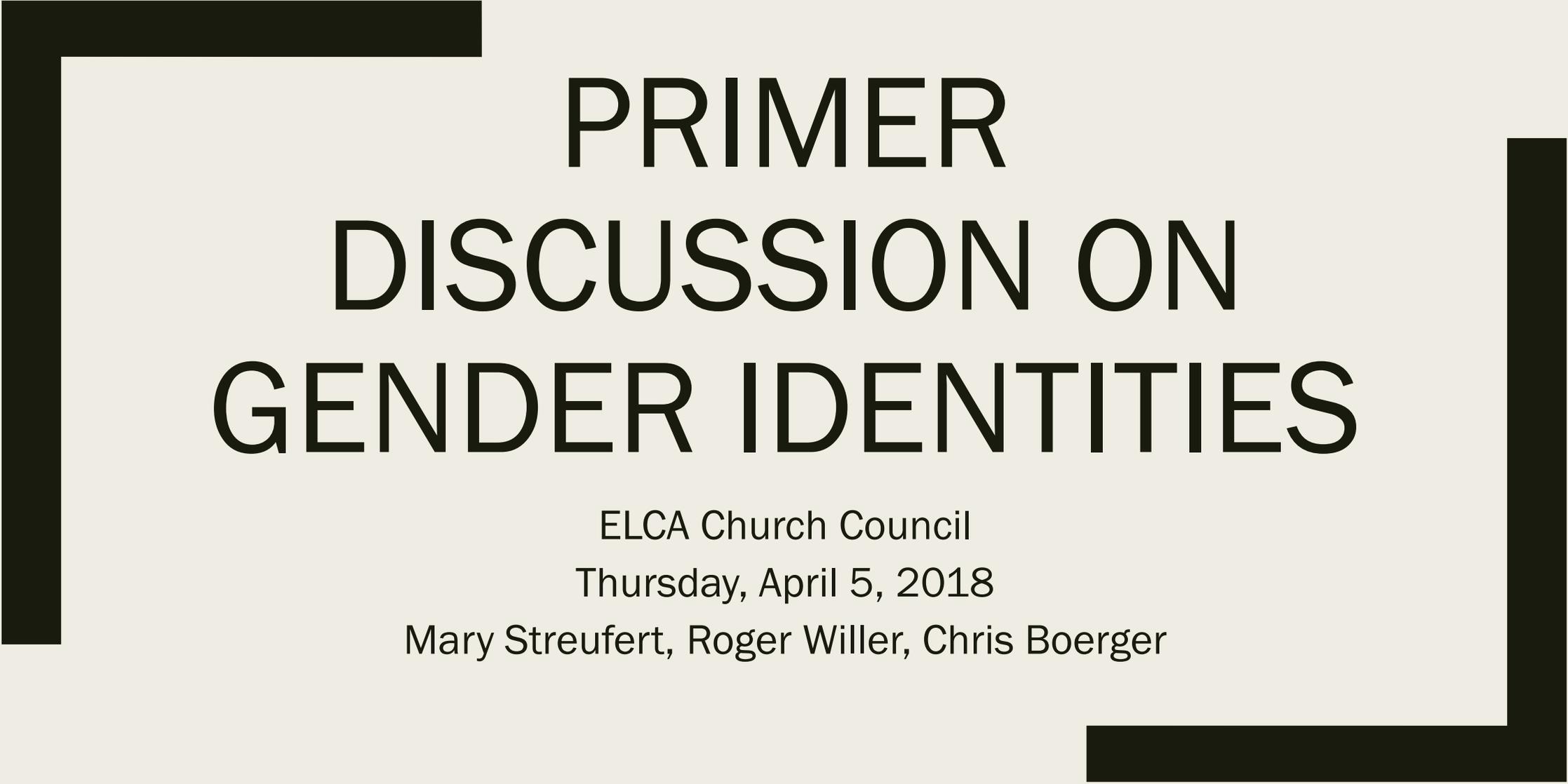
Each table will report out 1 or 2 ideas from their circle.

02

Responses will be scribed.

03

Closing prayer.
(Rev. Dr. Moses Penumaka)



PRIMER DISCUSSION ON GENDER IDENTITIES

ELCA Church Council

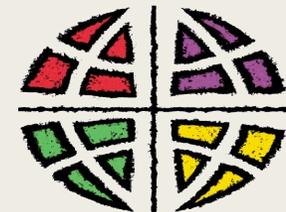
Thursday, April 5, 2018

Mary Streufert, Roger Willer, Chris Boerger

We are church for the sake of the world.

- “The witness of this church in society flows from its identity as a community that lives from and for the Gospel. Faith is active in love; love calls for justice in the relationships and structures of society. . . . Word and Sacrament are the originating center for this church’s mission in the world. . . . In witnessing to Jesus Christ, the Church announces that the God who justifies expects all people to do justice.”

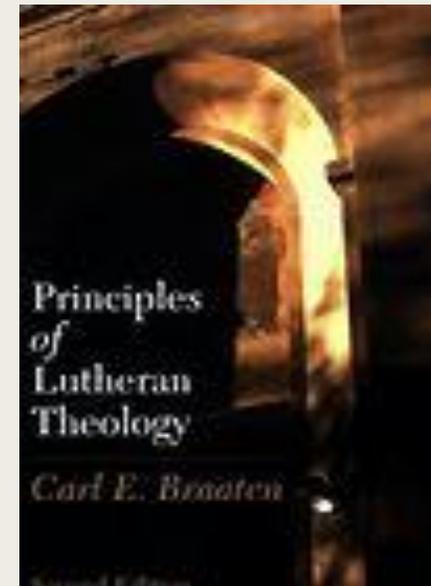
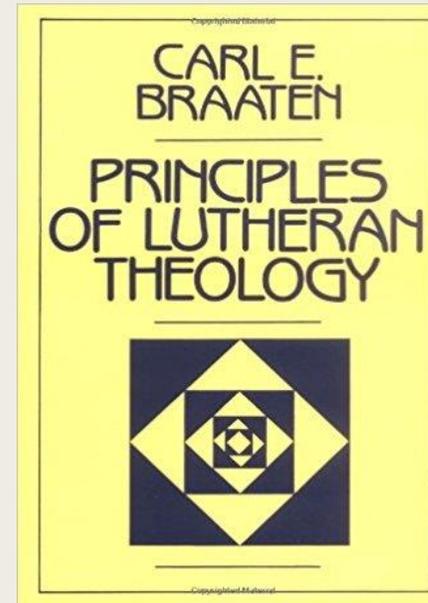
(“The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective,” 2-3)



We are church for the sake of the world.

- “Justice is the form that love takes in the life of society.”

(Carl E. Braaten, *Principles of Lutheran Theology*, 132)



We are church for the sake of the world.

- “I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbor, just as Christ offered himself to me. I will do nothing in this life except what is profitable, necessary, and life-giving for my neighbor, since through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ.”

(Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian,” in Tranvik, 82 and *LW* 21:37)



Objectives for Today

1. Assessed the collective church council questionnaire results.
2. Reflected on and shared any additional comments and insights to the results.
3. Generated initial objectives for a webinar to deepen understanding of questions related to gender identities.
4. Achieved greater clarity regarding the assignment established by the assembly resolution.

Assess the collective church council questionnaire results. (See “other documents.”)

- 1. Major points of the results
- A. Significant familiarity for a majority of CC members; some said they welcome a review.
- B. A fair number of respondents identified their needs with content.
- C. Benefits? Greater inclusion, honoring of differences, Christian welcome. Witness or modeling.
- D. Challenges? Division, conflict, misunderstanding. Resources. Having the right conversation partners. Cultural change is continuous. Problems with representational principles.
- E. Webinar? Consistent and shared understanding of language (vocabulary). Focus on substantive policy matters. Theology. How all of these connect into decision-making for CC.
- F. Other? Need to know what current policies and definitions will be reviewed. Need preparation well in advance. How does this have to do with the Gospel?

Reflect on and share any additional comments and insights to the results.

(See “other documents” in the ELCA Church Council folders.)

1. What else do you see in the results that you think everyone should notice?
2. What do you notice is *not* represented in the results?
3. What additional comments and insights do you have?

Clarify objectives for a webinar to deepen understanding. (1)

3 common interests:

- 1) Gain **clarity of definitions and terms** to create a common vocabulary for this discussion;
- 2) Receive **an overview explaining the issues** at stake for those who identify with these terms;
- 3) Hear **biblical, theological reflection** to ground talking about varieties of sexualities/gender identities.

**Clarify objectives for a webinar to
deepen understanding. (2)**

**What ELSE do you think is an
important objective for a
webinar?**

Email to Joseph.Schmidt@elca.org; place written in basket on table.

Achieve greater clarity regarding the assignment.

- CA16.05.27 To refer Motion D: Resolution on Gender Identity to the Church Council
- and that the Church Council use the resolution to help inform the study of
- gender identity and the review of existing ELCA definitions and policies
- regarding gender identity as referenced in the above approved memorial, and
- urge all three expressions of our church, whenever possible, and when not
- otherwise guided by current constitution and/or policy, to consider using event
- registration and other forms that:
 - *1) Include additional options for gender, for transgender, non-binary*
 - *and/or gender non-conforming people; and*
 - *2) When asking for a person's personal information, include asking for*
 - *the person's pronouns; and*
 - *3) When asking for a person's honorific or title, include a gender*
 - *neutral option.*

Achieve greater clarity regarding the assignment.

CA16.02.03q To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Sierra Pacific Synod regarding Gender Identity;

To refer this memorial to the Church Council for study of gender identity;

To ask the Church Council, the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary to review existing definitions and policies in light of the council's study; and

To report to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA actions and proposals for additional actions as may be required.

■ Next Steps

- *Registration for Churchwide Assembly*
- *Nominations for positions to be elected at Churchwide Assembly*
- *How should we modify the “Representational Principles” **5.01.f.** & **5.01.g.**?*

**Church Council Memorial/Motion on Gender Identity Results
 April 2018**

In response to a memorial/motion on gender identity, a survey was fielded to the ELCA Church Council. The survey asked how informed Church Council members felt they were about gender identity terms. It also asked what benefits and challenges could possibly come out of a review of existing ECLA policies regarding gender identity. Church Council members were asked what they would hope to learn from a possible webinar on policies and practices related to gender identity and were also afforded a space to provide other information. The survey was available online from March 13 until April 2. Twenty-eight responses were received.

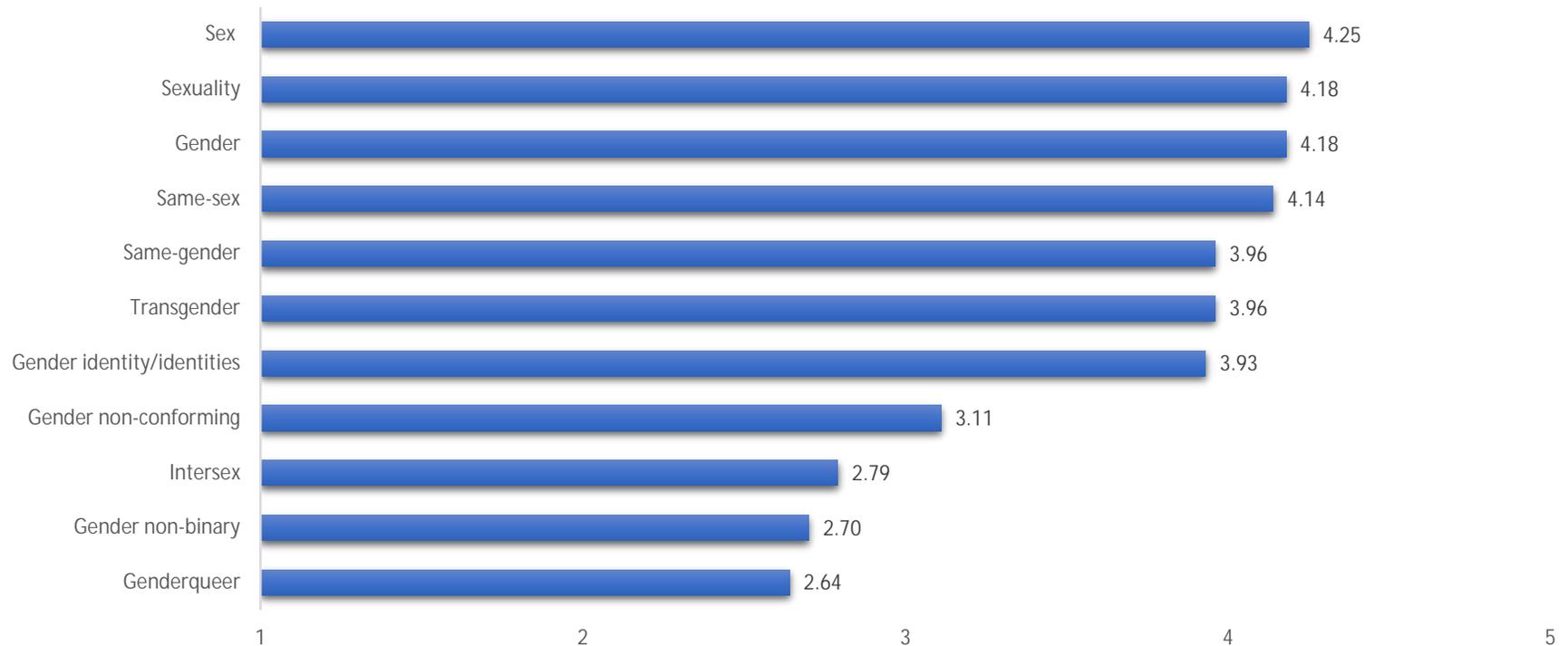
Respondents were most familiar with the following terms: *Sex*, *Gender*, *Sexuality* and *Same-Sex*. They were least familiar with *Genderqueer*, *Gender non-binary* and *Intersex*.¹ Below are the results.

N=28 (unless otherwise noted)	1-Completely unfamiliar with term/meaning	2-Unfamiliar with term/can guess at meaning	3-Familiar with term/not confident of meaning	4-Familiar with term/relatively confident of meaning	5-Completely familiar with term/confident of meaning	Mean Score
Gender	1	0	1	17	9	4.18
Sex	1	0	1	15	11	4.25
Intersex	5	6	9	6	2	2.79
Gender identity/identities	1	1	2	19	5	3.93
Genderqueer	5	7	9	7	0	2.64
Transgender	1	0	6	13	8	3.96
Sexuality	1	0	1	17	9	4.18
Same-sex	1	0	2	16	9	4.14
Same-gender (N=25)	1	1	3	13	7	3.96
Gender non-conforming	2	6	10	7	3	3.11
Gender non-binary (N=27)	7	5	7	5	3	2.70

¹ One respondent scored a "1" for all eleven items yet advocated the "Genderbread Person" resource.

Church Council Memorial/Motion on Gender Identity Results
April 2018

Mean Scores – Gender Identity Terms



Open-Ended Responses

- *At one point I would have been confident of the meaning of a few of these terms, but today I find myself questioning what I think I know. That is not a complaint or judgement, simply an observation that we may not know as much as we think we know.*
- *I realize that some terms might be understood differently by different people. I understand basic terms like sex or sexuality in the traditional way--hopefully, those haven't morphed into something else. Same-sex and same-gender seem to be the same terms. Are they different? That shakes my confidence in my own definitions. Maybe they now just mean "same-category."(?)*
- *Search for "The Genderbread Person Version 3.0". This picture offers a helpful starter that explains the differences between sex, gender, attraction, and identity.*

**Church Council Memorial/Motion on Gender Identity Results
April 2018**

Below are brief summaries and highlights from questions 2 – 5. Full responses can be found beginning on page 5.

2. What benefits for the church can come out of the Church Council review of existing ELCA policies regarding gender identity?

Most of the responses were about broader inclusion, better understanding and clarity of language. Basically, having better and clearer language will help us honor the differences of all of God's creation. Following are two quotes that highlight these themes.

- *Clarity for ELCA documents. Sense of inclusion for folks whose sex or identities are not currently reflected in our documents/forms.*
- *It helps honor differences that are not always well understood or tolerated. It helps model inclusiveness to communities that may not feel welcome in our midst. It is us saying all are welcome, and all are loved as God's children.*

3. What challenges for the church can come out of the Church Council review of existing ELCA policies regarding gender identity?

The most common response was that there will be division, conflict or resistance. Also, it will distance some people and/or some will see this as unnecessary. Following are selected quotes.

- *Any policy discussion or resulting in change to a policy can be interpreted by individuals that align with the status quo as threatening. Recognizing this is important to mitigate this.*
- *As evidenced by the social statement on human sexuality, our church spans a wide spectrum of views regarding matters of gender identity and sexuality. I expect that as a review of policies uncovers necessary changes to policies and practice, there will be discomfort and pushback from many.*
- *We've still got ground to cover to honor and justly engage women and non-white individuals. In a universe confined by time, space and matter, attention and resource given to one issue decreases those available for another. Some would dismiss that as a scarcity mentality, but it's math, physics, finances and confessions.*
- *Those who are unfamiliar with, dismissive of, or flat out against anything other than traditional male/female identities and relationships will likely be critical. Some of them will be vocal.*
- *The culture continues to change and is not stagnant. So even if the policy is changed/updated, it could be out-of-date by the time it gets into the hands of people.*
- *There is a challenge when a task falls to a group of people who are not necessarily a part of the community who requested the changes. We need to make sure the important voices are heard and that we have learned everything we can about the concerns we are addressing.*
- *Create numerous problems with male and female representation on councils, boards, and assemblies if changes are made.*
- *The most obvious challenge is gaining Churchwide understanding of gender terms and changes to documents that don't accurately state gender related terms.*

**Church Council Memorial/Motion on Gender Identity Results
April 2018**

4. If offered, what would you want to learn from a webinar on issues, policies and practices related to gender identity?

Responses were about providing more clarity on language and how to avoid language in policies that could lead to discrimination. Following are two comments.

- *I believe we should focus on practices that may result in discrimination - and provide oversight for the correction of those practices; I am less interested in discussion on the drafting of language around identity - I trust that ELCA has staff that can incorporate appropriate changes in policy language that is subject to our review and approval. We should be focused on substantive policy matters that may be addressing.*
- *What's the most effective and efficient way we can honor identities in the work we share (matters of registration, designation, representation, language, etc.)? How do we handle the imbalance between chosen identities and imposed identities?*

5. Please add any other information you think will contribute to the study of gender identity or the review of existing ELCA definitions and policies regarding gender identity?

Respondents would like to know what definitions and policies will be reviewed. They also would like more information about the process for reviewing/changing language. Following is one representative comment.

- *What are the current definitions and policies that will be reviewed? When were the current definitions and policies put in place? What are the concerns of those who have requested this review? In what ways do these definitions and policies shape the practices of this church and are there additional ways that implementation of policies can accomplish what we hope for?*

	2. What benefits for the church can come out of the Church Council review of existing ELCA policies regarding gender identity?
1	* greater sense of inclusion among all groups of individuals. * for those where gender identity is a leading concern, a sense that the ELCA is responsive to their needs and concerns. * for those who do not identify with gender identity as an issue, a greater recognition of gender identity concerns.
2	A broader understanding of gender issues.
3	As our society and church awaken to realities long-experienced by marginalized and silenced communities, it is important that our church leadership humbly seek to find common understanding and expression of gender and gender identities. This work, beginning with the leadership, will be invaluable as we move to adjust our church (as an institution and a culture) to becoming more inclusive and faithful.
4	Assuring that our policies are reflective of the sensitivities surrounding language that refers to identities
5	Becoming better aware of how our language in documents and publications is inclusive (or not) based on our understanding of the terms just mentioned. Most of our documents have assumed a binary understanding of sexuality and gender which does not speak to how these things are currently understood. We can become better
6	versed in definitions and then use language appropriately.
7	Better language will mean more inclusiveness for all people.
8	Better understanding of a significant number of leaders and members in our church.
9	Broader awareness and a better-informed Council. Greater sensitivity in personal interactions generally, and in encounters with ELCA resources, policy, staff, etc.
10	Clarity for ELCA documents. Sense of inclusion for folks whose sex or identities are not currently reflected in our documents/forms.
11	Create a deeper understanding of our teachings and how we serve a number of communities.
12	full inclusion and acceptance
13	Greater ability to welcome people from many perspectives. Everything starts with modeling on the level of top leadership.
14	Greater knowledge about the complexity of gender which should enhance the church's ability to more fully embrace gender related issues.
15	It helps honor differences that are not always well understood or tolerated. It helps model inclusiveness to communities that may not feel welcome in our midst. It is us saying all are welcome, and all are loved as God's children
16	It would help more individuals feel accepted, understood, respected and valued as members of the church and as God's children.
17	Justice, peace, and dignity for a tiny minority of our church's membership, and others in society.
18	Policies need to be relevant ... and culture does change ... so review from time to time is necessary.
19	Reflects a sensitivity to the importance of language and a particular sensitivity to those for whom the identity with the Church - particularly the ELCA - could be enhanced by showing such a sensitivity.
	The obvious benefit would be making certain that everyone truly feels they are fully included in the church and that they are welcome as they are, however they may identify. Another benefit would be more awareness for those of us who are not currently in relationship with any or many people who are part of the LGBTQIA community. I think many people are intimidated by the terminology and the variety of ways people identify while many are completely unaware of the experiences of others. Opening the conversation and explaining the considerations that need to be made can only be a healthy step toward understanding and better relationships.

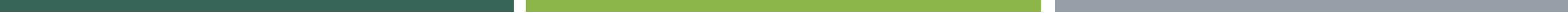
	2. What benefits for the church can come out of the Church Council review of existing ELCA policies regarding gender identity?
20	This should not be a big deal. Adjusting to modern concepts of gender identity is itself a benefit and should be matter-of-fact. If not, we risk dashing ourselves on the shoals of "righteous" debate and controversy--similar to past quarrels over biblical "infallibility." That would not benefit our church at all. I think we as a church have already covered the theology of this issue. However, as a "big umbrella" church we need to be cautious about disrespecting those who don't see things the way we might. Put bluntly, how do we tolerate the intolerant without just sending them away?
21	Unsure of any benefits for the church as a whole. Benefits would be for individuals who do not see themselves in current church representation.
22	We can use the most accurate terms in our conversation and discussion regarding gender.
23	What is it we actually teach? Is that teaching applicable to the situation in which we find ourselves post-the Supreme Court decision on same-gender marriage.

	3. What challenges for the church can come out of the Church Council review of existing ELCA policies regarding gender identity?
1	Any policy discussion resulting in change to a policy can be interpreted by individuals that align with the status quo as threatening. Recognizing this is important to mitigate this. Also, it is likely that there is no true consensus position among our membership on many aspects of our existing policies, so it is likely that it will be challenging to gain a consensus on any changes to those policies.
2	There will likely be resistance by some to even talking about this.
3	As evidenced by the social statement on human sexuality, our church spans a wide spectrum of views regarding matters of gender identity and sexuality. I expect that as a review of policies uncovers necessary changes to policies and practice, there will be discomfort and pushback from many.
4	Not all of our membership has the same views on these matters
5	When we make changes in language to become more inclusive of all people and their self identification, this will add another layer to discussion of sexuality which have yet to be addressed. We have not yet fully come to terms with the fallout from the 2009 decisions and this could further alienate some people that had been hanging on by threads. We may well be asked to do another study on human sexuality moving forward to better inform the church of how these newer definitions fit within our theology and practice.
6	Unfortunately, some church members find these terms confusing, and not necessary, and they might be further distanced from the ELCA. But the ELCA still needs to do this.
7	Not everyone would assign time and energy dedicated to this matter the same priority. We don't lack burning and time-sensitive issues that demand awareness and decisions, including other matters of exclusion/confusion regarding identity. We've still got ground to cover to honor and justly engage women and non-white individuals. In a universe confined by time, space and matter, attention and resource given to one issue decreases those available for another. Some would dismiss that as a scarcity mentality, but it's math, physics, finances and confessions.
8	Need for more education/understanding about gender, identity, etc.
9	Setting policies that go further than our church body is ready for.
10	range from confusion to clarify understanding to efforts to be inclusive to everyone
11	It can be a "hot button" topic, and people could become upset.
12	The usual push back and resistance from constituents that do not want to engage the topic and fear the church is moving in the wrong direction.
13	Those who are unfamiliar with, dismissive of, or flat out against anything other than traditional male/female identities and relationships will likely be critical. Some of them will be vocal. I can't gauge whether this will be at the same or similar level as the conversations and actions leading up to 2009. But it definitely has the potential to be ugly.
14	It may cause more division or conflict for those who aren't fully accepting of gender differences or various identities.
15	Too numerous to list, if it makes a big splash in church life could have plenty of consequences, such those as we had in 2009–present. (Though arguably on a smaller scale.)
16	The culture continues to change and is not stagnant. So even if the policy is changed / updated, it could be out-of-date by the time it gets into the hands of people.

3. What challenges for the church can come out of the Church Council review of existing ELCA policies regarding gender identity?	
17	The need to educate/inform leaders and members of our operational values (calling of rostered - lay and ordained, consecrated, etc. leaders) in matters of human sexuality. Implementing/monitoring personnel policies for compliance with policies.
18	There is a challenge when a task falls to a group of people who are not necessarily a part of the community who requested the changes. We need to make sure the important voices are heard and that we have learned everything we can about the concerns we are addressing.
19	The challenge is to do what is right in a way that does not cause or engender (sorry!) divisiveness.
20	Create numerous problems with male and female representation on councils, boards, and assemblies if changes are made.
21	The most obvious challenge is gain Churchwide understanding of gender terms and changes to documents that don't accurately state gender related terms.
22	I think there may be more confusion than we realize. Conflict would be enlightening. Confusion will just make us upset.
23	What to do with the information, how it could be used to align with our goals

	4. If offered, what would you want to learn from a webinar on issues, policies and practices related to gender identity?
1	* clarity on terms that are used to identify various groups of individuals. * a greater awareness of what issues each of these groups raises as primary concerns. * how current ELCA policies address those concerns.
2	Clear understanding of the variety of terms. Maybe best explained by people who identify as each of the gender descriptions.
3	Most immediately helpful would be a clear definition of terms (as clear and consistent as possible, given the fluidity of our language and understanding) and second would be to hear some of the stories from members of our church and society who have been most affected by our policies. i.e. What are the policies related to gender identity and how have they harmed members of the body of Christ (intentionally or not)?
4	I believe we should focus on practices that may result in discrimination - and provide oversight for the correction of those practices; I am less interested in discussion on the drafting of language around identity - I trust that ELCA has staff that can incorporate appropriate changes in policy language that is subject to our review and approval. We should be focused on substantive policy matters that may be addressing.
5	A common vocabulary for talking about the various definitions of the terms listed previously. A Biblical, theological basis for talking about the varieties of sexualities/gender identities.
6	I would like to learn what practices in the church would be affected by this new language.
7	What's the most effective and efficient way we can honor identities in the work we share (matters of registration, designation, representation, language, etc.)? How do we handle the imbalance between chosen identities and imposed identities?
8	I feel very comfortable with this topic and terms, but would still love a brief overview. Like the one Aubrey Thornvold can do.
9	How they relate to the work we do as a church council.
10	clarify definitions and expectations that may hamper acceptance by understanding each group
11	How a congregation composed primarily of white people who identify as straight can better welcome and include people who do not consider themselves white and/or straight? How can we grow in genuine love?
12	Definitions Key challenging issues
13	As much as possible. Practical things like correct terms, meanings of terms, how to use language in a way that does not exclude or alienate. Why this is an important exercise in the church and in society.
14	1. Would like to hear how the Sierra-Pacific Synod has adapted to a more accommodating use of language in their forms, etc. 2. Would need to know the financial cost and staff time devoted to this in a time when other minorities (ethnic and racial) are told their support is reduced.
15	Definition of the words on the first page of the questionnaire would be a good start.
16	Would be open to continued learning and further understanding of terminology and importance of proper use of language/terminology related to gender identity.
17	Familiarity with terms and issues.
18	I would rather just have a face-to-face conversation.

	5. Please add any other information you think will contribute to the study of gender identity or the review of existing ELCA definitions and policies regarding gender identity.
1	A brief (perhaps one page) position paper providing an overview of existing policies.
2	A brief overview of the process for reviewing and changing those policies would be helpful. Are we talking constitutional changes? Procedural documents related to candidacy and Vision and Expectations? HR for churchwide and synods?
3	To the maximum extent possible, please provide us with information to read in advance of our meeting, and provide us with the essence of what decisions we may need to make in order to be responsive to the memorial resolution.
4	Again, a Biblical and theological understanding for our use of terms. Are there boundaries in our acceptance of all the gender identities named?
5	Recognizing that it's not a clean dichotomy, this nonetheless feels more "justice" than "Jesus." I have grave concerns about that recurring trend.
6	Any examples or models of policy reviews from other organizations.
7	clarify our objective from confusion to clarity and understanding.
8	safe environment in which to have the conversation.
9	What is the goal in reviewing the policies and definitions? Are we to recommend changes to existing policies/forms/documents etc. or will this be a longer process?
10	I think it's important for this to be presented and discussed.
11	It would be interesting to review the ELCA organizational gains and losses since the last time we contemporized our policies regarding gender/sexually issues.
12	How are social statements, other official actions/statements of the ELCA used in defining/informing ELCA policies?
13	What are the current definitions and policies that will be reviewed? When were the current definitions and policies put in place? What are the concerns of those who have requested this review? In what ways do these definitions and policies shape the practices of this church and are there additional ways that implementation of policies can accomplish what we hope for?
14	It would be helpful to know what areas and contexts we are talking about in terms of "existing ELCA definitions and policies." Is it in human resources and personnel? Access issues? Representation on councils and to assemblies? Anti-discrimination? All of the above and more?
15	We need to realize that there is a broad range of opinions in our church regarding this and many other issues. We need to be a church for all including conservatives and liberals. By changing policies that would seem to be more welcoming to those concerned with gender identity, we may drive away more conservative members who look at gender identity from a different perspective.
16	ELCA leaders are expected to be good role models for the body of Christ. If we use accurate language when we discuss gender related topics, other church members will likely follow our lead.
17	I don't think lack of information is our problem. I think we just don't want to realize that different parts of the church have different missional needs at this time. We're trying to make sure nobody gets upset.



ELCA CHURCH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

PART I: WHAT SHOULD THE COUNCIL'S ROLE BE?



AGENDA

- Framework and Goal for this discussion
- Revisiting our past work and survey input
 - Vision for the Council's role
 - What values should guide good governance for the Council?
- Considering specific examples – what should the council do and not do?
- Seeking consensus on a rough outline for these questions

FRAMEWORK AND GOALS

- We hope this discussion will be:
 - About what *should* be, not necessarily what *is*
 - Grounded in good governance (background reading and more)
 - Aimed at the governance needs for our context
- Our goal:
 - Come to consensus on a shared understanding of what the Church Council's governance role should be in order to best serve the governance needs of the ELCA now and moving forward
 - Provide sufficient guidance for the Ad Hoc Committee to be able to prepare a draft policy document outlining this shared understanding

PREVIOUS GOVERNANCE CONVERSATIONS

- Report of Outcomes – ELCA Church Council retreat 2017
- Discussion Starter on Governance and the ELCA
- Summary of November 2017 Church Council Governance Conversations
- Future Directions 2025
- Your feedback in pre-meeting questions

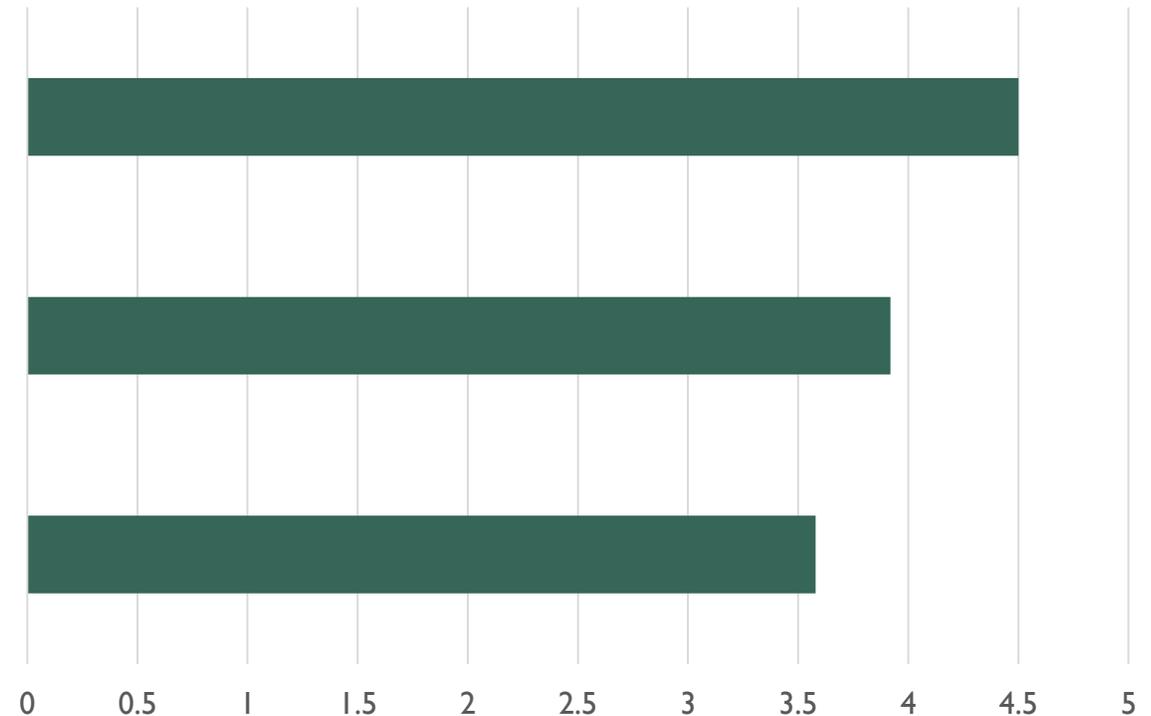
SURVEY RESULTS – WHAT THE COUNCIL’S ROLE SHOULD BE

Question 3: Please rate how closely you believe each of the following matches your understanding of what the Church Council’s governance role should be.

The ELCA Church Council is the board of directors and shall serve as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly.

The ELCA Church Council is a proactive, forward-looking body that identifies strategic directions, assesses outcomes, and identifies risks and opportunities.

The ELCA Church Council is an elected group with the collective authority to control and foster an institution that is administered by a qualified executive and staff.



SURVEY RESULTS: VISION FOR THE COUNCIL'S ROLE

- Consensus around current constitutional language: dual role of
 - Interim legislative authority
 - “The Church Council should be the governing body of the ELCA in between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly.”
 - Seven responses focused on this
 - Board of Directors
 - “The council should serve as the board of directors of the ELCA.”
 - Seven responses focused on this

SURVEY RESULTS: VISION OF THE COUNCIL'S ROLE

Themes across nominal roles:

- Future planning/strategic direction and visioning
- Address “major issues of management and direction”
- Guide and direct management
- Legal/fiduciary responsibility
- Set policy goals and see that they are achieved (ends/means)
- Address things needing official “church” action

PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS

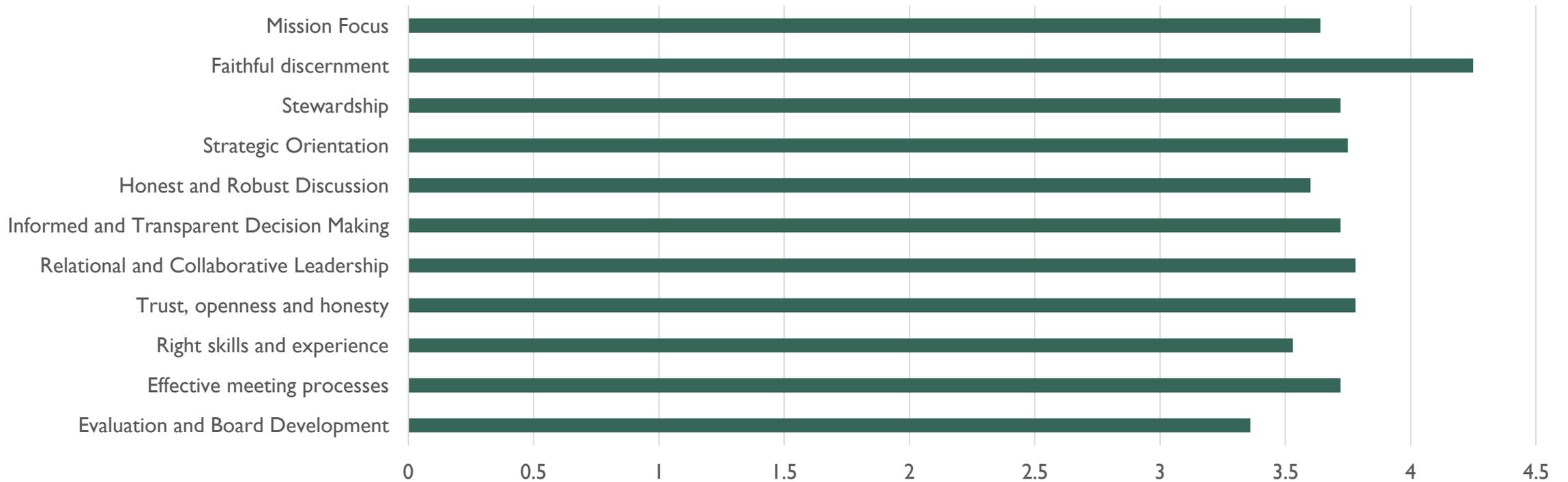
- “[T]he Church Council is both an expression of ELCA as a community of faith and a governing body with responsibilities typical of a board”
- “[M]ore proactive, forward looking and strategic orientation when compared to the current constitutional description of roles”
- “Allow more flexibility for staff. Council does more strategic direction, assessing outcomes, identifying risk and opportunities, empowering staff.”
- “Church Council’s role is mission accountability, resource allocation (leverage for objectives), and cross committee lines. Give direction to look at innovative leadership models including learning from global partners. Church Council’s role is to “ride herd on” [accompany while leading] shared commitments. Encourage and hold accountable those who are responsible for leadership.

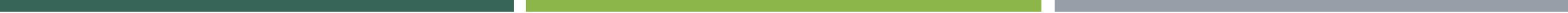
VALUES TO GUIDE CHURCH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

- Mission focus
- Faithful discernment
- Stewardship
- A strategic orientation
- Honest and robust discussion
- Informed and transparent decision making
- Relational and collaborative leadership
- Trust, openness and honesty
- The right skills and experience
- Effective meeting processes
- Evaluation and board development

SURVEY SUMMARY OF VALUES

In the past year, do you agree that the Council has lived up to these values?





WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

WHAT SHOULD THE COUNCIL DO AND NOT DO?



PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS WHAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD DO/NOT

The Council should:

- Decide strategic goals and priorities for ELCA and CWO
- Identify outcomes and metrics to monitor progress toward goals
- Review and monitor progress toward goals
- Align budget and resources in light of goals/priorities.
- Fulfil the council's fiduciary responsibilities (financial and legal)
- Review decisions and use of resources for their fit with the strategic goals and priorities.

The Council not:

- Decide things that go too far into administration
- Possibly:
 - Approving mission support
 - Approving seminary bylaws
 - Programmatic things (constitution currently says Council must approve all things that are not "day to day")

CASE STUDIES/EXAMPLES

Let's test our understanding of this vision of what the Council should do and not with a few specific examples, using our previous discussions and board governance background materials as a guide.

- Should the Council vote on/approve the creation of a Congregational Vitality team within Domestic Mission to improve the church's efforts toward congregational vitality?
 - What role, if any, should the Council have on this matter?
- Should the Council vote on/approve financial policies for ensuring adequate internal controls and financial reviews for the churchwide organization?
- Should the Council discuss the supply of rostered leaders for ELCA congregations and take any action regarding this issue?

CASE STUDIES/SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

- In groups of 2-3, discuss the following examples and decide if is this something the Council should or should not do and why? And, if you decide no, what would be an appropriate role for the Council, if any, with regard to this matter?
- After 12-15 minutes of discussion time, we will go through the examples as a large group.
- Feel free to write your group's thoughts on the specific examples on the paper provided. This will be shared with the Ad Hoc Committee to potentially further inform the governance policy draft.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

Consider, should the Council ... for each of the following. IF not, what **should** be the Council's role in this regard?

- Approve increased budget allocations for high priority areas
- Vote to approve a change in churchwide office staffing that creates a new program area
- Be notified of upcoming regulatory changes that could substantially affect the ELCA's access to investment income
- Ensure the churchwide organization has goals for congregational vitality and leadership
- Approve program documents, such as new ministry or liturgy proposals
- Get overview data/information about progress towards major goals
- Approve policies and/or changes to rostered leadership requirements and standards

SEEKING CONSENSUS AND A SHARED UNDERSTANDING

The role of the Church Council is to ...

The Church Council should:

The Church Council should not:

Other issues:

CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS

- Our work today (vision/should/should not/values and any group notes) will go to the Ad Hoc Committee to form the basis of a draft policy document outlining the governance role of the ELCA Church Council
- That document will come to the Church Council for a vote in November 2018
- The Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and the Office of the Secretary will consider what, if any, changes to the ELCA Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions should be considered in order to match this outline of the Council's governance role. Those will come to the Council for approval before the 2019 Churchwide Assembly
- In November 2018, we will have a similar initial discussion of Part 2: How the Council Governs Itself

Proposal for a Process to Develop an ELCA Church Council Governance Policy

Rationale

The development of an ELCA Church Council Governance Policy was proposed at the April 2017 Church Council Retreat. Such a policy document would be in alignment with Goal 5 of Future Directions 2025 ("A well-governed, connected and sustainable church").

After investigating the process other boards have undertaken to develop and adopt governance documents, the Board Development Committee presents the following proposal for a process for the ELCA Church Council (hereafter "Council") to develop and adopt governance documents. Note that this is a proposal for a process, not the content of the documents. The committee believes that this process will lead to a strong set of governance documents for the Council that clarify the role of the Council and its relationships with other leadership groups (such as the church's officers, Churchwide Organization leadership, and Conference of Bishops).

This proposal contemplates developing and adopting governance documents in two parts:

Part 1: Council Role – What should be the role of the ELCA Church Council?

Part 2: Council Governance – How does the ELCA Church Council do business and govern itself?

Timeline

April 2018 Church Council Meeting

- Discussion and vote on Proposal for Developing and Adopting Governance Policies
- Initial discussion of Part 1: Council Role (with preparatory materials to guide discussion)
- Council resources and education on board governance

November 2018 Church Council Meeting

- Discussion and vote on adopting Part 1: Council Role
- Identify any proposed or potential recommended changes to ELCA bylaws to present to 2019 Churchwide Assembly and continuing resolutions for subsequent Church Council action
- Initial discussion of Part 2: Council Governance

April 2019 Church Council Meeting

- Discussion and vote on adopting Part 2: Council Governance
- Discussion and vote on any recommended changes to ELCA bylaws to forward to 2019 Churchwide Assembly and amendments to continuing resolutions
-

Ad hoc Committee

- The Council will appoint an Ad Hoc Governance Policy Committee to assist Council with this process. The committee will include up to five Council members, one liaison bishop and three Churchwide Organization Administrative Team members (Officers are included in the Administrative Team).
- The committee will assist with providing preparatory materials, facilitating discussions, and preparing any draft documents.
- The committee may determine that the use of an outside consultant would be beneficial.

Human Rights Screen Cover Memo
Submitted by Amy Reumann, Director, Advocacy

After the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, there was a call to the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) table to convene to answer this resolution:

(CA16.06.31)

- *To direct the ELCA's Corporate Social Responsibility review team to develop a human rights social criteria investment screen based on the social teachings of this church and, in the case of Israel and Palestine, specifically based on the concerns raised in the ELCA Middle East Strategy.*

The CSR table determined the need to develop a Social Message on Human Rights to provide a firm foundation in ELCA social policy for the screen. The Church Council adopted the message on November 12, 2017.

To expedite the process, a first draft of a screen was developed concurrently with the finalization of the social message. The CSR table met in person, by phone and email to review the current social teachings of this church and CSR policies surrounding the topic of human rights. It was determined by the table that the best way forward was to focus on the right to *equal access and participation in legal and political decisions*, and to develop the new screen to parallel that right. This approach will take the broad field of human rights and narrow the screen to address the concern from the assembly addressed in the Middle East Strategy.

On November 10, 2017, the Program and Services Committee held a first review of the draft Human Rights Screen. Edits were incorporated by the CSR table. Those changes included crafting the title "Political and Civil Human Rights: Equal Access and Participation" to quickly identify and differentiate this screen from any future human rights screens. The other primary edit was a decision to consistently apply the word civic to modify human beings and civil in all other places. These changes were reviewed and approved by the Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee (TECC) of the Conference of Bishops at their March meeting.

The draft is now before the Program and Services Committee of the Church Council for final consideration.

1 Political and Civil Human Rights: Equal Access and Participation Social Criteria
2 Investment Screen

3
4 **Authority:** The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has consistently affirmed its support for
5 human rights as “a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences.” The Social Statement
6 *For Peace in God’s World*¹ is grounded in the understanding that God desires Shalom for all human beings and
7 commits the ELCA to “defend the human rights of groups most susceptible to violations...”
8

9 Several ELCA statements such as *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective*² and *Sufficient Sustainable*
10 *Livelihood for All*³ also name the defense of human rights as a task for this church and its members. The Social
11 Message on Human Rights affirms on the basis of these and other ELCA teachings six broad categories on
12 human rights as a middle link between the UN Declaration of Human Rights⁴ and specific actions. One of these
13 categories confirms that humans are political and civic beings with the right to equal access and participation in
14 legal and political decisions affecting them. The message also expresses that this church’s witness includes
15 exercising financial power as an investor and shareholder prudently to focus attention on egregious violations of
16 human rights, and to encourage corporations to take responsibility to respect human rights.
17

18 Social Policy Resolution 16.06.31⁵ directed development of “a human rights social criteria investment screen
19 based on the social teachings of this church and, in the case of Israel and Palestine, specifically based on the
20 concerns raised in the *Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine*,” including the management
21 of collective or personal investments “with concern for their impact on the lives of all Holy Land peoples who
22 suffer from the ongoing conflict.”
23

24 The Engagement Strategy gives priority to working toward “Israelis and Palestinians co-existing in justice and
25 peace, as citizens of viable and secure Israeli and Palestinian states,” as foundational to building a just peace for
26 all. Such citizenship is only possible when the rights of humans as political and civic beings are upheld.
27

28 **Wording of screen:** The ELCA recommends not investing in corporations benefiting from the most egregious
29 denial of the rights of humans as political and civic beings to have equal access and participation in legal and
30 political decisions affecting them.
31

32 **Definition of problem:** Equal access and participation in legal and political decisions cannot happen when they
33 occur in conflict-affected countries, especially disputed or occupied territories.
34 Recognizing that various investors will implement this along a continuum, for the purpose of this screen
35 investments might include screening companies supporting and benefiting from occupation. It could also include
36 investments that promote positive economic development in such regions.
37

38 **Social policy, Churchwide Assembly actions and studies:**

39 *For Peace in God’s World* <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace> [ELCA
40 1995]

41 Sufficient Sustainable Livelihood for All <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social->

¹ <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace>

² <https://www.elca.org/en/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Church-in-Society>

³ <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Economic-Life>

⁴ <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

⁵

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.guidebook.com/upload/p8aWh9vqY2iSfM4NcXE63BHJ5PwCOxn7/4XRoWHgJb5EfCuEqROz3L1l6mJAHYtbdBqc5.pdf>

42 [Statements/Economic-Life](#) [ELCA 1999]; Church in Society... Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and
43 Palestine
44 [http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW_Strategy.pdf?_ga=2.267827726.18504674](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW_Strategy.pdf?_ga=2.267827726.1850467427.1502898236-473792649.1477574731)
45 [27.1502898236-473792649.1477574731](#) Ammparo Strategy
46 [http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AMMPARO_Strategy_Final_042616.pdf?_ga=2](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AMMPARO_Strategy_Final_042616.pdf?_ga=2.267827726.1850467427.1502898236-473792649.1477574731)
47 [.2](#) 61080141.1984756162.1505246798-1575511960.1390508187

CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION OPERATIONAL PLAN 2018-19 - OVERVIEW

Goals, headline results and objectives

March 8, 2018

Introduction

In November 2016, the ELCA Church Council approved *Called Forward Together in Christ - Future Directions 2025*. From 2018, churchwide organization operational planning will support the identity, vision and shared purpose of this church as set out in *Future Directions 2025* and be framed around the goals and priority action areas identified for the ELCA as one church together in Christ.

The Churchwide Organization Operational Plan Overview sets out the goals, headline results and objectives that the churchwide organization will work toward in 2018-19. They show a strong emphasis on congregational vitality and leadership, the strategic focus areas identified by the Presiding Bishop and affirmed by the Administrative Team, Conference of Bishops and Church Council.

A more detailed plan showing the focus of strategy and programming for each objective and responsibilities for these is under development and will be completed for implementation in 2018-19, with oversight by the churchwide organization Administrative Team.

The authority for and relationship between different levels of planning is detailed in a separate document titled *ELCA Churchwide Organization Planning and Reporting Framework*. The full framework document includes guidance on levels of planning, responsibilities, reporting processes and a glossary of terms. The main map of churchwide organization planning levels is included as an attachment.

The headline results and objectives provide for a more analytic and results oriented approach to reporting to Church Council by the churchwide organization. They also establish the framework for ongoing planning and reporting at an operational level. While management level reporting on major activities will continue, the Administrative Team and senior leaders will aim for analysis and reporting that shows how the churchwide organization's work is contributing toward achievement of objectives, whether the headline results are tracking in the right direction and what the learning is with respect to assumptions, strategy, resources and adjustment of plans.

This plan requires the infrastructure and systems of the churchwide organization to operate efficiently and effectively in support of the strategies, primary programs and events within the Operational Plan. While Goal 5, Objective 6 speaks to the improvement of these structures, systems and processes, the important work done each day in the areas of: human resources, finance, information technology, facilities, archiving and records retention, constituent support, data/information management, marketing and communications, research and evaluation, legal, governance, and event planning, may not be directly documented in this plan. These critical functions support the ongoing operations of the organization and the achievement of the Goals and Objectives contained within this plan.

DM = Domestic Mission	OB = Office of the Presiding Bishop
GM = Global Mission	OS = Office of the Secretary
MA = Mission Advancement	OT = Office of the Treasurer

<p><i>Called Forward Together in Christ Future Directions 2025</i></p> <p>Goal one A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people.</p> <p>Goal two A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.</p>	<p>Headline Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Strengthened capacity of congregations/worshipping communities to engage their local communities for the sake of evangelical witness and service. ◆ Strengthened leadership capacity for engaging, and in assisting others to engage, in evangelical witness and service (including more ready access for all to vocational pathways). Also, evidence of greater courage and higher morale among leaders. ◆ Strengthened relationships, for the sake of evangelical witness and service, within and between the whole church (congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization; companion churches; ecumenical and inter-religious partners; the LWF communion and other global relationships). ◆ A slowed rate of decline in ELCA church membership and worship attendance.
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<p>Objective 1: Promote a wider understanding of ELCA’s identity (we are church; we are Lutheran; we are church together; and, we are church for the sake of the world) and equip leaders and disciples to communicate our theology and beliefs in accessible and compelling ways.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation</p> <p>Youth Gathering - DM Messaging Strategies – MA Social Statements and Policies – OB Mission Support Symposiums – MA World Hunger Education – MA/DM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy</p> <p>Annual survey of lay and rostered ministers focused on comprehension, support, proclamation of basic Lutheran doctrine. Create and use key questions covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justification by Faith Alone • Distinguishing Law and Gospel • Theology of the Cross • Word and Sacraments • Role of the Church • Church Polity • Christian Vocation • Social statement and policy public comment/review
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<p>Objective 2: Renew and strengthen faith formation and evangelism practices by lay members and rostered ministers, drawing on success stories among ELCA expressions and lessons from global accompaniment with companion churches.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Congregational Faith Formation/Evangelism Programs – DM Lay Schools – DM Glocal Events – GM Domestic Engagement of Global Missionaries and Young Adults in Mission (YAGM) Alumni Program – GM/MA/DM Storytelling Programs – MA</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Annual survey of lay and rostered ministers on stages of faith/faith development and commitment to, and engagement of, evangelism practices within the context of Christian vocation.</p>
<p>Objective 3: Work with engaged synods to support renewal and revitalization of congregations and worship communities in ways that deepen spiritual life and faith practice, welcome and retain worshippers and increase engagement in God’s mission, locally and globally.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Partner Synod Project: (new congregations, renewals, congregation-based organizing), ethnic specific and multicultural ministries, leadership – DM/MA/GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative (three-year ending) evaluation of the progress of each synod engaged in the Partner Synod Project within the context of the goals of each synod and, in comparison to, a control group of synods.</p>
<p>Objective 4: Support new congregations and worship communities to start and become vital and viable expressions of this church, with a specific focus on ethnic specific and multicultural ministries.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation New congregations (new congregations, congregation-based organizing), ethnic specific and multicultural ministries, leadership – DM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evaluation of the progress of new ministries in the ELCA.</p>

<p>Objective 5: Provide access to continuing education and development opportunities for youth and young adults, other lay leaders, and rostered ministers, to enhance the church’s capacity for evangelical witness and service.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Lay Schools – DM Training Events – DM Young Adult Network – DM First Call Theological Education - DM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evaluation of the participation of lay and rostered ministers in continuing theological education. Baseline to be established in year one.</p>
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<p>Objective 6: Through mutual accompaniment, strengthen the capacity of ELCA synods and global companion churches for evangelical witness and service, and encourage all expressions of the ELCA to more fully embrace the gifts and knowledge of the companion churches.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Companion Synod Program – GM International Leaders Program – GM Global Companion Evangelism Efforts – GM Donor Immersion Trips — MA</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Annual survey of synods to assess interaction with, and impact of synod engagement, with global companions. Survey immersion group participants</p>
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<p>Objective 7: Provide avenues for youth and young adults from diverse backgrounds to participate in domestic and global service, thereby deepening their faith, increasing engagement in the ELCA and enabling their formation as leaders.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation YAGM/YAGM Alumni Program – GM ELCA World Hunger Advocacy Fellows – DM Horizon Apprentice Program – DM Elisha’s Call Program – DM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evaluation of the scope and impact of these programs. Set a base for a possible longitudinal study of impact.</p>
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<p><i>Called Forward Together in Christ Future Directions 2025</i></p> <p>Goal three</p> <p>An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.</p>	<p>Headline Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increased participation in this church of people of color/primary language other than English. ◆ An increase in the number of people of color/primary language other than English who are lay and rostered ministers, bishops, synod staff and churchwide organization staff. ◆ Growth in multicultural and ethnic specific ministries – number and rates of participation. ◆ Increased participation of young adults in ELCA networks and evidence of more young adults taking up leadership opportunities.
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<p>Objective 1: Develop proactive recruitment and formation strategies to achieve a more diverse leadership profile with a clear focus on ethnic, cultural, gender generational diversity, and social status, and better matching the gifts and experiences of leaders to different communities and ministries.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation</p> <p>Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) – DM YAGM Alumni Program – GM Bishop’s Leadership Initiative – OB/MA Fund for Leaders – MA Churchwide Human Resources – OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy</p> <p>Summative evaluation of the impact of these programs using existing research on these programs as a base.</p>
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<p>Objective 2: With synods, equip congregations with resources and strategies to reach out to people in their neighborhoods and embrace new ways to facilitate engagement and participation in this church, through worship, evangelical witness and service.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation</p> <p>Partner Synod Project – DM/GM/MA Congregational Tool Kits – MA (e.g. ELCA Domestic World Hunger resources; Intercultural Development Inventory [IDI]) Companion Synod Program – GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy</p> <p>Initial study using ZIP codes to establish a community “diversity index” for every congregation and synod. Summative evaluation of progress through the comparison of congregation active participation to the community diversity index.</p>
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<p>Objective 3: Develop, empower and support networks among ethnic specific and multicultural ministries and share their experience and knowledge with synods and congregations seeking to welcome and nurture diversity.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Authentic Diversity Task Force – DM Ethnic Associations – DM Accompanying Migrant Minors (AMMPARO) – GM/DM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy (See Goal Three: Objective 2)</p>
<p>Objective 4: Actively encourage youth and young adults from diverse backgrounds to be agents of generational change and role models for becoming a more culturally diverse church.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Multicultural Youth Leadership – DM tAble – DM YAGM Alumni – GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Qualitative summative evaluation.</p>
<p>Objective 5: Support congregations and synods to grow in their commitment to and practice of gender justice and racial justice.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Synod Leadership Anti-Racism Training – DM Women and Justice Social Statement & Inter-Religious Policy Statement – OB Human Rights Message – OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Assessment of the impact on leaders who are engaged by these events and resources.</p>
<p>Objective 6: As a church in the public space speak out against discrimination and violence based on race, gender, sexual orientation and social status through advocacy and other forms of public witness.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Provide channels for speaking to these issues — MA/OB (e.g. statements and news releases from the presiding bishop) Advocacy — DM/GM/OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory of actions related to these issues. Measurements from the Advocacy Action Center</p>

<p><i>Called Forward Together in Christ Future Directions 2025</i></p> <p>Goal four</p> <p>A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.</p>	<p>Headline Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evidence of impact achieved through distribution of ELCA World Hunger Program funds, domestically and globally. ◆ Increased engagement with the ELCA World Hunger Program (World Hunger Leaders Network, congregations, synods, companion churches, and ELCA gatherings and events). ◆ Evidence of the impact achieved through the distribution of Lutheran Disaster Response funds domestically and globally. ◆ Growth in engagement and two-way learning between congregations and Lutheran Social Ministry Organizations.
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<p>Objective 1: Expand and deepen engagement with God’s Work. Our Hands, as a vehicle for witness and service by congregations, synods and ministries of this church.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation God’s Work. Our Hands — MA</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Build on existing reports of participation. Add a summative, qualitative assessment.</p>
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<p>Objective 2: Mobilize and harness resources for local, national and global ministries to alleviate poverty and hunger - including funds, networks, partnerships, ecumenical and inter-religious relationships and mutual accompaniment with companion churches and the global church.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation ELCA World Hunger Program – MA/DM/GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory of actions related to these issues.</p>
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<p>Objective 3: With synods and domestic affiliates, global companions and partners, respond effectively to natural disasters and humanitarian crisis in the U.S., Caribbean and throughout the world, and develop local capacities in disaster preparedness and response, including displacement and migration of crisis affected people.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) – DM/GM/MA Companion churches — GM AMMPARO — DM/GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory of responses to events including an assessment of the number of person served.</p>
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<p>Objective 4: Plan and direct ELCA’s international relief and development program to respond to needs identified by our companion churches and our global operating partners.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation ELCA World Hunger — GM/MA Companion churches — GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory of responses to events including an assessment of the number of person served.</p>
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<p>Objective 5: Lead and participate in national and global advocacy efforts to advance gender justice, climate justice and human rights, and to alleviate poverty and hunger, engaging church networks and joining with ecumenical partners, leaders of other faiths and the global church.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Peace Not Walls — GM Advocacy/ELCA World Hunger — GM/DM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Leaders: Women • Lutheran Office for World Community <p>Ecumenical Inter-Religious Relations – OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evidence of collaborative work.</p>
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<p>Objective 6: Strengthen the churchwide organization’s capacity to monitor the impact of ELCA’s World Hunger Grants - domestic and international - and gather and tell these stories across this church.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation ELCA Grants Maker Project — OT/IT</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Annual assessment of relevant churchwide staff on progress in the churchwide organization’s ability to monitor impact.</p>
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<p>Objective 7: Expand and deepen engagement with dialogue, full communion, conciliar, inter-religious and global partners to enhance capacity for working collaboratively for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue — OB Inter-Religious Statement—OB Support of the Lutheran World Federation — OB/GM Cooperative work with the Full Communion Partners — DM/OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative assessment of increased capacity due to this work collaboratively.</p>
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<p><i>Called Forward Together in Christ Future Directions 2025</i></p> <p>Goal five</p> <p>A well governed, connected and sustainable church.</p>	<p>Headline Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Growth in the capacities of ELCA leadership tables for collaboration/mutual accountability. ◆ Achieved or exceeded ELCA Campaign targets; and, no decline in overall giving and support of ELCA’s ministries post-Campaign. ◆ Maintained levels of funding for World Hunger and disaster. ◆ Slowed decline in mission support; and, emergence of new sustainable models of mission support. ◆ A budget that is aligned to results and objectives; responsible stewardship of financial performance based on the budget. ◆ Increased effectiveness of churchwide communication strategies.
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<p>Objective 1: Facilitate strong relationships across ELCA’s leadership tables and further build a culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation</p> <p>Joint Leadership Table (Church Council Executive Committee, Conference of Bishops Executive Committee, Churchwide Organization Administrative Team) — OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy</p> <p>Annual survey of leadership tables to assess progress.</p>
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<p>Objective 2: Support and enable effective governance by Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly, in line with the outcomes of the 2017 Church Council retreat.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation</p> <p>Churchwide Assembly—OB/OS Church Council governance policy —OB/OS</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy</p> <p>Evaluation survey of the Churchwide Assembly. Annual survey of Church Council to assess progress.</p>
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<p>Objective 3: Identify and take forward structural redesign and reform opportunities that contribute to more effective stewardship of God’s mission and this church’s resources and assets. <i>(Roles and structures of synods and the churchwide organization, seminaries, networking of lay schools, repurposing property assets).</i></p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Mission Support Strategy — MA/DM Creating sustainable models — MA/OT/OB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Administration • Operations <p>Joint Leadership Table – Synod structures Theological Education Advisory Committee – OB/DM ELCA Foundation - Transition to Separately Incorporated Ministry – MA/OT</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory and summative evaluation of the impact of relevant changes.</p>
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<p>Objective 4: Grow resources for mission and ministry in line with ELCA’s shared goals and priorities and the expectations and roles of its three expressions. <i>(Successfully conclude and wind up the Campaign for the ELCA and develop the next generation of strategies to raise resources for this church, in line with its priorities; Comprehensive Mission Support Strategy).</i></p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Campaign for the ELCA – MA Mission Support Strategy — MA/DM/OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory and summative evaluation of the impact of relevant changes.</p>
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<p>Objective 5: Ensure the presiding bishop’s strategic focus on common identity, becoming a more relational and connected church, congregational vitality and development of leaders is supported by contemporary and effective communication strategies and platforms for information sharing and learning.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Churchwide communication strategy — MA/OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evaluation of the perceptions of ELCA rostered ministers and lay members on how well the church is connected, governed, and its sustainability.</p>
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<p>Objective 6: Improve structures, systems and processes of the churchwide organization, including those relating to deployed staff, synods, congregations, ministries and partners, to ensure they provide for efficient and effective teamwork, management and accountability. <i>(HR, technology, team structures, internal communication and information sharing).</i></p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Assessment and the implementation of relevant strategies — OB/OS/MA/DM (e.g. financial systems)</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evaluation with relevant surveys of the impact of changes.</p>
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**ELCA Churchwide Organization
 Planning Framework**

Authority

ELCA Church Council approves.
 Future Directions 2025 is the high level framework for ELCA governance and for Churchwide Organization operational planning.

Churchwide Organization Administrative Team approves.
 Headline results and objectives are reviewed by Church Council for their alignment with Future Directions 2025 based on advice of the Planning and Evaluation Committee.

Executive Directors and senior leaders are responsible for implementation of the operational plan and for team plans and work plans for events and projects.

**Called Forward Together in Christ
 Future Directions 2025**
 Speaks to the three expressions of the ELCA on identity, shared vision, purpose and values, goals and priority action areas

**Churchwide Organization Operational Plan
 2018-19**
 Headline results, CWO objectives, major strategy and program commitments, responsibility and resources

**Work plans
 Team, project and event plans**
 Align to the operational plan – set out more specific objectives, activities, targets and timeframes

Strategic focus areas and related strategies

Strategic Foci – 2018-19
Congregational vitality and leadership - affirmed by ELCA Church Council, Conference of Bishops and Churchwide Organization Administrative Team

Guiding strategies

- Congregational vitality
- Leadership initiatives
- Mission Support
- AMMPARO
- ELCA Campaign
- World Hunger

Examples

- Churchwide Assembly 2019
- Youth Gathering
- Women and justice

THEMES FROM THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS TABLE DISCUSSION ON SUSTAINABILITY FOR DISCUSSION BY THE CHURCH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – APRIL 5, 2018

BACKGROUND

Together in Christ Future Directions 2025 identifies sustainability of the ELCA as both a goal and a priority. Throughout the Called Forward Together in Christ process sustainability was discussed in both positive and negative terms without capturing a clear definition or framework for thinking about its meaning in ELCA's context.

In extending the work of the Future Directions Table in April 2017 the Church Council specifically asked for support in "developing a strategy for becoming a sustainable church, which involves review and change to the way this church is organized (structures, roles and stewardship of resources)". This was to be a primary focus for the table in addition to communication and engagement strategies for Future Directions 2025 and advice on whole of church strategies relating to congregational vitality and leadership.

Discussions around ELCA's leadership tables have continued.

- In September 2017, the Joint Executive Leadership Tables committed to begin development of a framework that defines sustainability and helps position strategies to enhance sustainability of the ELCA in all its expressions. An overall commitment was also given "to embrace our identity as: We are Church; We are Lutheran; We are Church Together; We are Church for the sake of the world as key to church vitality and sustainability".
- Around this time, the Administrative Team explored a definition of sustainability including consideration of the markers of a sustainable church -
- In November 2017, sustainability was the focus of a generative discussion at Church Council. While there were good ideas and questions forthcoming, the discussion did not arrive at specific conclusions on definition or strategy.

The Future Directions Table met on March 21. This meeting focused on two areas: framing and promoting sustainability as a positive narrative across this church and identifying the logic that helps to assign roles and functions to the Churchwide Organization.

The purpose of this paper is to test the emerging thinking on defining sustainability and suggest some next steps:

- for further development of a sustainability framework for the ELCA, and
- for developing strategies under Goal 5 of Future Directions 2025 (A well governed, connected and sustainable church), especially the two priority areas relating to church structures and resources for mission

The Church Council Executive Committee will review the paper and decide whether and how it should be used with the full Church Council.

OVERVIEW OF FUTURE DIRECTIONS TABLE DISCUSSION

At its most recent meeting, the Future Directions Table worked on four questions on sustainability:

- How should sustainability be defined for the ELCA?
- What are the important markers of a sustainable ELCA and are these markers similar when we think of ELCA's three expressions and the ministries that make up the wider church ecology?
- How do we speak about and promote sustainability as a faithful goal that is mission driven and deeply important for the life and future of the ELCA?

- What will it take to enable and empower more church leaders to address some of the institutional challenges that could threaten sustainability?

The discussion was robust and helpful but there has not been time to develop a concise paper that does justice to the group's thinking. Key messages from the discussion were:

- Sustainability in the context of the ELCA is theologically grounded and begins with a focus on living faith. God created this church for God's mission for the world and calls us to be public stewards of the Gospel. Hence sustainability is linked to our confessional identity, faithful discipleship and our ability to accomplish God's mission.
- Sustainability is built as the ELCA becomes a *thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people* and a *welcoming, visible and ecumenical church* committed to justice, peace and reconciliation. (Reference Goals in Future Directions 2025)
- Sustainability speaks to identity and how the ELCA together lives into that identity faithfully and responsibly – We are Church; We are Lutheran; We are Church Together; and, We are Church for the Sake of the World.
- Sustainability is about connectedness, mutuality and relationships, with God, as people and as different expressions and ministries of the church.
- Vitality and sustainability are contextually defined – relevance and legitimacy in different contexts are markers of sustainability.
- And, as church together, sustainability is about being responsible and accountable as stewards of the God-given gifts and resources available to us. In this vein, it is about having clear goals and priorities, development of leaders at all levels, effective governance, good communication and relational processes, well managed and efficient organizations, gathering resources for mission and maximising the use of those resources and technology.

The Future Directions Table concluded congregational vitality and development of leaders go hand in hand with church sustainability. The two priority focus areas are therefore foundations for sustainability.

However a concern at the centre of discussion was that sustainability is often perceived as a negative or unfaithful term - a word associated only with survival, turning the tide on decline and protecting or maintaining the status quo. This prevents understanding sustainability as being about both spiritual and institutional growth and development for today and into the future. By way of contrast, members of the Future Directions Table looked to the environment movement where sustainability generally has positive connotations relating to care and protection of creation for the sake of current and future generations.

On the question of promoting and building sustainability, questions were raised as to:

- How do we reframe sustainability and build the positive narrative – with sustainability being about abundance not scarcity?
- Whose responsibility is it to promote and develop sustainability?
- How do we hold the elements of sustainability together, ensuring discussions on finances and structures are not separated from or undermine the broader spiritual and theological meaning of church sustainability?
- How will the priority action areas under Goal 5 be taken forward, especially *church structures and resources for mission?* (What is the appetite for change? Is there a sense of urgency to find more sustainable ways of being church together?)

The Future Directions Table reflected on the extent to which church leaders are willing to make changes to their current models of ministry for the sake of the gospel, asking in essence whether there is a culture of adaptation, measured risk taking, learning and change that undergirds efforts to become a thriving, sustainable church. In exploring what it would take to multiply practices and models that contribute to sustainability, the table lifted

up formation and education of leaders, engaging and acknowledging willing change makers, supporting leaders to experiment and remodel their ministries and widely communicating the stories of success in ways others can embrace.

POINTS FROM A CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION SENIOR LEADERS MEETING

In 2016 Senior Leaders discussed a definition of sustainability, focusing more specifically on the churchwide organization. The conclusions are captured below and accord well with the Future Directions Table discussion.

A sustainable churchwide organization is theologically grounded in an understanding that we exist because God created the church for God's mission for the world. God is our source of life. A sustainable churchwide organization will be empowered to share a bold message of God's grace to the world today and tomorrow, so that all might experience the love of Christ. Markers of a sustainable churchwide organization include:

- Clear identity and sense of mission
- Relevancy in lives of ELCA members and our neighbors
- Broad and growing revenue streams
- Diverse, gifted participation and leadership
- Positive reputation and impact
- Efficient systems and processes
- Adaptability
- Good governance
- Shared Ecclesiology

HOW HAS THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION DEFINED SUSTAINABILITY

In June 2015 The General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) presented a paper to the LWF Council "Towards a sustainable projection of the LWF and its Communion Office". While the paper primarily explored issues relating to financial sustainability and stewardship of the communion, it took care to situate the discussion in a broader theological and spiritual framing of sustainability. Below are some paragraphs taken from that paper. While it relates to LWF as a global communion of churches, again there is resonance with the Future Directions Table discussion.

Sustainability for LWF is first of all a theological and spiritual matter. As it is God's word that calls the church into being, it is God's call into communion, which constitutes the cornerstone of the LWF's sustainability. As long as God's vocation is vigorous, is recognized and continues inviting LWF member churches into a shared journey, and as long as the gift of being drawn into togetherness is recognized, and the task resulting from this togetherness is taken up by LWF member churches, the LWF is sustainable. Accordingly, for the LWF as a communion of churches 'sustainability' is not a question of preservation or surviving, but of offering a thriving witness to God's grace as a communion included in God's mission for the healing of the world. It is this service across ethnic, social and political borders that becomes a witness of the communion in Christ and to Christ's grace. A service that will also seek its genuine expression through relationships of mutuality among sisters and brothers (2 Cor 8 and 9, 1 Cor 12:25).

The key question guiding the quest of sustainability is therefore: what needs to be done so that LWF's 'passion for the church and for the world' (LWF Strategy) is expressed meaningfully and relevantly to member churches and to the multitudes longing for justice, peace and reconciliation in this world? This involves a multi-dimensional understanding of sustainability that includes people/ communities and their vocation, relationships, methodologies of interaction, to name some. For LWF, important dimensions of sustainability include a shared faith and spiritual life, a broad and culturally rich grassroots base, a legitimacy that comes from collective ownership of LWF's identity and shared purpose, and organizational processes and capacities (leadership, financial and human resources, communication and systems). While emphasizing questions of financial

sustainability, we seek to avoid decisions on finances that undermine this broader understanding of sustainability, and the theological foundations on which it is built.

NEXT STEPS IN DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY AND SHAPING STRATEGIES TO BUILD FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Church Council Executive is asked to consider how the discussion and work on sustainability should go forward. The steps outlined below provide a starting point for consideration. It would be helpful for the Executive Committee to take a proposal on next steps to the Church Council meeting, together with inviting a discussion around the questions identified by the Future Directions Table detailed above.

POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CHURCH COUNCIL

1. Drawing on discussions thus far, prepare a paper for consideration of the Joint Executive Leadership Tables provisionally titled - Towards a Faithful and Multi-Dimensional Understanding of Sustainability.
 - Develop an initial draft based on discussions over the past year. A preliminary content outline is detailed in Attachment 1.
 - Comments on the draft would be sought initially from the Executives of Church Council and Conference of Bishops and the Administrative Team and then more widely.
 - The paper would be revised in time for consideration by the Conference of Bishops and Church Council at their Fall meetings.
 - The goal is that by November 2018, Church Council embraces a definitional framework on sustainability that has support of the Conference of Bishops and the Administrative Team in the Churchwide Organization.
2. Once the framework on sustainability is endorsed:
 - A communications task force (synod and churchwide specialists) is appointed to create and take out a positive narrative around ELCA's goals to be a thriving, sustainable church, especially among lay leaders and pastors in congregations, communities of worship and related ministries.
 - The Joint Executive Leadership Tables commit to developing a 5 year progressive strategy for realigning structures and resources across the three expressions, with a major focus on the role and functions of synods and the churchwide organisation. This work would be supported by a small task force of interested and willing people from the COB, Church Council and the Churchwide Administrative Team. A principle of experimenting with new ways of doing business – structures, roles, generating and sharing resources for mission, new funding models – would be applied to strategy development, building on successful examples of change from the recent past.

TOWARDS A FAITHFUL AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABILITY

THOUGHT PIECE FOR ELCA'S LEADERSHIP TABLES

1. BACKGROUND

- What has informed the paper
- Purpose and use of the paper

2. WHY A POSITIVE NARRATIVE MATTERS

- Or put another way why it is not unfaithful to talk about and promote sustainability of this church

3. DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

- Situating the definition as centred in Christ, faith and discipleship, theology and identity as a Lutheran church. And framing sustainability as being about abundance not survival.

4. THE MARKS OF A SUSTAINABLE CHURCH

- What does a sustainable church look like – what are the important elements? (Here the paper will draw directly on FDT discussion and the markers identified by the CWO Administrative Team)

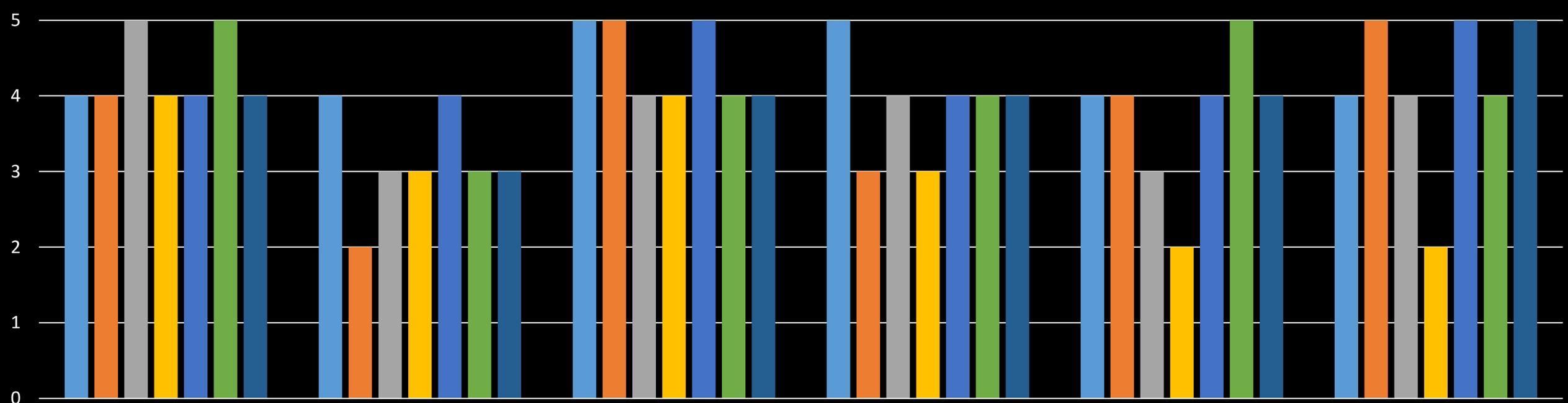
5. PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY – WHOSE JOB IS IT?

- A communication and strategy challenge for church leaders across all expressions and ministries

6. COURAGE AND NEW WAYS TO ADDRESS THE INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

- The importance of developing whole of church strategies under Goal 5 - future funding models and stewardship of resources, revisiting structures and roles and strengthening connectedness and accountability as church together
- Specifically, what is expected of the churchwide organization in promoting sustainability of ELCA's structures and processes and increasing revenue to support churchwide ministries?

Process Observation Church Council



Dissenting Perspectives Were Presented

Under-Represented Perspectives Were Presented And Considered

Reports Reflected A Commitment To Racial, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability, And Age Justice Inclusion

There Was Evidence Of Hearing From & Listening To People Of Color, Women, Varied Age Gorups, Different Sexual Orientations, And Different Abilities Who Might Be Stakeholders

Coucil Members Shared Equally The Responsibility For Raising Concerns Pertinent To Racial, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability, And Age Justice And Inclusion

Policy Decisions And Recommendations Were Made That Moved ELCA Closer To Being A Church That Values Racial, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability And Age Justice And Inclusion

Comments:

- “We don’t hear much from people of color in the room. Would like to create a space where that happens.”
- “Lift up concerns/needs at beginning of our meetings as a reminder for us to be cognizant of our thoughts & actions.”
- “I believe that council members are aware and feel empowered to offer their dissenting opinions.”

Comments (*continued*):

- “Need more work to hear perspectives offered by youth, ethnic groups, and GLBTQIA.”
- “...officers and staff, in particular, do a good job with addressing these issues (racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age justice).”
- “More awareness needed.” (council members shared equally the responsibility for raising concerns pertaining to racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age justice inclusion)

Comments (*continued*):

- “Vast improvement needed”. (Policy decisions and recommendations were made in this meeting that moved ELCA closer to being a church that values racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age justice inclusion)
- “Sometimes it takes awhile for people to feel comfortable to [offer] dissent”.
- “Questions and comments can be dominated by 2-3 people, while some others were never heard from during the plenary sessions.”

Program and Services Committee

Cynthia Gustavson



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Actions That Require CC Action

- Review of Corporate Social Resp Screen
- Update on Entrance Rite Discernment Document
- Changes to Social Message on Immigration



Actions Taken by the Committee

- En bloc
 - To approve the "Political and Civil Human Rights: Equal Access and Participation" Social Criteria Investment Screen; and to request that the secretary of this church to inform the synods of this action.
 - To adopt the identified changes to the social message on immigration (1998) as an editorial update that will provide accurate information from the ELCA's strategy to AMMPARO.



Actions Taken by the Committee for CC Vote

- To receive with gratitude the report and proposed recommendations from the ERDG; To refer the proposed recommendations to the Office of the Secretary for preliminary work on possible amendments to the Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA; To encourage the ERDG to share the proposed recommendations throughout the church and with full communion partners for further conversation; and to request the ERDG present final recommendations to the Nov. 2018 Church Council meeting.



Report from the Conference of Bishops

The March 2018 meeting of the Conference of Bishops (CoB) gathered under the theme, “To Claim and Test Our Heritage,” borrowed from a hymn that is part of the soundtrack for our life as church in North America today. Our agenda was also shaped in great measure by our two common priorities: congregational vitality and leadership. Along the way, we did a good bit of both claiming and testing. Here are a few highlights.

Continuing our commitment to engage seminary leaders with intentionality for a couple of years to address leadership needs of the church, we have appointed three bishops to work with three seminary leaders to shape our time together at each CoB meeting. In this last meeting, we gathered in affinity groups around key themes (e.g. recruitment, formation, etc.) which resulted in a cadre of working groups committed to working on these themes between meetings.

This commitment to work together and with others between meetings of the CoB was another important development in this meeting. It has become clear that limiting our work with churchwide staff, each other, and others to our twice-a-year gatherings is not nimble or immediate enough to meet the needs of the church. We have committed to some of our committees and other task groups to working between CoB meetings.

With the leadership of the Academy Committee, we are beginning to explore the way we do the Bishops’ Academy and the ways in which the Academy interacts with the fall and spring CoB meetings. We are considering moving the Academy every other year, while we also explore ways to reshape our spring and fall meetings to facilitate more effectively together and with others, to include theological engagement, and to continue to honor healthful and helpful rhythms in our schedule.

We finally came up with a definition of congregational vitality. Actually, we decided what is needed is a *description*, not a definition. Leave it to bishops to redefine the task. Knowing that creating something from nothing is nearly impossible for the CoB or any other such gathering, we shaped our conversation around the definition/description already in use in the Congregational Vitality Project. In the end, we not only affirmed – and tweaked via footnotes – the description used in the Congregational Vitality Project, we also, and more importantly, engaged the conversation at a level far deeper than a definition. In the end, we agreed that vital congregations are:

*The church of Christ
in every age,
beset by change
but Spirit led,
must claim and test
its heritage
and keep on rising
from the dead.*
-F. Pratt Green

Communities¹ of Jesus² that nurture life changing relationships³ with God, one another, and the world.

1. The phrase "Communities of Jesus" is meant to evoke an expansive understanding of how, in this age, people are gathering to engage God’s Word. We envision campus ministries, Bible Camps, pub theology gatherings and more as places where the Triune God is at work creating faith.
2. While we use the word "Jesus", we understand that it is God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who through the power of the Holy Spirit calls, gathers and makes holy.
3. Regarding the phrase "nurture life changing relationships", in relationship with the Triune God and others we are most certainly nurtured, but we are also changed, in other words the Word has the power to transform.

We began our gathering by sharing worship and some fellowship time with members and leaders of the Youth Core Leadership Team. This was an important way for the CoB to get to know and to affirm several young people who are intentionally growing in their leadership skills and providing leadership for the church and in their local communities. Our Sunday morning offering for the Campaign for the ELCA: Youth and Young Adults totaled almost \$2,900, another sign of the bishops’ support for young people.

In that same spirit, we also tried an experiment in affirming a statement of support for young people who are calling our culture to address gun violence and school safety in reference to the March 24, 2018, March for Our

Lives. Rather than working such a statement through the CoB's Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee (as our existing policies prescribe), we considered a statement written by one bishop and presented to the CoB for its consideration as a body. The statement itself was a fine statement. It has been well received in many quarters of the church and, of course, has been criticized in others, as any such statement would be.

Interestingly, the Episcopal House of Bishops adopted a very similar statement just days after the ELCA CoB adopted ours. A number of ELCA bishops participated in the Washington, DC march or in local marches on their territory, as I did. In my case, and in other situations as well, this was done in partnership with Episcopal colleagues.

Both the process of adoption and the results were flawed in the end, however, due to some poor stewarding of the process on my part and less than sterling communication (also on my part) about whether the statement would contain individual names of bishops (which it did, in unprecedented fashion) and imperfect communication (me again) with bishops who were not in the room when we discussed and voted on the statement. But, as is necessary in times that require adaptive leadership – when we are claiming and testing our heritage – we learned some things through this experiment. Among them is the insight that our policies and processes for developing statements, adopted in 2001, are outdated and not nimble enough for today's realities. We hope to consider new policies, processes, and practices for developing and issuing statements as a Conference at the fall 2018 meeting.

Among many other things, at this last meeting of the CoB we also discussed draft recommendations of the Word and Service Entrance Rite Group, convened our working group on race (which will assist us as a conference to address racism), moved a little further down the road on implementation of continuing resolution 5.01.B16 (“diversity”), and engaged in a hearing on the proposed interfaith statement.

We also welcomed the newest bishop among us, Pedro Suarez (Florida-Bahamas). We bade farewell and Godspeed to colleagues whose ministries as bishop are coming to an end: Claire Burkat (SE Pennsylvania), Mary Froiland (South-Central Synod of Wisconsin), Rick Hoyme (NW Synod of Wisconsin), Felipe Lozada-Montanez (Caribbean), and Ray Tiemann (SW Texas). We prayed with and for colleagues who will be involved in election processes this spring and early summer: Jim Gonia (Rocky Mountain), Jim Hazelwood (New England), Brian Maas (Nebraska), Ann Svennungsen (Minneapolis Area), and Shelley Wickstrom (Alaska).

*We have no mission but to serve in full obedience to our Lord;
to care for all, without reserve, and spread God's liberating word.*

Report of the Executive for Administration

Strategic Planning

Churchwide Organization 2018 – 2019 Operational Plan:

FUTURE DIRECTIONS 2025

- Goal One: A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith of all people.
- Goal Two: A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.
- Goal Three: An Inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.
- Goal Four: A Visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.
- Goal Five: A well-governed, connected and sustainable church.

The final version of the 2018-2019 Operational Plan is presented at this 2018 spring meeting of the Church Council for your affirmation. The operational plan emphasizes the two foci identified by the ELCA Church Council, Conference of Bishops, and the Churchwide Organization Administrative Team; namely, congregational vitality and leadership. The Planning and Evaluation Committee will review the plan and its evaluation framework. In addition, the committee will discuss the organization's risk management grids and plans. (See attachments)

Budget

The churchwide organization's operating results for 2017 were favorable to the annual budget by \$2.8 million. Your churchwide staff exercised good stewardship, stayed within the expenditure authorization, and achieved underspending in several areas. Please see the [Report of the ELCA Treasurer](#) for detailed information regarding the year-end results for 2017.

The spending plans for 2018 are on point for budget. We will monitor expenses quarterly, as usual, to ensure alliance with the operating plan and income projections. Resource allocations for 2019 resource will be challenging. The Administrative Team has begun conversations with the executive committees of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops regarding this matter.

Staff Demographics

The total number of churchwide organization employees as of March 1, 2018 was 361. The distribution of staff was 59 percent female, 41 percent male; 35 percent persons of color; 28 percent ordained rostered; and two percent rostered deacons. Seventy one percent of the staff is Chicago-based. There are 287 regular full-time positions, 9 regular part-time and 65 term contracts. In addition, there are 200 missionaries in 41 countries.

The separately incorporated ministries under the umbrella of the Churchwide Organization personnel policies are: The ELCA Foundation, Mission Investment Fund, Women of the ELCA and Lutheran Men in Mission. Their staffing demographics in March were:

- The ELCA Foundation: Total number of employees was 23. The distribution of staff was 52 percent female, 48 percent male; 22 percent persons of color. Less than one percent rostered and 39 percent are Chicago-based.
- Mission Investment Fund: The total number of employees was 53. The distribution of the staff was 66 percent female, 34 percent male; 38 percent persons of color, nine percent rostered ministers; and 83 percent Chicago-based.
- Women of the ELCA: The total number of employees was 10. The distribution of the staff was 100 percent female; 50 percent persons of color; 100 percent lay; and 100 percent Chicago-based.
- Lutheran Men in Mission: The total number of employees was 2. The distribution of the staff was: 2 white males; 1 deacon; 1 Chicago-based.

The Human Resources web site can be found at www.elca.org/humanresources; information regarding positions in Global Mission can be found at www.elca.org/globalserve.

Research and Evaluation

I regret to announce the retirement of Kenneth Inskip, PhD. Kenn has been a valued employee of the churchwide organization and has served for thirty years. He will be missed.

Since your November meeting, reports have been completed for:

- The Assignment Process (in cooperation with the Conference of Bishops and Domestic Mission);
- A Baseline Review of the Roster (intended to be a major component of the assessment of this church's progress in diversifying the roster);
- A Report on the Distribution of Domestic Mission Grants for New Starts and Renewal Ministries;
- A Report on Participation, Giving, and other Revenue for the Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities (SAWCs) and Congregations Under Development (CUDs).

Staff are also working on a report regarding the level of support among the bishops for different models of theological education intended to prepare individuals for ordination pastors in the ELCA.

This staff worked closely with the director for mission support on developing, in response to the Church Council, contextually sensitive guidelines for each synod to provide a basis for consultations on mission support.

Work continues to provide support for synods preparing for the election of a new bishop; to respond to requests from synods and congregations for its trend statistics; and to provide demographic support for churchwide staff, directors for evangelical mission, and congregations.

Theological Education Advisory Committee

The Theological Education Advisory Committee (TEAC) will share a report and recommendations at this meeting. TEAC has continued to work toward systems conversions, assessment tools, and funding strategies for seminaries; greater support for lay theological education; and increased leadership development among leaders of color. The committee is concerned with the stewardship of resources for theological education and how best to create a common enterprise-wide approach for the future.

Rostered Women of Color Project

I am delighted to report that this project is completed. More than 40 stories from rostered women of color are shared in "God's Faithfulness on the Journey." Please visit www.elca.org/rwoc to read these reflections. Also, see the March edition of [*Living Lutheran*](#) magazine for excerpts.

CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION OPERATIONAL PLAN 2018-19 - OVERVIEW

Goals, headline results and objectives

March 8, 2018

Introduction

In November 2016, the ELCA Church Council approved *Called Forward Together in Christ - Future Directions 2025*. From 2018, churchwide organization operational planning will support the identity, vision and shared purpose of this church as set out in *Future Directions 2025* and be framed around the goals and priority action areas identified for the ELCA as one church together in Christ.

The Churchwide Organization Operational Plan Overview sets out the goals, headline results and objectives that the churchwide organization will work toward in 2018-19. They show a strong emphasis on congregational vitality and leadership, the strategic focus areas identified by the Presiding Bishop and affirmed by the Administrative Team, Conference of Bishops and Church Council.

A more detailed plan showing the focus of strategy and programming for each objective and responsibilities for these is under development and will be completed for implementation in 2018-19, with oversight by the churchwide organization Administrative Team.

The authority for and relationship between different levels of planning is detailed in a separate document titled *ELCA Churchwide Organization Planning and Reporting Framework*. The full framework document includes guidance on levels of planning, responsibilities, reporting processes and a glossary of terms. The main map of churchwide organization planning levels is included as an attachment.

The headline results and objectives provide for a more analytic and results oriented approach to reporting to Church Council by the churchwide organization. They also establish the framework for ongoing planning and reporting at an operational level. While management level reporting on major activities will continue, the Administrative Team and senior leaders will aim for analysis and reporting that shows how the churchwide organization's work is contributing toward achievement of objectives, whether the headline results are tracking in the right direction and what the learning is with respect to assumptions, strategy, resources and adjustment of plans.

This plan requires the infrastructure and systems of the churchwide organization to operate efficiently and effectively in support of the strategies, primary programs and events within the Operational Plan. While Goal 5, Objective 6 speaks to the improvement of these structures, systems and processes, the important work done each day in the areas of: human resources, finance, information technology, facilities, archiving and records retention, constituent support, data/information management, marketing and communications, research and evaluation, legal, governance, and event planning, may not be directly documented in this plan. These critical functions support the ongoing operations of the organization and the achievement of the Goals and Objectives contained within this plan.

DM = Domestic Mission	OB = Office of the Presiding Bishop
GM = Global Mission	OS = Office of the Secretary
MA = Mission Advancement	OT = Office of the Treasurer

<p><i>Called Forward Together in Christ Future Directions 2025</i></p> <p>Goal one A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people.</p> <p>Goal two A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.</p>	<p>Headline Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Strengthened capacity of congregations/worshipping communities to engage their local communities for the sake of evangelical witness and service. ◆ Strengthened leadership capacity for engaging, and in assisting others to engage, in evangelical witness and service (including more ready access for all to vocational pathways). Also, evidence of greater courage and higher morale among leaders. ◆ Strengthened relationships, for the sake of evangelical witness and service, within and between the whole church (congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization; companion churches; ecumenical and inter-religious partners; the LWF communion and other global relationships). ◆ A slowed rate of decline in ELCA church membership and worship attendance.
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<p>Objective 1: Promote a wider understanding of ELCA’s identity (we are church; we are Lutheran; we are church together; and, we are church for the sake of the world) and equip leaders and disciples to communicate our theology and beliefs in accessible and compelling ways.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation</p> <p>Youth Gathering - DM Messaging Strategies – MA Social Statements and Policies – OB Mission Support Symposiums – MA World Hunger Education – MA/DM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy</p> <p>Annual survey of lay and rostered ministers focused on comprehension, support, proclamation of basic Lutheran doctrine. Create and use key questions covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justification by Faith Alone • Distinguishing Law and Gospel • Theology of the Cross • Word and Sacraments • Role of the Church • Church Polity • Christian Vocation • Social statement and policy public comment/review
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<p>Objective 2: Renew and strengthen faith formation and evangelism practices by lay members and rostered ministers, drawing on success stories among ELCA expressions and lessons from global accompaniment with companion churches.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Congregational Faith Formation/Evangelism Programs – DM Lay Schools – DM Glocal Events – GM Domestic Engagement of Global Missionaries and Young Adults in Mission (YAGM) Alumni Program – GM/MA/DM Storytelling Programs – MA</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Annual survey of lay and rostered ministers on stages of faith/faith development and commitment to, and engagement of, evangelism practices within the context of Christian vocation.</p>
<p>Objective 3: Work with engaged synods to support renewal and revitalization of congregations and worship communities in ways that deepen spiritual life and faith practice, welcome and retain worshippers and increase engagement in God’s mission, locally and globally.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Partner Synod Project: (new congregations, renewals, congregation-based organizing), ethnic specific and multicultural ministries, leadership – DM/MA/GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative (three-year ending) evaluation of the progress of each synod engaged in the Partner Synod Project within the context of the goals of each synod and, in comparison to, a control group of synods.</p>
<p>Objective 4: Support new congregations and worship communities to start and become vital and viable expressions of this church, with a specific focus on ethnic specific and multicultural ministries.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation New congregations (new congregations, congregation-based organizing), ethnic specific and multicultural ministries, leadership – DM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evaluation of the progress of new ministries in the ELCA.</p>

<p>Objective 5: Provide access to continuing education and development opportunities for youth and young adults, other lay leaders, and rostered ministers, to enhance the church’s capacity for evangelical witness and service.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Lay Schools – DM Training Events – DM Young Adult Network – DM First Call Theological Education - DM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evaluation of the participation of lay and rostered ministers in continuing theological education. Baseline to be established in year one.</p>
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<p>Objective 6: Through mutual accompaniment, strengthen the capacity of ELCA synods and global companion churches for evangelical witness and service, and encourage all expressions of the ELCA to more fully embrace the gifts and knowledge of the companion churches.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Companion Synod Program – GM International Leaders Program – GM Global Companion Evangelism Efforts – GM Donor Immersion Trips — MA</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Annual survey of synods to assess interaction with, and impact of synod engagement, with global companions. Survey immersion group participants</p>
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<p>Objective 7: Provide avenues for youth and young adults from diverse backgrounds to participate in domestic and global service, thereby deepening their faith, increasing engagement in the ELCA and enabling their formation as leaders.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation YAGM/YAGM Alumni Program – GM ELCA World Hunger Advocacy Fellows – DM Horizon Apprentice Program – DM Elisha’s Call Program – DM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evaluation of the scope and impact of these programs. Set a base for a possible longitudinal study of impact.</p>
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<p><i>Called Forward Together in Christ Future Directions 2025</i></p> <p>Goal three</p> <p>An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.</p>	<p>Headline Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increased participation in this church of people of color/primary language other than English. ◆ An increase in the number of people of color/primary language other than English who are lay and rostered ministers, bishops, synod staff and churchwide organization staff. ◆ Growth in multicultural and ethnic specific ministries – number and rates of participation. ◆ Increased participation of young adults in ELCA networks and evidence of more young adults taking up leadership opportunities.
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<p>Objective 1: Develop proactive recruitment and formation strategies to achieve a more diverse leadership profile with a clear focus on ethnic, cultural, gender generational diversity, and social status, and better matching the gifts and experiences of leaders to different communities and ministries.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation</p> <p>Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) – DM YAGM Alumni Program – GM Bishop’s Leadership Initiative – OB/MA Fund for Leaders – MA Churchwide Human Resources – OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy</p> <p>Summative evaluation of the impact of these programs using existing research on these programs as a base.</p>
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<p>Objective 2: With synods, equip congregations with resources and strategies to reach out to people in their neighborhoods and embrace new ways to facilitate engagement and participation in this church, through worship, evangelical witness and service.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation</p> <p>Partner Synod Project – DM/GM/MA Congregational Tool Kits – MA (e.g. ELCA Domestic World Hunger resources; Intercultural Development Inventory [IDI]) Companion Synod Program – GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy</p> <p>Initial study using ZIP codes to establish a community “diversity index” for every congregation and synod. Summative evaluation of progress through the comparison of congregation active participation to the community diversity index.</p>
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<p>Objective 3: Develop, empower and support networks among ethnic specific and multicultural ministries and share their experience and knowledge with synods and congregations seeking to welcome and nurture diversity.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Authentic Diversity Task Force – DM Ethnic Associations – DM Accompanying Migrant Minors (AMMPARO) – GM/DM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy (See Goal Three: Objective 2)</p>
<p>Objective 4: Actively encourage youth and young adults from diverse backgrounds to be agents of generational change and role models for becoming a more culturally diverse church.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Multicultural Youth Leadership – DM tAble – DM YAGM Alumni – GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Qualitative summative evaluation.</p>
<p>Objective 5: Support congregations and synods to grow in their commitment to and practice of gender justice and racial justice.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Synod Leadership Anti-Racism Training – DM Women and Justice Social Statement & Inter-Religious Policy Statement – OB Human Rights Message – OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Assessment of the impact on leaders who are engaged by these events and resources.</p>
<p>Objective 6: As a church in the public space speak out against discrimination and violence based on race, gender, sexual orientation and social status through advocacy and other forms of public witness.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Provide channels for speaking to these issues — MA/OB (e.g. statements and news releases from the presiding bishop) Advocacy — DM/GM/OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory of actions related to these issues. Measurements from the Advocacy Action Center</p>

<p><i>Called Forward Together in Christ Future Directions 2025</i></p> <p>Goal four</p> <p>A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.</p>	<p>Headline Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evidence of impact achieved through distribution of ELCA World Hunger Program funds, domestically and globally. ◆ Increased engagement with the ELCA World Hunger Program (World Hunger Leaders Network, congregations, synods, companion churches, and ELCA gatherings and events). ◆ Evidence of the impact achieved through the distribution of Lutheran Disaster Response funds domestically and globally. ◆ Growth in engagement and two-way learning between congregations and Lutheran Social Ministry Organizations.
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<p>Objective 1: Expand and deepen engagement with God’s Work. Our Hands, as a vehicle for witness and service by congregations, synods and ministries of this church.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation God’s Work. Our Hands — MA</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Build on existing reports of participation. Add a summative, qualitative assessment.</p>
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<p>Objective 2: Mobilize and harness resources for local, national and global ministries to alleviate poverty and hunger - including funds, networks, partnerships, ecumenical and inter-religious relationships and mutual accompaniment with companion churches and the global church.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation ELCA World Hunger Program – MA/DM/GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory of actions related to these issues.</p>
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<p>Objective 3: With synods and domestic affiliates, global companions and partners, respond effectively to natural disasters and humanitarian crisis in the U.S., Caribbean and throughout the world, and develop local capacities in disaster preparedness and response, including displacement and migration of crisis affected people.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) – DM/GM/MA Companion churches — GM AMMPARO — DM/GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory of responses to events including an assessment of the number of person served.</p>
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<p>Objective 4: Plan and direct ELCA’s international relief and development program to respond to needs identified by our companion churches and our global operating partners.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation ELCA World Hunger — GM/MA Companion churches — GM</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory of responses to events including an assessment of the number of person served.</p>
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<p>Objective 5: Lead and participate in national and global advocacy efforts to advance gender justice, climate justice and human rights, and to alleviate poverty and hunger, engaging church networks and joining with ecumenical partners, leaders of other faiths and the global church.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Peace Not Walls — GM Advocacy/ELCA World Hunger — GM/DM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Leaders: Women • Lutheran Office for World Community <p>Ecumenical Inter-Religious Relations – OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evidence of collaborative work.</p>
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<p>Objective 6: Strengthen the churchwide organization’s capacity to monitor the impact of ELCA’s World Hunger Grants - domestic and international - and gather and tell these stories across this church.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation ELCA Grants Maker Project — OT/IT</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Annual assessment of relevant churchwide staff on progress in the churchwide organization’s ability to monitor impact.</p>
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<p>Objective 7: Expand and deepen engagement with dialogue, full communion, conciliar, inter-religious and global partners to enhance capacity for working collaboratively for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue — OB Inter-Religious Statement—OB Support of the Lutheran World Federation — OB/GM Cooperative work with the Full Communion Partners — DM/OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative assessment of increased capacity due to this work collaboratively.</p>
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<p><i>Called Forward Together in Christ Future Directions 2025</i></p> <p>Goal five</p> <p>A well governed, connected and sustainable church.</p>	<p>Headline Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Growth in the capacities of ELCA leadership tables for collaboration/mutual accountability. ◆ Achieved or exceeded ELCA Campaign targets; and, no decline in overall giving and support of ELCA’s ministries post-Campaign. ◆ Maintained levels of funding for World Hunger and disaster. ◆ Slowed decline in mission support; and, emergence of new sustainable models of mission support. ◆ A budget that is aligned to results and objectives; responsible stewardship of financial performance based on the budget. ◆ Increased effectiveness of churchwide communication strategies.
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<p>Objective 1: Facilitate strong relationships across ELCA’s leadership tables and further build a culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation</p> <p>Joint Leadership Table (Church Council Executive Committee, Conference of Bishops Executive Committee, Churchwide Organization Administrative Team) — OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy</p> <p>Annual survey of leadership tables to assess progress.</p>
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<p>Objective 2: Support and enable effective governance by Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly, in line with the outcomes of the 2017 Church Council retreat.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation</p> <p>Churchwide Assembly—OB/OS Church Council governance policy —OB/OS</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy</p> <p>Evaluation survey of the Churchwide Assembly. Annual survey of Church Council to assess progress.</p>
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<p>Objective 3: Identify and take forward structural redesign and reform opportunities that contribute to more effective stewardship of God’s mission and this church’s resources and assets. <i>(Roles and structures of synods and the churchwide organization, seminaries, networking of lay schools, repurposing property assets).</i></p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Mission Support Strategy — MA/DM Creating sustainable models — MA/OT/OB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Administration • Operations <p>Joint Leadership Table – Synod structures Theological Education Advisory Committee – OB/DM ELCA Foundation - Transition to Separately Incorporated Ministry – MA/OT</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory and summative evaluation of the impact of relevant changes.</p>
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<p>Objective 4: Grow resources for mission and ministry in line with ELCA’s shared goals and priorities and the expectations and roles of its three expressions. <i>(Successfully conclude and wind up the Campaign for the ELCA and develop the next generation of strategies to raise resources for this church, in line with its priorities; Comprehensive Mission Support Strategy).</i></p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Campaign for the ELCA – MA Mission Support Strategy — MA/DM/OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Inventory and summative evaluation of the impact of relevant changes.</p>
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<p>Objective 5: Ensure the presiding bishop’s strategic focus on common identity, becoming a more relational and connected church, congregational vitality and development of leaders is supported by contemporary and effective communication strategies and platforms for information sharing and learning.</p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Churchwide communication strategy — MA/OB</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evaluation of the perceptions of ELCA rostered ministers and lay members on how well the church is connected, governed, and its sustainability.</p>
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<p>Objective 6: Improve structures, systems and processes of the churchwide organization, including those relating to deployed staff, synods, congregations, ministries and partners, to ensure they provide for efficient and effective teamwork, management and accountability. <i>(HR, technology, team structures, internal communication and information sharing).</i></p>	<p>Priority Program with Lead Unit Designation Assessment and the implementation of relevant strategies — OB/OS/MA/DM (e.g. financial systems)</p>	<p>Evaluation Strategy Summative evaluation with relevant surveys of the impact of changes.</p>
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**ELCA Churchwide Organization
 Planning Framework**

Authority

ELCA Church Council approves.
 Future Directions 2025 is the high level framework for ELCA governance and for Churchwide Organization operational planning.

Churchwide Organization Administrative Team approves.
 Headline results and objectives are reviewed by Church Council for their alignment with Future Directions 2025 based on advice of the Planning and Evaluation Committee.

Executive Directors and senior leaders are responsible for implementation of the operational plan and for team plans and work plans for events and projects.

**Called Forward Together in Christ
 Future Directions 2025**
 Speaks to the three expressions of the ELCA on identity, shared vision, purpose and values, goals and priority action areas

**Churchwide Organization Operational Plan
 2018-19**
 Headline results, CWO objectives, major strategy and program commitments, responsibility and resources

**Work plans
 Team, project and event plans**
 Align to the operational plan – set out more specific objectives, activities, targets and timeframes

Strategic focus areas and related strategies

Strategic Foci – 2018-19
Congregational vitality and leadership - affirmed by ELCA Church Council, Conference of Bishops and Churchwide Organization Administrative Team

Guiding strategies

- Congregational vitality
- Leadership initiatives
- Mission Support
- AMMPARO
- ELCA Campaign
- World Hunger

Examples

- Churchwide Assembly 2019
- Youth Gathering
- Women and justice

2-19-18

Goal 1: A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people. Goal 2: A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.			
Headline result	Performance indicators	Methodology and/or source of information	Questions to use in evaluating results
<i>Strengthened capacity of congregations/worshiping communities to engage their local communities for the sake of evangelical witness and service.</i>	<i>Overall: a three percent increase in the number of congregations completing the Congregational Vitality Inventory (CVI)</i>	<i>Analysis of the response rate on the 2018 Congregational Annual Report.</i>	<i>Has an increase occurred?</i>
	<i>A three percent increase in congregations scoring 4 or above on CVI's 5-point scale (1-poor to 5-great): "Please tell us how this congregation is at interacting with the local community."</i>	<i>Analysis of the responses on the 2018 Congregational Annual Report.</i>	<i>Has an increase occurred?</i>
	<i>A three percent increase in congregations scoring 4 or above on CVI's 5-point scale (1-poor to 5-great): "Please tell us how each phrase describes this congregation: This congregation is a positive force in the community."</i>	<i>Analysis of the responses on the 2018 Congregational Annual Report.</i>	<i>Has an increase occurred?</i>
<i>Strengthened leadership capacity for engaging, and in assisting others to engage, in evangelical witness and service (including more ready access for all to vocational pathways). Also, evidence of greater courage and higher morale among leaders.</i>	<i>Evidence of increased capacity.</i>	Establish baseline survey around the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a positive regard for the capacities of people and groups in the congregation; • a moderate degree of assertiveness and a high degree of collaborative interest in others; • a capacity to work with and anticipate conflict; • creativity; • a theology that moves others toward action; • a sense of the networks of influence in congregations and communities; and • a clear and consistent process of communicating and gathering feedback. 	<i>Which areas show, and do not show, increased capacity?</i>

Goal 1: A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people. Goal 2: A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.			
Headline result	Performance indicators	Methodology and/or source of information	Questions to use in evaluating results
<i>Strengthened relationships, for the sake of evangelical witness and service, within and between the whole church (congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization; companion churches; ecumenical and inter-religious partners; the LWF communion and other global relationships).</i>	<i>Evidence of stronger relationships.</i>	<i>Lay leader survey including the following questions: 1. "If I had to change my membership to another congregation I would feel a great sense of loss." In 2013, 37 percent strongly agreed. 2. "It is important for me to be a member of a Lutheran church." In 2013, 42 percent strongly agreed. 3. "It is important for me to be a member of a Lutheran church which is part of the ELCA. In 2013, 27 percent strongly agreed.</i>	<i>Is there a strategy (strategies) that has clearly produced results?</i>
		<i>Baseline survey of synod bishops and vice-presidents to assess the strength of relationship between the synods and their congregations and between the synods and the churchwide organization.</i>	
		<i>Survey to assess the strength of the relationship with companion churches; ecumenical and inter-religious partners, the LWF communion and other global partners.</i>	
<i>A slowed rate of decline in ELCA church membership and worship attendance.</i>	<i>Evidence of a slowed rate of decline</i>	<i>Monitor annual reports.</i>	<i>What accounts for a slowed rate of decline?</i>

Goal 3: An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.			
Headline result	Performance indicators	Methodology and/or source of information	Questions to use in evaluating results
<i>Increased participation in this church of people of color/primary language other than English.</i>	<i>Evidence of an increase.</i>	<i>Baseline from 2017, followed by comparisons for 2018 and 2019. Monitor annual congregational reports for an increase.</i>	<i>Is there a strategy that clearly produces results?</i>
<i>An increase in the number of people of color/primary language other than English who are lay and rostered ministers, bishops, synod staff and churchwide organization staff.</i>	<i>Evidence of an increase.</i>	<i>Baseline from the 2017, followed by comparisons for 2018 and 2019. Monitor rosters, synod staffing, churchwide staffing for an increase.</i>	<i>Is there a strategy that clearly produces results?</i>
<i>Growth in multicultural and ethnic specific ministries—number and rates of participation.</i>	<i>Evidence of an increase.</i>	<i>Baseline from 2017, followed by comparisons for 2018 and 2019. Monitor annual congregational reports for an increase.</i>	<i>Is there a strategy that clearly produces results?</i>
<i>Increased participation of young adults in ELCA networks and evidence of more young adults taking up leadership opportunities.</i>	<i>Evidence of an increase.</i>	<i>Baseline from 2018. Identify networks and participation rate of young adults. Also establish base line for the inclusion of young adults on two rosters of the church. Provide report in 2019. Monitor participation in the networks and on the rosters of the church.</i>	<i>Is there a strategy that clearly produces results?</i>

Goal 4: A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities around the world.			
Headline result	Performance indicators	Methodology and/or source of information	Questions to use in evaluating results
<i>Evidence of impact achieved through distribution of ELCA World Hunger Program funds, domestically and globally.</i>	<i>Evidence of impact.</i>	<i>Establish a baseline. Inventory and map the distribution of funds by geographic and programmatic emphasis. Count (estimate as necessary) the number of individuals impacted, and the gender, age, and income distributions of those impacted. Provide annual reports in 2018 and 2019.</i>	<i>What is the impact of focusing on these specific indicators and collecting this data?</i>
<i>Increased engagement with the ELCA World Hunger Program (World Hunger Leaders Network, congregations, synods, companion churches, and ELCA gatherings and events).</i>	<i>Increased engagement.</i>	<i>Establish a baseline. Inventory activities group and engagement emphasis. Count (estimate as necessary) the number of individuals, congregations, companion churches engaged. Provide annual reports in 2018 and 2019. Count the number of dollars contributed. Provide annual reports in 2018 and 2019.</i>	<i>What is the impact of focusing on these specific indicators and collecting this data?</i>

Goal 4: A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities around the world (continued).			
Headline result	Performance indicators	Methodology and/or source of information	Questions to use in evaluating results
<i>Evidence of the impact achieved through the distribution of Lutheran Disaster Response funds domestically and globally.</i>	<i>Evidence of impact.</i>	<i>Establish a baseline. Inventory and map the distribution of funds by geographic and programmatic emphasis. Count (estimate as necessary) the number of individuals impacted, and the gender, age, and income distributions of those impacted. Provide annual reports in 2018 and 2019.</i>	<i>What is the impact of focusing on these specific indicators and collecting this data?</i>
<i>Growth in engagement and two-way learning between congregations and Lutheran Social Ministry Organizations.</i>	<i>Evidence of increased engagement and two-way learning.</i>	<i>Establish a baseline. Include question about the level of interaction on the annual report of congregations for 2018 and again in 2019. Provide report in 2019.</i>	<i>What motivates contact and joint activity.</i>

Goal Five: A well governed, connected and sustainable church.			
Headline result	Performance indicators	Methodology and/or source of information	Questions to use in evaluating results
<i>Growth in the capacities of ELCA leadership tables for collaboration/mutual accountability.</i>	<i>Evidence of growth in capacity.</i>	<i>Establish a baseline using a survey or interviews of participants on the leadership tables. Repeat in 2019 and provide report.</i>	<i>What is the overall impact of increased capacity for collaboration and mutual accountability?</i>
<i>Achieve or exceed ELCA Campaign targets with no decline in overall giving and support of ELCA's ministries post-Campaign.</i>	<i>Meet ELCA Campaign targets with no decline in overall giving.</i>	<i>Monitor and report on Campaign targets and on the level of giving and support of ELCA's ministries post-Campaign. Report in 2019.</i>	<i>What was the overall impact of the Campaign?</i>
<i>Maintain levels of funding for World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response.</i>	<i>Maintained funding levels for World Hunger</i>	<i>Monitor funding levels. Report in 2018 and 2019.</i>	<i>What are the trends for other "hunger" campaigns?</i>
<i>Slow decline in mission support and create new sustainable models of mission support.</i>	<i>Slowed decline in mission support. Evidence of new sustainable funding models.</i>	<i>Monitor and report in 2018 and 2019.</i>	<i>What were the primary factors slowing the decline?</i>
<i>Present a budget that is aligned to results and objectives, exhibiting responsible stewardship of finances based on the budget.</i>	<i>Aligned budget to results and objectives. Evidence of responsible stewardship.</i>	<i>Assess that the budget is aligned to results and objectives using informants: Executive for Administration, the Treasurer, and a subcommittee of the Budget and Finance committee. Report in 2018 and 2019.</i>	<i>How does the alignment impact the overall effectiveness of the churchwide organization?</i>
<i>Increase effectiveness of churchwide communication strategies.</i>	<i>Evidence of increased effectiveness of communication strategies.</i>	<i>Establish a baseline. Inventory communication strategies. Count (estimate as necessary) the number of individuals and congregations engaged and use a panel of respondents to assess effectiveness. Provide annual reports in 2018 and 2019.</i>	<i>What is the overall impact of these communication strategies?</i>

Appendix C: Ops Plan Risk Management for Churchwide Organization

Impact on Churchwide Organization	Probability →	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely	Action	Staff Assigned	
	Very High				decline in mission support	Mission Funding Team consults / works with synods	OB/MA (Bishop Eaton, Victoria Flood, Nick Kiger) Mission Support Coordinating Team	
	High		Predecessor church retirement liability			increasing complexities of IT systems beyond capacity to internally manage	Purchase managed services and buy technology as a service	OT-IT (Lori Fedyk, Jon Beyer, Wyvetta Bullock)
			issues related to legal defense coverage due to the bankruptcy of Atlantic Mutual				Ad hoc working group with members from CWO and Portico are developing a plan to fully fund	
			confidential constituent data not adequately safeguarded once shared with synod and partners				monitor	OS (Rob Thoma and Tom Cunniff)
	Moderate					rising IT maintenance and other infrastructure costs	IT capacity analysis make sure data shared restricts access to confidential information	MA-ECIS (Ala Rasoul)
					Staff retention		work with units to maximize efficiencies and monitor costs	OB, OT (Wyvetta Bullock and Lori Fedyk)
					inadequate capital budget		identify and apply best practices for retention	MA/HR (Christina Jackson/Rhondean Johnson)
					impact of response to major disasters on other income streams			OB, OT (Wyvetta Bullock, Lori Fedyk, Christopher Carpenter-Majors)
			declining income for charitable gift annuity program				monitor income closely in 4 th qtr. Prepare contingencies as needed	MA (Christina Jackson)
		not filling in a timely manner significant positions				consult with gift planning and investment management company for recommendations to strengthen program	FO (Christina Jackson)	
Low						work with recruiting firms	OB /HR(Rhondean Johnson)	
		Political instability (Missionary / YAGM)				Contingency planning Crisis response team	GM (Rafael Malpica)	

DM – Domestic Mission

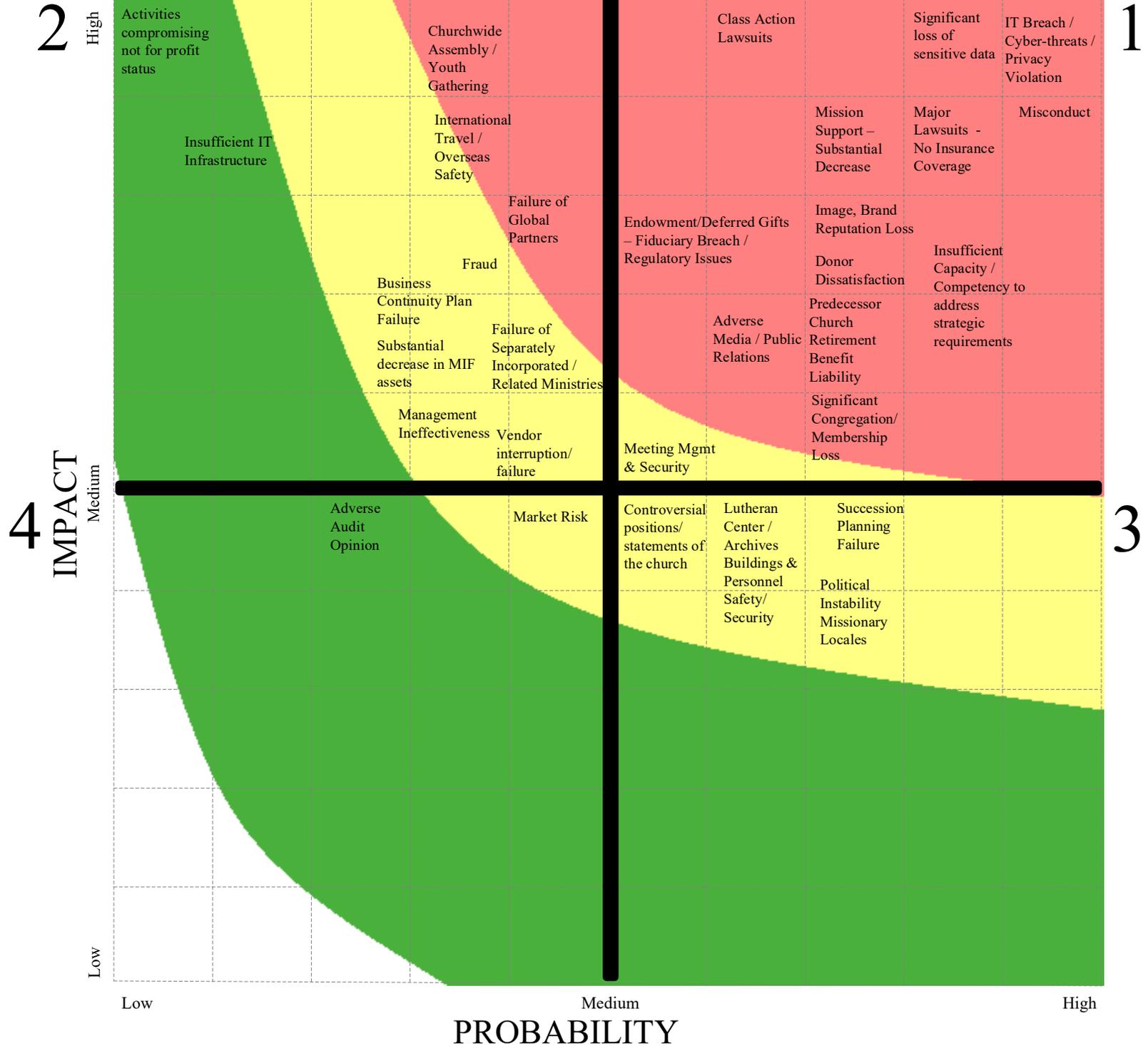
GM – Global Mission

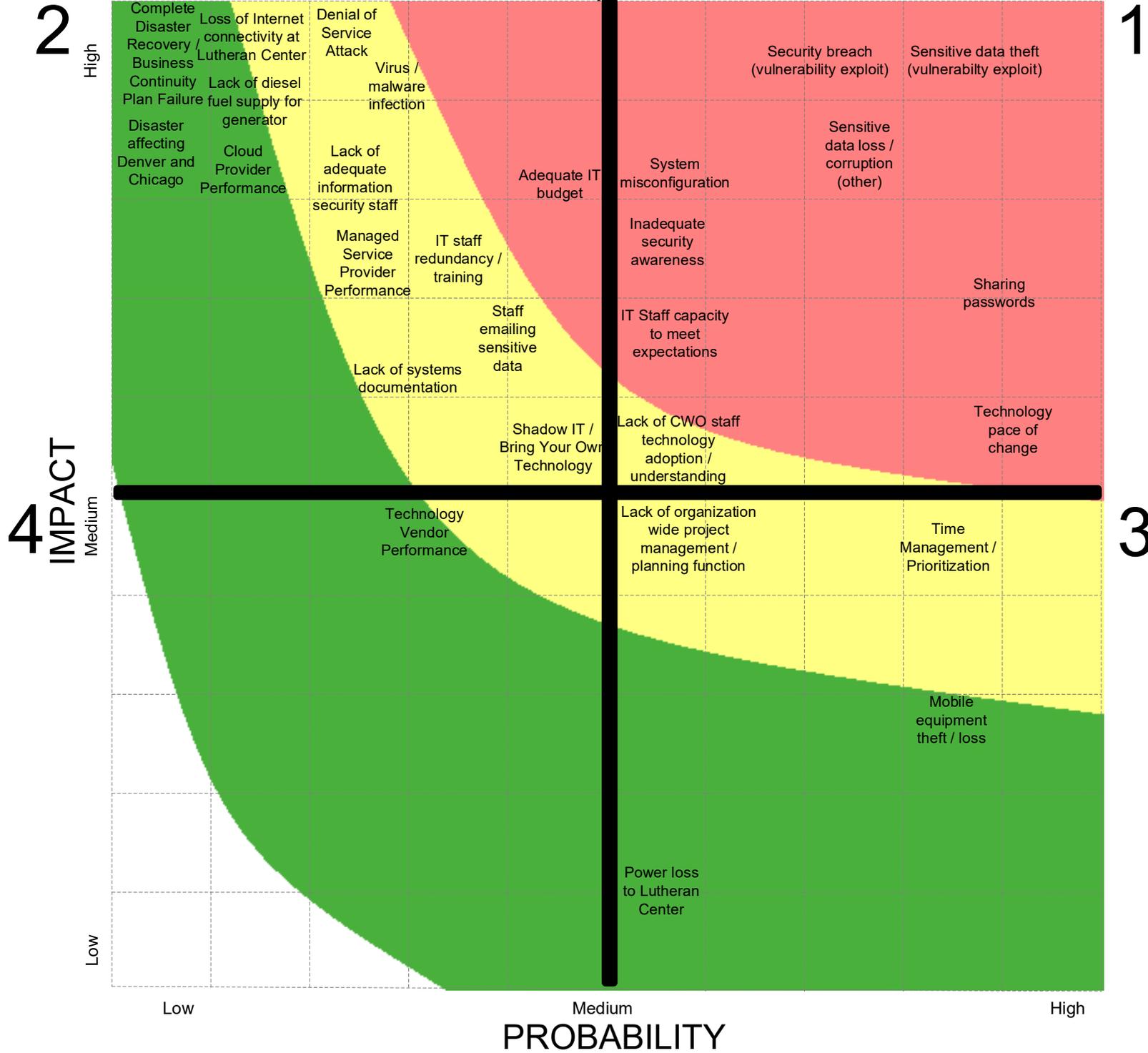
MA – Mission Advancement

OB – Office of the Presiding Bishop

OS – Office of the Secretary

OT – Office of the Treasurer





Report of the Presiding Bishop

Welcome to the spring 2018 meeting of the Church Council. At this meeting, we hear and act upon many of the ministries of this church. I continue to be amazed not only at the quantity, but the quality of the important work carried out by the churchwide staff and others across this church. I will highlight a few of the issues and ministries that we have been working on since our last meeting in November 2017.

The Theological Education Advisory Committee (TEAC) continues to work with the seminaries to develop some kind of common platform. At this time Luther Seminary, Wartburg Seminary, and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) are taking the lead on this project and the other seminaries, United Lutheran Seminary (ULS), Trinity Seminary, the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary are interested in what can be learned and shared across the entire seminary system. It should be noted that two of our seminaries, ULS and LSTC are experiencing some distress at this time. ULS is going through an unexpected and difficult leadership transition and LSTC has been placed on probation by the Higher Learning Commission. LSTC does, however, retain its accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Both schools continue to function and are working diligently to address these issues. I ask that you keep their faculties, staffs, and students in prayer.

At last April's Church Council retreat we identified governance as an item for attention by the Church Council. The Board Development Committee is taking the lead on this and will be engaging us in conversation and some decisions around this issue.

At this meeting you will also have a hearing on the draft policy statement, A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment. The 1991 policy statement, *Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, called for the development of "an official statement to describe the church's commitments and aspirations" for interreligious engagement. (*Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* 1991, pg. 13) The comment period will close on June 30, 2018. The policy statement will come before the Church Council for consideration and possible recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly at the November 2018 Church Council meeting.

Your Theological Discernment team will present on the draft Social Statement on Women and Justice. The proposed statement will also be before the Church Council for consideration and possible recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly at the council's November 2018 meeting.

One of my four emphases is We Are Church for the Sake of the World. On April 4, 2018, the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., members of this church gathered with thousands of others on the Mall in Washington D.C. in a march to end racism. It is deeply disturbing that fifty years later there is still a need to protect civil and voting rights in this country. I am proud of the hundreds of ELCA members, some of whom traveled all night, who showed up. The ELCA is committed to work for racial equity and justice.

We are in year five of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. To date our members have given \$145 million in cash and commitments as well as \$30 million in planned gifts. That is remarkable. Ministries that did not exist before the campaign have been established and are flourishing. One example is Reconciliation Lutheran Church in Juba, South Sudan. This church, community center, and clinic provide medical and educational services that are otherwise not available all in the name of Jesus who is our hope.

Some thoughts... We have worked hard across this church to discern what God is calling us to be and do. Future Directions 2025 is the result of that process. The five goals of Future Directions 2025 are that we shall be:

- 1.) A Thriving Church
- 2.) An Equipping Church
- 3.) A Welcoming Church
- 4.) A Viable Church
- 5.) A Well-Governed, Connected and Sustainable Church.

As we work to realize these goals we will do so through the twin lenses of congregational vitality and leadership. We cannot tackle everything at once, so we are going to start here. This does not mean the goals will go away, it means that we will use the goals to advance congregational vitality and leadership. All of these – the goals and the foci of congregational vitality and leadership – are undergirded by who we are: we are church, we are Lutheran, we are church together, we are church for the sake of the world.

Here is my current working definition for the four emphases:

We Are Church

Therefore, our foundation is Christ and we gather around Word and Sacraments

- Go to church!
- Be faithful in the use of the means of grace
- Pray without ceasing

We Are Lutheran

Therefore, in the suffering and death of Jesus, through grace and faith we live in the promise of the Resurrection

- Be rooted in the word of God
- Celebrate the sacraments
- Study Luther's Catechisms

We Are Church Together

Therefore, "so we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."
(Romans 12:5)

- Know each other
- Love each other
- Work together

We Are Church for the Sake of the World

Therefore, in courage and hope we are sent into the world to be the love of Christ

- Get up!
- Get out!
- Get going!

In a changing culture and a changing church, the tendency is to look for certainty and a technical fix. There is no technical fix. But there is certainty – the steadfast love of God shown in the crucified and risen savior and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

I am grateful for our faith-filled staff who are ready to face the challenge of being church in the 21st century North American context. I am also grateful for your partnership in the gospel.

Report of the Secretary

Churchwide Assembly Preparation

I noted to the Conference of Bishops last month that we are moving from responding to the actions of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly to preparing for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. That does not mean that we have accomplished all the work that the Assembly in New Orleans placed before us. It does mean that the work given to us is now part of our regular routine and we are beginning the process of preparing for the next assembly in Milwaukee.

At this meeting, I am asking the Legal and Constitution Review Committee to bring to you a revision of continuing resolution **19.01.A15**. I have been very clear since my election in 2013 that it was my intention to serve just one term as secretary of this church. Since every member of this church is technically eligible for election to this office, it seems appropriate to me that some form of identification of potential nominees for secretary should be part of our election process. Thus, I am proposing that you adopt:

19.01.A18. *In a year when the vice president or secretary shall be elected, the voting members elected to serve at the Churchwide Assembly shall be invited to identify the names of up to three persons who might be considered for election as vice president or secretary. Names shall be submitted to the Office of the Secretary at least four months prior to the assembly. The Office of the Secretary shall contact those persons identified and request biographical information. At least 60 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members.*

Questions about how long we should leave the biographical information up on the assembly website or in the Guidebook App can be answered in the Rules of Procedure that you will be acting upon at the April 2019 Church Council meeting. It is clear that whatever decision we make about how long this information is posted will need to be communicated to the voting members multiple times before the assembly.

The allocation of voting members has been communicated to all the synods. Two synods will not hold synod assemblies in 2018 and elected voting members at their 2017 synod assemblies. As synods decide to move away from the pattern of an annual synod assembly, it will be important to remind them regularly that they should schedule an assembly in the year before a Churchwide Assembly. This will also need to be a regular reminder to synod assembly planners.

Memorials and Resolutions

We are beginning to hear of memorials being circulated among synods for possible adoption and then submittal to the Churchwide Assembly. As you hear of memorials, please share that information with the Office of the Secretary. It is helpful if we know what is coming and if there is time to offer suggestions to the makers so that the memorials are in a form that will be understood by the members of the Churchwide Assembly.

We received 110 memorials in 2016. Many of these have had significant financial impact on the work of the churchwide organization. We also have issues with those memorials that are not consistent with the identified directions and strategic goals of this organization. The assembly is the highest legislative authority in this church. It is the place where members through congregations and synods, bring their concerns to the attention of the whole church. Memorials are a constitutional means of “petitioning” (**9.53.07.**) From my perspective, it appears that congregations and synods act to pass this memorial along to the Churchwide Assembly without always considering the cost, both in terms of money and of staff time.

Starting last year, I have requested synods to attach an “Anticipated Memorial Implementation Analysis” form to each memorial they adopt. This form asks the maker to review the financial implications of the memorial for each expression of this church. It also asks what implications there might be for staff and/or volunteers for each expression. How synods will use this form is still to be determined. It is my hope that raising the issue early in the process will give each expression of this church the opportunity to evaluate the merits of the proposal as well as the projected cost of the memorial.

I will be looking at our Rules of Procedure for the Churchwide Assembly from the perspective of how to involve the Budget and Finance Committee of this council when we see budgetary implications in a proposed memorial. We already have this rule for resolutions. How we work together with synods, voting members of the assembly and the council could help us address this growing concern.

Let me say again, as you attend synod assemblies or as you are approached in your role as a member of the Church Council, please share with me any information related to possible memorials that may be proposed for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. The Office of the Secretary can assist authors in formatting their memorials so that their intent is clear, and the assembly can vote on what needs to be done to respond to the memorial.

Digital Directory

In January, we launched the ELCA Digital Directory. This online version of what used to be a printed yearbook makes all the information that used to be in the yearbook available in a digital format. The Secretary is to “provide for the publication . . . a directory of congregations, rostered persons, and entities of this church and other informational and statistical material” (**13.41.02.c.**). That has been done by the annual yearbook.

Shortly after coming into this office, I was informed by staff of 1517 Media that they could no longer publish the yearbook as they had in the past. Costs of publishing and a decline in those purchasing the book made this decision necessary. In 2014, I began working with the then churchwide staff on how we might replace the yearbook. In 2016, a team from Information Technology, the Mission Advancement unit, Research and Evaluation and the Office of the Secretary began work on what is now the ELCA Digital Directory. I will be doing a short demonstration of the directory as part of my verbal report at this meeting. I want to commend and thank the staff who worked on this project. We are still in the early stages of its rollout and will be adding features as we move forward. I invite your use and assessment of the directory. It is at <http://directory.elca.org>. You can use the same login as you use for your access to <http://my.elca.org>.

For the most part, we are receiving positive feedback from churchwide staff who regularly use the directory. The most common concern, coming from our Presiding Bishop and members of her staff, is they miss holding the book in their hands. If you did not get a 2017 Yearbook, we have several copies left over from last year. You may request a copy of this old information and we will provide you with one. This is a limited time offer as we will be recycling them shortly after this meeting.

There will be new functionality in the future. As synods keep the information in the ECIS database up to date, this will be the information displayed in the directory. Statistical information is updated on an annual basis. For the purposes of research and evaluation, we will be taking an annual “snapshot” of the data for year to year comparisons. This has been an exciting project for the churchwide organization. I commend the directory to you for your use.

Possible Constitutional Amendments

At the November 2018 meeting of the Church Council, you will need to act upon any amendments to the constitution that you will be proposing to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. My plan is to go over the amendment topics that we have heard about from the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council or that the Office the Secretary has identified since the 2016 assembly. The staff of the Office of the Secretary will work on possible language to address these areas over the summer and will be submitting

these possible amendments to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee for study prior to the November 2018 meeting. If other members of the council would like advance preparation for this work, this will all be posted under the committee's heading in My.ELCA.org.

We know that we will be working on the following:

1. Granting voice and vote at Churchwide Assembly to members of the Church Council not elected to serve as voting members by their synod.
2. Allowing for the possible compensation of the Vice President.
3. Should there be a continuing education requirement for rostered ministers? What are the consequences of not fulfilling such a requirement?
4. Re-looking at the vote threshold for a congregation joining another denomination as part of the disaffiliation process.
5. Should the Conference of Bishops be required to approve non-stipendiary calls? Can this be handled by policy or does it require a constitutional amendment?
6. Issues related to Church Council governance.
7. Amendments that have been suggested by the African Descent Community as part of the response to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly action on a memorial originated by the African Descent Lutheran Association.
8. Addressing how congregations could elect different voting members to a special synod assembly if those originally elected could not attend.
9. The normal review of the constitutional language for consistency and addressing concerns that specific situations have raised.
10. Adding the Endowment Fund/ELCA Foundation to Chapter 17 as a Separately Incorporated Ministry of this church.
11. Other suggestions that may come from this meeting of the Church Council and from the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee.

The work related to the *Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* is very important. As we are now in the three-year cycle between churchwide assemblies, the council should appreciate the importance of this work on the constitutions of each expression of this church. The constitution gives the structural framework for the church to use in doing the work that God has given us. It is essential that our structure support this work.

Church Council Calls

By a previous action of the Church Council, the presiding bishop and the secretary of this church are authorized to sign letters of call to rostered ministers on behalf of the Church Council. The secretary is to annually report to the council who has received a Church Council call during the previous year. In Appendix A of this report you will find a list of all of those who were called during 2017.

The constitution of this church only allows calls to be issued by a congregational meeting, by a synod council or by the Church Council. It is an important part of our polity to recognize who has the authority to issue a call. Chapter 7 of the constitution contains two continuing resolutions which go into detail about the source of call and the types of calls that can be issued to either ministers of Word and Sacrament or ministers of Word and Service.

Changes in the Office of the Secretary

It is with sadness that I report recent restructuring in the Office of the Secretary. With the move to the digital directory and with the need to reduce the budget of the office, I decided to consolidate two positions in this office into one new position. The result is that Marie Fellows, executive administrative assistant, and Thom Ehlen, yearbook editor, saw their positions end on February 8, 2018. It also should

also be noted that 2018 would be the 30th year of service for both coworkers. We have posted the new administrative services coordinator position and are pleased to announce that Justin Clavet will begin serving in this role on April 9, 2018. Other members of the Office of the Secretary staff are doing this work for the time being. We know that some of this work will not be done until the new position is filled.

It is with great joy that I will be able to introduce Aja Favors to you at this meeting as our new associate general counsel. Aja comes to us from the Mission Investment Fund (MIF) and the ELCA Foundation prior to MIF. Aja and Tom Cunniff will be at this meeting.

Transitions always bring new opportunities and letting go of things previously done. We are in that time. It is still my primary goal that the Office of the Secretary is responsive and supportive to the various people and organizations that call on us. It is important to me that we respond in a timely manner to requests from you.

In conclusion, I will again thank the faithful and hard-working staff in this office. The secretary is charged with responsibilities for the constitutions of this church, maintaining the roster records, preserving the minutes and records of this church, event planning, legal services, risk management and the archives of this church. This work requires people with unique skills and a willingness to engage in work that others try to avoid. I am surrounded by very gifted and dedicated people who do this work very well. I specifically want to recognize and thank the members of the OS management team, Mary Beth Nowak, Deacon Sue Rothmeyer and Tom Cunniff. They and their teams are the ones who do the real work of this office. Please thank them as you see them when we are together.

On a personal note, I can say that the first months of 2018 have not been the best for me and my family. Thank you for the many acts of kindness that you shared with DeDe and me at the death of her father. I was with Bishop Eaton in New York, then returned to Washington state just in time for DeDe's father's death. Coming back to Chicago after the funeral to tell two faithful colleagues that their jobs were ending did take a toll on me. I am surrounded by good friends and colleagues in the Conference of Bishops, in the Office of the Secretary and the churchwide organization. I am blessed to be able to do this work with the support of family, colleagues and friends. I thank God, and I thank you for your prayers and your support.

Church Council Calls Issued in 2017

Name	Job Start Date	Job Title	Name of Organization
Melissa L Stoller	1/3/2017	Director for Evangelical Mission	Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA
Justin M Rimbo	2/3/2017	Assistant Director for Enrollment	Lenoir-Rhyne College
Irma B. Banales	2/6/2017	Director for Evangelical Mission	Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, ELCA
Martin J Russell	2/9/2017	Country Director, Tanzania	Global Mission
Paul A Baglyos	3/20/2017	Candidacy & Leadership Manager	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Ruth E Hamilton	3/20/2017	Candidacy Leadership Manager	Region 9, ELCA
Angela L Shannon	3/27/2017	Dean of Student Life	Luther Seminary
Mitzie S Schafer	4/17/2017	Regional Gift Planner	ELCA Foundation
Janelle S Neubauer	4/29/2017	Country Coordinator	Global Mission
Matthew A Short	5/1/2017	Director for Evangelical Mission	Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA
Christopher D Laughlin	5/30/2017	Chaplain	US Army Reserves
Raymond W Pickett Jr	6/1/2017	Rector	Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
Alexis J. D. LaChapelle	6/15/2017	YAGM Country Coordinator	South Africa
Angela K Zimmann	7/1/2017	Vice President of Advancement	United Lutheran Seminary
Brooks Schramm	7/1/2017	Professor of Biblical Studies	United Lutheran Seminary
Charles R Leonard	7/1/2017	Associate Professor of Practical Theology	United Lutheran Seminary
Christine L. Yucha	7/1/2017	Director of Assessment & Planning	Lutheran School of Theology At Chicago
Gilson A C Waldkoenig	7/1/2017	Professor of Church in Society	United Lutheran Seminary
Gordon J Straw	7/1/2017	Associate Professor	Lutheran School of Theology At Chicago
Heidi Rodrick-Schnaath	7/1/2017	Director of Student Services	United Lutheran Seminary
J Paul Rajashekar	7/1/2017	Professor of Systematic Theology	United Lutheran Seminary
John F Hoffmeyer	7/1/2017	Associate Professor of Systematic Theology	United Lutheran Seminary
John R Spangler Jr	7/1/2017	Senior Vice President	United Lutheran Seminary
Kristin Johnston Largen	7/1/2017	Professor of Systematic Theology	United Lutheran Seminary
Maria E Erling	7/1/2017	Professor of Modern Church History	United Lutheran Seminary
Mark G Hoffman	7/1/2017	Professor of Biblical Studies	United Lutheran Seminary
Mark W Oldenburg	7/1/2017	Professor of Worship	United Lutheran Seminary
Martin O Zimmann	7/1/2017	Director of Alumni Relations	United Lutheran Seminary

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Michael E Krentz	7/1/2017	Dean of the Chapel	United Lutheran Seminary
Michelle J Huth	7/1/2017	Director of Lifelong Learning	United Lutheran Seminary
Nathaniel D Preisinger	7/1/2017	Director of Admissions	United Lutheran Seminary
Trina M Johnsten	7/1/2017	Vice President of Student Services	United Lutheran Seminary
Jeffrey S Jacobson	7/5/2017	Chaplain	U S Navy
Sean M Ewbank	7/29/2017	Director for Evangelical Mission	Southeast Michigan Synod, ELCA
Amanda B Nelson	8/1/2017	Executive Director	Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries
Erik C. Christensen	8/1/2017	Pastor to the Community	Lutheran School of Theology At Chicago
John G Largen	8/1/2017	Contextual Formation Director	United Lutheran Seminary
Nelson Rivera Garcia	8/1/2017	Associate Professor of Theology	Moravian Theological Seminary
Rebecca S Ehrlich	8/1/2017	Associate Director of Admissions	United Lutheran Seminary
Danielle K. DeNise	8/7/2017	Director for Evangelical Mission	North Carolina Synod, ELCA
Jennifer L. Baker-Trinity	8/14/2017	Program Director for Resource Development	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Mark H Rich	8/16/2017	Lecturer	Tanzania (Republic of)
Viking E Dietrich	8/16/2017	Regional Representative	Global Mission
Sara V. Bishop	8/27/2017	Pastor	Tallinn Holy Spirit Congregation
Francisco J Goitía Padilla	9/1/2017	Program Director for Lay Schools for Mission	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Krista M Anderson	9/1/2017	Program Director for Support of Rostered Leaders and Candidacy	Region 3, ELCA
Peggy A Paugh Leuzinger	9/5/2017	Director for Evangelical Mission	Montana Synod, ELCA
Adrainne J. Gray	9/17/2017	Communications Coordinator	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
Jaime A Dubon	10/2/2017	Area Desk Director, Latin America & the Caribbean	Global Mission
Henry S Martinez	10/11/2017	YAGM Country Coordinator	Australia
Christina M Mauntel	11/1/2017	Chaplain	U S Navy
Kevin L Jacobson	12/4/2017	Manager for Relationships	Global Mission

Report of the Treasurer

The churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America had total operating revenue and support of \$71.7 million for the twelve-month period ending January 31, 2018. This was \$2.8 million greater than expenses of \$69.0 million. Net operating results were also favorable to the annual budget by \$2.8 million.

Operating revenue totaled \$68.7 million for the twelve-month period compared with \$65.3 million in the previous year. This includes \$2.8 million released from the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust for a one-time capital contribution to the ELCA Foundation. Excluding this nonrecurring and unbudgeted item, operating revenue was \$0.6 million, or 0.9 percent over prior year and \$4.0 million or 6.4 percent over budget. In addition, \$3.1 million in support was released from restriction or designation during the fiscal year 2017, resulting in \$71.7 million in total revenue and support. Total annual expenses related to the current operating fund of \$69.0 million also include the \$2.8 million one-time funding to the ELCA Foundation. Excluding this \$2.8 million, total expenses were \$66.2 million which is \$1.0 million below the authorized unit spending plans. Compared to the prior year, fiscal year 2017 expenses were \$1.3 million lower. The report which details the actual spending by unit versus the authorized spending by unit for the year is attached. The \$2.8 million gross up of revenue and expenses was required to transfer the funds between entities in accordance with the accounting regulations.

Income from congregations through synods in the form of Mission Support income for the twelve months was \$44.4 million. While this represents a 0.8 million decline from the prior year, it is favorable to the budget by \$0.3 million. The Mission Support budget for 2017 of \$44.1 million was \$1.05 million or 2.3 percent lower than the amount received in fiscal 2016.

Other unrestricted and temporarily restricted revenue and support available for the budgeted operations of the churchwide organization amounted to \$21.5 million, compared with \$20.1 million in the previous year. Key components of the change as compared to last year are as follows:

	Incr (Decr) in \$000s
Investment Income	\$2,734
Bequests & Trusts	(1,431)
Rent	(343)
Global Church Sponsorship, including Missionary Sponsorship	176
Other	214
Total Increase	\$1,350

Consistent with the prior year, the Mission Investment Fund provided grant support of \$1.5 million to the churchwide organization.

Total contributions to ELCA World Hunger for the twelve months were \$21.4 million. This was a \$2.6 million shortfall to budget and a \$0.6 million shortfall to the prior year. ELCA members and partners have contributed \$22.9 million for Lutheran Disaster Response in the twelve-month period ended January 31, 2018. Primary areas of support were \$14.7 million to support the ELCA's response to the various hurricanes, over \$0.5 million in support of South Sudan Conflict Relief, along with support for U.S. wildfires and general undesignated programs.

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA has raised \$144 million in revenue and commitments to date through the fourth year of our five-year, comprehensive campaign. This amount represents 72.7 percent of the total campaign goal of \$198 million by January 31, 2019. Campaign to date response continues to be strong in the areas of New Congregations, Fund for Leaders, and Global Church-International Leaders: Women and Missionaries/Young Adults in Global Mission. Global Church was the 2017 ministry emphasis for *The Campaign for the ELCA*.

Report of the Vice President

Psalm 133:1-3

**How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down over the collar of his robes.
It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion.
For there the Lord ordained his blessing,
life forevermore.**

Acts 2:42-47

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

It is good to be with you all again. For my opening comments, I thought that I would use the 2018 “Bread for the Day” reading that gives us a thoughtful reflection during the first week of Easter. Note the theme of unity that is so eloquently expressed in both scripture passages. Amid our hard work today and in the future, let us remember how unity is so integral in our work and important to us as people of God. We all want to see meaningful changes occur in our church and we want to see it now. In our drive to achieve our goals, let’s remember how it feels to be in unity with one another as we work together.

I will highlight my observations from attending the annual meetings of the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America (LECNA) and the Network of the ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU) this past January, the ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force work, the Joint Leadership Tables (Executive Committees of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops, and Churchwide Administrative Team) conference call, and the Conference of Bishops meeting, briefly discuss my upcoming synod assembly schedule as a churchwide representative, and ask for your support as we enter the final phase of the *Always Being Made New: Campaign for the ELCA*, and share some random thoughts about different topics.

Just as we all were welcoming in the 2018 New Year, Pr. Mark Wilhelm, Executive Director, Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU) asked me to attend the annual Board of Directors of NECU and the pan-Lutheran group known as the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America. The meeting was held January 3-4, 2018 in South Florida.

I enjoyed both meetings and heard very insightful panel discussions that included Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) and ELCA college and university presidents. It was interesting to hear the LCMS presidents talk about how much the LCMS church wants to influence their schools while the ELCA presidents felt completely different about the ELCA. The NECU members want to strengthen its connection with the ELCA around its Lutheran origins, ongoing identity and shared mission as part of the ELCA. The NECU Board of Directors endorsed a Lutheran Identity Statement “Rooted and Open” as an

expression of the common calling and shared values of the NECU and commended the document for further study by its members.

The purpose of my visit with NECU was to provide them an ELCA update and how their work can and should link to the Future Directions 2025 Goals and the broader church. It was an eye-opening experience for me to see once again how the ELCA touches the lives of our members and their families and new people who may be affiliated with other faith traditions or none.

Regarding the ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force, the draft policy statement has received comment from a variety of our ecumenical and interfaith partners and is now on the ELCA website for public comment. The Executive Committee of the Church Council will discuss the draft, and it will be introduced to the Church Council at our April 2018 meeting. This task force experience has heightened my awareness when I hear people of other faith traditions express their faith through their conversation and expression of ideas related to day to day living. I want to reiterate what I shared with you last time. I am confident that it will be a document that will be rich in content and provide helpful guidance to our rostered ministers, lay leaders and congregations as we seek God's calling in the interfaith world that we live in. I believe ELCA Lutheran Christians offer a variety of ways that people can engage each other in the workplace and public space around value related issues and topics. Let's make it something that we all will be proud to use in our daily walk as disciples of Christ. The Church Council is to consider this document for recommendation to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

In March, I participated in a conference call of the Joint Executive Leadership Tables that consist of the executive committees of the Conference of Bishops and Church Council, and Administrative Team. This group followed up on its September 2017 face-to-face meeting and reviewed the commitments identified as church priorities around congregational vitality and leadership. Some of that review will be discussed at our meeting.

I also attended the fall Conference of Bishops meeting along with Cynthia Gustavson and Maren Hulden as Church Council guests. The two most significant update conversations were a proposed definition for congregational vitality and a proposed entrance rite for people that are ministers of Word and Service. The Entrance Rite Discernment Group is working on a proposed entrance rite for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service and will send it to the Church Council when they feel it is ready for our review. We will likely review the final proposal at our November 2018 meeting.

During the month of May, I am attending three synod assemblies as a churchwide representative. I am looking forward to learning more about our church context at the Rocky Mountain, Pacifica and Nebraska synod assemblies. All the synod bishops and their staffs have reached out to me and two of the synods will have elections.

As all of you know, we are in the final year of the *Always Being Made New: Campaign for the ELCA*. Some or all of you may have already contributed to the campaign. However, I believe that we should clearly express Church Council support of the campaign as leaders of this church through our participation and contributions as God has blessed us to do so. We will discuss this opportunity during our meeting.

Finally, a few closing thoughts. I believe that Joint Leadership Table collaboration is the way forward to achieve the Future Directions 2025 Goals. I see this everywhere: the Conference of Bishops, synod assemblies, Church Council and the Separately Incorporated Ministries. It takes all our efforts to get our important work done well. The Church Council must ensure ELCA voices are heard and act to move things along in a timely manner. God is calling the ELCA to do God's mission in the world. I believe that we are all committed to getting it done in Christ's name.

God's Work. Our Hands.

Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions

1. Motion B (Authentic Diversity)

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA16.05.25] to refer Motion B to the Church Council.

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

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 of this 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 the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

Work toward becoming a more authentically diverse church is currently being carried out through the Ethnic Specific Ministry Associations and the Ethnic Specific, Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice team. In addition, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton was asked [CC15.11.55] by the Church Council at its November 2015 meeting “to include the current efforts in a broader, comprehensive strategy toward becoming a racially and ethnically diverse church committed to dismantling racism.” It is worth noting that the Called Forward Together in Christ process identified a goal that this church becomes “an inviting, inclusive church that reflects the diversity of our communities and embraces the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.” While the Domestic Mission unit has continued the work, it requests more time for consultations and further reflection before advising the council on a proposed task force and the scope of work prescribed. A full report will be prepared for the April 2017 Church Council meeting.

Church Council action [CC16.11.46hh]

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit and to anticipate a report by the April 2017 Church Council meeting.

Response from the 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 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 [CC17.03.07]

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.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2017)

The Domestic Mission unit and representatives of the ethnic specific ministry associations recommend the following people be appointed to the task force for implementation of Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA:

Region	Name	
6	Bishop Abraham Allende	To serve as co-convener of the task force; Bishop of Northeastern Ohio Synod
6	The Rev. Rani Abdulmasih	Pastor, Mother of the Savior, Dearborn Michigan; Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
1	Mr. Abel Arroyo Traverso	Latino association recommendation; 2017 graduate of LSTC (MDiv)
1	The Rev. Priscilla Austin	Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington; co-author of Motion B
2	Mr. Joseph Castaneda	Latino association recommendation; Southwest California Synod area ministries LGBTQ/advocacy
3	Ms. Cheryl Chatman	To serve as Church Council liaison on task force; Diversity officer, Concordia College Minneapolis

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3	The Rev. Joann Conroy	President, American Indian Alaska Native Association; Chaplain Good Samaritan Center St. Paul, Minn.
7	Ms. Grace El-Yateem	Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage; Salem Arabic Lutheran Church Brooklyn N.Y.
8	The Rev. Maria G. Sijera Grant	President, Asian Pacific Islander Lutheran Association; Pastor, First Lutheran Church
4	Ms. Jennifer Kirby	United Nations Forum on Indigenous Women of the ELCA representative; Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Oaks, Oklahoma
9	Ms. Maribel Lorenzana	Attorney and advocate for rights of immigrants in the U.S.; Latino Ministries Diversity Network
6	Ms. Vickie Murph	Women of the ELCA recommendation; Anti-racism facilitator Women of the ELCA Southern Ohio Synod
8	The Rev. Surekha Nelavala	Asian International Lutheran Conference; Steering Committee; Pastor, Global Peace Lutheran Fellowship Frederick, Maryland
3	The Rev. Larry Thiele	Pastor, Dacotah Oyate Lutheran Church, Sheyenne, North Dakota; American Indian Alaska Native Ministries
7	The Rev. Lamont Wells	President, African Descent Lutheran Association; Director of Evangelical Mission, Metro New York Synod

Scope of work for task force:

- Assess and summarize synod and churchwide work toward becoming an authentically diverse church prior to 2016 Churchwide Assembly;
- Develop working definition of “authentic diversity”;
- Prepare report and recommendations for benchmarks, accountability and support for attaining diversity goals in all expressions of this church in advance of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Recommendations for task force:

- Participate in anti-racism/racial justice training;
- Engage ecumenical partners in consultation/advisory capacity;
- Request European American Association for Racial Justice representative(s) to be available in consultation/advisory capacity;
- Review and take into advisement recommendations and action called for by the 2016 Multicultural Summit and 2018 proposed summit follow up;
- Work in concert with the Office of the Secretary, Domestic Mission unit and Research and Evaluation relative to ongoing resolutions calling for synod reporting of diversity and anti-racism work.

Projection of funds to support implementation of task force:

\$150,000 for travel and contract staff. Projecting two in-person task force meetings per year 2018-2019 and additional travel and conferencing as needed.

Timeline:

Upon approval of the November 2017 recommendations by Church Council, participants will be notified. First in-person convening of task force is projected for late January/early February 2018. First task force report to Church Council is scheduled for Spring 2018.

Church Council Action [CC17.11.27]

To receive the progress report from the Domestic Mission unit regarding the implementation of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA (Motion B);

To appoint Bishop Abraham D. Allende [Northeastern Ohio Synod], the Rev. Rani Abdulmasih, Mr. C. Abel Arroyo Traverso, the Rev. Priscilla N. Paris-Austin, Mr. Joseph Castañeda Carrera, Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman, the Rev. Joan A. Conroy, Ms. Grace Kuttab El-Yateem, the Rev. Maria G. Sijera Grant, the Rev. Moses P.P. Penumaka, Ms. Jennifer Kirby, Ms. Maribel Lorenzana, Ms. Vickie L. Murph, the Rev. Surekha Nelavala, the Rev. Lorenzo (Larry) T. Thiele, Mr. Kevin O. Vandiver and the Rev. Lamont A. Wells to the task force assigned with providing benchmarks, accountability and support for attaining diversity goals in all expressions of this church toward becoming an authentic diverse church; and

To request a progress report be submitted to the Church Council at its April 2018 meeting.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (April 2018)

Bishop Abraham Allende, Northeastern Ohio Synod and the Rev. Albert Staff, Domestic Mission (DM) staff, co-convened the first gathering of the Strategic Task Force Towards Authentic Diversity on March 14-15, 2018 at the Lutheran Center. The purpose of the meeting was to establish working relationships among task force members and provide direction on the scope of work. The task force is comprised of racial and ethnic diversity of persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English, with attention to gender balance, sexual orientation, regional and rostered/laity representation. It was noted that the current task force lacks participation from person(s) with disability. Task force members shared experiences of racial inequity and other barriers hindering our church in achieving racial parity--especially in places where resistance is high. Collectively they expressed resilience and fruitful hope in moving forward. The Rev. Priscilla Austin, author of Motion B, presented the intent and background of the action. Her remarks named existing racial inequities within this church; and the removal of the constitutional goal of achieving representation of 10 percent persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English within the first ten years of the ELCA's formation.

The task force reviewed the scope of their assignment in increasing racial and ethnic diversity within the ELCA. The group acknowledged previous efforts towards multiculturalism and existing denominational resources that are underutilized. Program Director for Racial Justice, Ms. Judith Roberts, presented an overview of all the diversity and racial justice resolutions adopted at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly in addition to Motion B. Work currently underway through the Ethnic Specific, Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice team was also shared. In addition, the task force received a report from the 2016 Multicultural Leadership Summit. The task force will incorporate recommendations from the Multicultural Leadership Summit in their future reporting to the Churchwide Assembly. The task force divided into three working groups: Group 1 focused on a working definition of "authentic diversity"; Group 2 developed a process and timeline for the work; and Group 3 worked with support for the implementation of 2016 Churchwide Assembly actions.

Each task force member will engage synod bishops and councils within their related region to introduce/raise awareness of the task force. Bishop Allende will inform the Conference of Bishops of the task force and its participants so that synod leaders will know to expect to be approached for conversation by task force members seeking to gain insight of synod's past and present work around racial inclusivity, anti-racism and racial justice. A video conference with the task force is scheduled for April 19, 2018. The next in-person task force meeting is set for July 23-24, 2018. The group will adopt a group working definition of "authentic diversity;" suggest a method for assessing diversity initiatives; develop a timeline for reporting to Church Council and pre-2019 Churchwide Assembly work.

CC ACTION [*EN BLOC*]

Recommended:

To receive the progress report from the Domestic Mission unit regarding the implementation of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA (Motion B); and

To request the Domestic Mission unit to provide periodic reports to Church Council on the work of the Strategic Task Force Towards Authentic Diversity leading up to a final report to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

2. Gun Violence Prevention

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.031]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Saint Paul Area and the Upper Susquehanna synods concerning legislation on background checks and gun violence;

To reaffirm this church's commitment to addressing the broad issues of violence in society through worship, education, service, advocacy and ongoing moral deliberation as called for in the 1994 social message on "Community Violence" and the 2013 Conference of Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Violence;

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

To encourage bishops, pastors and Lutheran leaders to communicate with members of Congress and state legislators this church's long-standing support for managing gun purchases, such as background checks for all gun sales including private sales;

To urge bishops, pastors and Lutheran leaders to communicate to members of Congress and state legislators this church's sense of urgency for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban (expired in 2004), including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013; and

To refer to the Church Council, in consultation with staff of the churchwide organization, consideration of the request for establishing an ELCA task force to organize actions consistent with ELCA policy that addresses gun violence prevention.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

The Domestic Mission unit addresses gun violence in a manner consistent with ELCA Social Policy through the education and advocacy work of ELCA Advocacy in the Washington, D.C., office and state advocacy ministries. For example, on July 8, 2016, ELCA Advocacy invited its network to take action through an alert on Gun Violence urging Congress to take action on gun safety. This action was in response to a call from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton to ELCA ministries and members to be present in their communities in the wake of violence.

Presiding Bishop Eaton will be working with the Public Policy Procedures Group (PPPG), which includes ELCA Advocacy staff and other colleagues, to determine the most effective timeline for communicating with members of Congress regarding "this church's sense of urgency for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban, including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013." This letter will also state "this church's long-standing support for managing gun purchases, such as background checks for all gun sales including private sales." Often when such a letter is sent, it is followed up with an ELCA Advocacy alert to its network to encourage others to write their own letters to members of Congress and state legislators.

The hope is that this work can be completed before the end of the 2016-2017 legislative session. This letter may also be timed with the work of state advocacy ministries, such as Faith Action Network, the ELCA advocacy ministry in Washington state, in their work to pass gun safety legislation (Extreme Risk Protection Order and Safe Gun Storage). The churchwide organization does not at this time have financial resources to devote to the work of a national task force "to organize actions consistent with ELCA policy that addresses gun violence prevention."

Church Council Action [CC16.11.46t]

- To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit;
- To decline to establish an ELCA task force addressing gun violence prevention;
- To commend the ongoing efforts of ELCA Advocacy in addressing gun violence in a manner congruent with this church's social teaching documents; and
- To request a follow-up report be provided to the April 2018 Church Council meeting.

Response from Domestic Mission unit (April 2018)

On Thursday, March 16, 2018, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton sent a [letter](#) to all Members of Congress that called for action on the reauthorization of an assault weapons ban and strengthening background checks. On March 22, 2018, ELCA Advocacy sent a follow-up [Action Alert](#) [elca.org/advocacy] with the same requests, timed to coincide with the March for Our Lives on March 24, 2018, a national event supported by ELCA Conference of Bishops in their [Statement in Solidarity with Our Children and Youth](#).

ELCA State Public Policy offices worked on 2018 legislative priorities that focus on managing gun purchases, including:

- Faith Action Network in Washington State supports gun responsibility legislation that includes the Dangerous Access Prevention Act, Enhanced Assault Weapon Background Checks, and action to prohibit sale of bump stocks.
- Virginia Interfaith Center supports legislation that will require background checks for all firearm sales and prohibit straw sales, making it illegal to purchase a firearm on behalf of anyone not lawfully allowed to purchase it themselves. In addition, the Virginia Interfaith Center supports legislation to further limit access to firearms for individuals that are previously convicted of violent crimes.
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania is working on a 2018 priority for legislation that would make it more difficult for defendants in domestic abuse cases to gain access to firearms.
- Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry in New Jersey organized advocacy including phone calls to the governor's office that led to a ban on bump stocks signed by outgoing Gov. Chris Christie on January 15, 2018.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

- To receive the report from the Domestic Mission unit on “Gun Violence Prevention;” and**
- To request that the secretary of this church notify the synods of this action.**

3. Deepening Relationships with Historic Black Churches

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.03.05]

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Southwestern Texas Synod calling for the Deepening of Relationships with the Historic Black Churches;

To refer the memorial to the presiding bishop and appropriate churchwide staff to develop a churchwide strategy for deepening relationships with Historic Black Churches in consultation with the African Descent Lutheran Association, Conference of Bishops, Church Council and ecumenical partners;

To encourage synod leaders to initiate and/or continue local efforts to strengthen and expand partnerships with Historic Black Churches in consultation with synod bishops, synod leaders of the African Descent Lutheran Association and synod members of the Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network; and

To encourage congregations to initiate and/or continue their efforts to strengthen and expand partnerships with Historic Black Churches.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2016)

Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop has carried out follow-up work with AME Zion Church partners following the Churchwide Assembly with the senior bishop, with the episcopal district bishops, and with the general officers who were present in New Orleans. This work has included sharing our gratitude for our partnership and the presence of these leaders, and affirming our desire for next steps. Further relationship-building between our bishops, building upon the 2010 Statement of Mission, will be important work.

Our office has also met with the new President of the AME Council of Bishops, Bishops John White, at his office in Chicago to explore next steps in re-engaging our bilateral partnership. Information about the discourse from the 1990s and early 2000s is being prepared and will be shared with the president, and the new Ecumenical Bishop Frank Reid III. Bishop Eaton has invited both Bishop White and Bishop Reid to participate in a joint AME-ELCA Epiphany service with the Conference of Bishops' Academy in Charleston, in January 2017.

Our office has also confirmed our commitment to participate in the second annual cross-racial dialogue to be hosted by the Conference of National Black Churches in December 2016.

We have continued to deepen our relationships with the Historic Black Churches at several ecumenical tables, especially those where we partner on racial justice and reconciliation namely: Churches Uniting in Christ (recognition of ministries/racial justice), the National Council of Churches USA (mass incarceration), the World Council of Churches (living letters delegation on racism), and Christian Churches Together in the USA (racial justice and poverty).

These various streams of our ELCA strategy are a continuation of ongoing work.

In response to recent racial tensions and protests in Charlotte following the shooting death of Keith Scott, churchwide staff for racial justice and ethnic specific ministries partnered with the North Carolina Synod and its bishop and local ELCA and ecumenical leadership, including the synod's African Descent Strategy Team and AME Zion partners in North Carolina to host a day of conversation, presence in the community, and prayer in early October.

Before the spring 2017 Church Council meeting, Kathryn Lohre will convene a conversation with these colleagues in order to strengthen our work and partnerships:

- Program Director, Racial Justice
- Director, Ethnic Specific & Multicultural Ministries
- President, African Descent Lutheran Association
- Chair, Conference of Bishops' Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Liaison Committee
- Church Council liaison

This initial meeting should include consideration for the history and current state of existing bilateral relations and coalition work. It should focus new energy on strengthening partnerships between ecumenical and inter-religious relations and the African Descent Lutheran Association leadership. It should give attention to identifying or developing resources that might be shared with synod bishops in order to encourage the actions related to synod leaders and congregations.

Church Council Action [CC16.11.46p]

To receive with gratitude the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding the relationship-building already underway to deepen relationships with Historic Black Churches; and

To request a report to the April 2018 Church Council meeting on the development of a strategy to further this goal.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (Spring 2018)

We have continued to engage in a multi-faceted strategy for strengthening relations with the Historic Black Churches. This has included strengthening our bilateral, coalition and conciliar work and witness, as well as partnerships among churchwide colleagues, synods and the African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA). A considerable amount has been accomplished within existing budget and capacity; a more expansive strategy will require further consideration of both.

Highlights for 2017 include:

- *Paving the way for renewed dialogue with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.*
Following up on 2016 meetings, Bishop Eaton received Bishop John White, president of the AME Council of Bishops, as a special guest at the 2017 Bishops' Academy in Charleston, South Carolina. High-level meetings to discuss new possibilities for dialogue and collaboration, ecumenical worship and fellowship on the occasion of Epiphany, and a shared visit to Mother Emanuel for prayer took place. Senior Bishop McKinley Young has since expressed interest in continued dialogue.
- *Strengthening joint reception of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ)-ELCA 2010 Statement of Mission.*
At the national level, we have continued to cultivate our partnership with AMEZ Bishops, including Senior Bishop Battle, as we live into our common commitments expressed in the 2010 Statement of Mission. Bishop Darin Moore spoke powerfully at the ELCA's 500th anniversary of the Reformation event in Washington, DC on truth-telling and racial justice. Further work has continued in the Carolinas with the leadership of Bishop Yoos and Bishop Smith and synod ecumenical committees in partnership with Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, Racial Justice Ministries, and ADLA. Local relationship-building and partnerships are being renewed or established through events and initiatives. These models are being shared through the Conference of Bishops.
- *Continuing presence and participation in strategic coalitions and conferences.*
We have continued to participate in the ecumenical body, Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), especially on the shared commitment to racial justice. At this table, we engage in common work with other Protestant and Historic Black Churches on questions related to the intersection between racism and the reconciliation of ministries. In 2017, the churches of CUIC publicly celebrated their mutual recognition of ministries and held a series of public events focused on racial justice in the Greater Dallas area. In 2017, we also participated for the third year in the Conference of National Black Churches, as part of their cross-racial dialogue. This Conference is the organization of the eight largest Historic Black Churches in the US. The Presiding Bishop spoke, and Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations and Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries were present.
- *Exploring new possibilities for strengthening historic black church relations.*
In 2017, ADLA President Lamont Wells provided leadership in organizing the first-ever joint African Descent Lutheran Association and Union of Black Episcopalians Summit in Cherry Hill, New Jersey on the theme, "Like A Mighty Stream, Let Justice Roll: Absalom, Jehu, and Beyond." The Summit provided an opportunity for these organizations to meet separately and together, and to celebrate the vital history and continued calling of black leadership in the Lutheran and Episcopal churches in the US. It was an exciting opportunity for deepening relationships with one of our full communion partners. The presiding bishop, several synod bishops, and various churchwide ministries staff members were present.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding "Deepening Relationships with Historic Black Churches;"

To commend the work of building and strengthening relations given the existing budget and capacity and to encourage the continued multi-faceted strategy of engagement; and

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

Responses to Synod Resolutions

1. “Find a Congregation” Feature on the ELCA Website

Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2016]

RESOLVED, that [the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly direct] the Synod Council [to] request the Church Council’s Executive Committee to:

- Eliminate access to parochial reports through the “Find a Congregation” feature. Make this information accessible in a research area, as opposed to an area trafficked by likely visitors to a congregation; and

Create a different template for the snapshot profile that would include information essential for a prospective visitor, such as contact information, address, website, worship times, accessibility, language and average weekly worship attendance. This template should also include qualitative data, such as a congregation’s mission statement, self-identified strengths of the congregation and a photo. This information could be gathered through a revised parochial report.

Executive Committee Action [EC16.08.22e]

To receive the resolution from the Lower Susquehanna Synod concerning the “Find a Congregation” feature on the ELCA website;

To refer the resolution to the Mission Advancement unit, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization units, for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention; and

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

Response from Mission Advancement unit (November 2016)

In the coming year, the Strategic Communications team in the Mission Advancement (MA) unit expects to consider the requests identified in this resolution along with other digital media matters. MA will continue to consult with other churchwide organization units and offices. We expect to bring a report to the Church Council at the end of 2017 or early 2018.

Church Council Action [CC16.11.4600]

To receive the response from the Mission Advancement unit and to anticipate a report no later than the April 2018 Church Council meeting; and

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

Response from Mission Advancement (April 2018)

The recent launch of <http://directory.elca.org> includes detailed information about ELCA congregations as well as parochial reports currently found on the “Find a Congregation” feature of ELCA.org.

We are actively working with IT staff at the churchwide office to remove the link to the parochial report (Form A) in the current “Find a Congregation” feature on ELCA.org. This update should satisfy the request made by the Lower Susquehanna Synod and is expected to be completed by the Church Council’s April 2018 meeting.

An audit is being done by Mission Advancement to determine what information we are already collecting from congregations compared to what information we are making available online. Once the audit is complete, we will create next steps to generate more information about congregations through “Find a Congregation” on ELCA.org.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response from the Mission Advancement unit regarding the “Find a Congregation” feature on the ELCA website;

**To commend the Mission Advancement unit for its efforts to revise and update the information about congregations available through “Find a Congregation” on the ELCA website; and
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

**2. The Role of Church in Combating Antimicrobial Resistance
Southeastern Synod [9D] [2017]**

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Council request that the ELCA Church Council work to engage with its ecumenical partners, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, to identify areas of mutual interest and future collaboration on this issue [combating antimicrobial resistance]; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Council request that the ELCA Church Council include information regarding the fight against antimicrobial resistance in existing churchwide efforts to eliminate health disparities (e.g., clean water initiatives, malaria prevention, etc.); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Council request that the synod’s Health Ministry Task Force work through the bishop’s office to engage its partner synods, domestically and internationally, to promote awareness and share ideas concerning best practices to combat antimicrobial resistance.

Executive Committee action [EC17.08.19e]

To receive the resolution from the Southeastern Synod on Combating Antimicrobial Resistance;

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further action; and

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

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2017)

The staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop consulted with colleagues in the Global Mission unit as that unit staff has more expertise on antimicrobial resistance. The churchwide organization does not have specific programs addressing antimicrobial resistance. The program director for global health and the program director for health and sustainable development in Global Mission will look at other support that the churchwide organization provides more broadly for testing and capacity-building. Global Mission will take the lead on this response. Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop will offer consultation as needed with respect to engaging ecumenical partners on the issue. A further response to the Southeastern Synod resolution will be submitted by the April 2018 Church Council meeting.

Church Council Action [CC17.11.33p]

To thank the Southeastern Synod for its resolution regarding “The Role of the Church in Combating Antimicrobial Resistance”;

To receive the report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and to request a further response from the Global Mission unit by the April 2018 Church Council meeting; and

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

Response from Global Mission Unit (April 2018)

The Global Mission (GM) staff strongly agree with the Southeastern Synod that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a threat facing the public health of many today, that it will increasingly be a concern into the future, and that it is the vulnerable populations around the world who are and will continue to be disproportionately affected. Through the methodology of accompaniment, AMR is a topic of conversation that already arises with our companions and partners who work in health care at all levels (i.e. community to hospital); GM can continue to explore possibilities to be more intentional in bringing this to the agenda where appropriate, encouraging companions and ecumenical partners to work with their own health systems, institutions, and patients and communities toward following the best practice recommendations by the World Health Organization. In work currently supported by GM, community-based primary healthcare programs frequently include promotion of infection prevention measures including sanitation and food safety. Health education programs and continuing education programs for doctors and other care providers often include educational components on the importance of avoiding over-prescription, the need

for testing prior to prescribing medication, finishing the full course of treatment, and not sharing among family members or selling prescriptions. Support for health systems strengthening in some areas includes reinforcing quality assurance and accountability mechanisms to ensure procedures are in place at the health facility/institutional level. Many ELCA companions engage in advocacy at local and national governmental levels to gain appropriate access to the tools needed to help prevent antimicrobial resistance (even though it may not be articulated specifically in those terms). Finally, the topic of AMR is also embedded within many programs focused on malaria and on HIV and AIDS.

Within the activities of the ELCA churchwide organization, we will explore opportunities to include the topic of antibiotic resistance in future publications and/or conversations around the health care work of ELCA World Hunger-supported projects as part of the context around eliminating health disparities. During the World Antibiotic Awareness Week in November, we will consider possibilities for engaging via social media (ELCA World Hunger Social Media account and/or Blog) around the reasons for concern about antibiotic resistance.

Global Mission Staff will work with the ELCA Advocacy offices in Washington D.C. and New York to identify if there are advocacy possibilities around or connected to this topic. The Lutheran Office for World Community at UN Headquarters provided information on a UN General Assembly resolution adopted in 2016 to share with the Southeastern Synod that may be useful for future work and/or conversations around this topic. The Lutheran Office for World Community also mentioned this resolution in one of their monthly advocacy reports through the Washington Office. Global Mission Staff will also consider opportunities to pursue the topic of AMR within the context of care for creation and climate justice through broader ecumenical coalitions.

CC ACTION *[EN BLOC]*

Recommended:

To receive the report from the Global Mission unit on “The role of the church in combating antimicrobial resistance;”

To commend the efforts of the Global Mission unit to engage our companions and partners on the topic of antimicrobial resistance and explore the best practices to combat it;

To encourage the churchwide organization to promote awareness around the reasons for concern about antibiotic resistance;

To encourage the Global Mission and the Domestic Mission units to identify advocacy possibilities connected to this topic; and

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

Immigration Social Message Edits

Background

ELCA social teaching documents necessarily are written in a particular social context and time period. As the years pass, some of the specific references and information in them, especially in ELCA social messages which are more practically oriented, naturally become dated to the point of being incorrect.

Quite often readers simply recognize the datedness of information and adapt their reading accordingly as they seek the biblical themes, theological features, moral values and Christian commitments in ELCA teaching. On occasion, however, references and information can become dated to the point of significant inadequacy and misdirection for those seeking to be guided by these documents.

In the judgment of leaders with responsibility for immigration work within the ELCA, this has become the case for the social message on Immigration (1998) after the adoption of the ELCA's strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO) at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. While AMMPARO is grounded in the biblical and theological themes, values and overall commitments of the social message on Immigration, the information provided in 1997 that direct members to action is now quite incomplete or misdirected. Since the social message is frequently used or sought out in support of ELCA immigration work, the problem is acute.

The Church Council is being asked to remedy this problem by adopting necessary editorial updates to the Immigration social message that are reflected in AMMPARO. Editorial updates so adopted by the council will be reflected in the message on the ELCA website immediately and be used when a second printing of the social message is called for.

A Message on . . .

IMMIGRATION

With this message, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, upon recommendation of the Division for Church in Society, offers to congregations "a resource for deliberation on attitudes regarding immigrants and a resource to interpret and apply ELCA policy related to immigration," as called for by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly (CA97.6.39).

We recognize and rejoice that our church along with our country continues to change with the steady arrival of newcomers in the United States. Persons who have recently come from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and other areas of the world are enriching congregations throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). We celebrate the liturgy in 33 languages; we worship and sing in Spanish with our new *Libro de Liturgia y Cántico*. Newcomers are increasingly assuming leadership roles in our congregations, synods, affiliated educational and social ministry agencies, and churchwide ministries. ~~We are~~ We are beginning new congregations in immigrant communities. We thank God for these developments, and we remember Paul's admonition: "Welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you, to the glory of ~~God~~" (God) (Romans 15:7).

We also recognize the obstacles and difficulties our church and society face in welcoming newcomers. Too often we are slow in, tire of, or even resist fostering a hospitable environment for newcomers. Too often we perpetuate the racism, the fear of, and the animosity toward newcomers that show themselves in our society. Our country's history exhibits an ugly strain of exclusionary attitudes and policies toward newcomers who differ from the majority. In times ~~of economic~~ of economic downturns especially—as ~~happened in~~ happened in ~~the early~~ the early 1990s—this strain becomes more pervasive and leads to laws that unduly restrict immigration and threaten the well-being ~~of newcomers~~ of newcomers.

The presence of newcomers in our church and society heightens our awareness of these realities and of the experience of new immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the United States. This awareness makes us more appreciative ~~of the~~ of the gifts our new neighbors bring and ~~of the~~ of the barriers as well as the opportunities they encounter. It deepens our belief that "all people are God's creatures, sinners for whom Christ died" and our responsibility to respect the human dignity of all.¹ This is a fitting time ~~for us~~ for us ~~to~~ to ~~examine~~ examine anew our attitudes toward newcomers, to strengthen our church's ministry among, with, and for the most vulnerable of newcomers, and to continue to advocate for immigration, refugee, and asylum laws that are fair and generous.

Drawing on our Experience

How do we who are residents learn to welcome newcomers more graciously? As members of a church with immigrants and with roots in immigrant churches in a nation of immigrants, we are familiar with old ~~and new~~ and new stories about newcomers. ~~We have~~ We have heard how persons left their ~~homes for~~ homes for economic or political reasons, journeyed into an uncertain future, and struggled in a strange land to begin a new life. There are stories of hardship, tragedy, courage, resourcefulness, and blessing. There are stories of hostile receptions and welcoming embraces, of tensions between immigrants ~~and their~~ and their children over how to live in a new culture, and of conflicts over what language to use in home and church.

What are the stories of immigration in your congregation? What is different and what is similar in the stories of people whose families had come from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, or the Middle East? What is different and what is similar in the stories that come from a century ago and a decade ago? How do these stories help you to enter into the experiences of current newcomers?

Recalling these stories may help those of us whose families have ~~been in~~ been in this country for a generation or more to empathize with today's newcomers. When a young immigrant woman is exploited by her employer, are we outraged? We would have been if that woman were our own mother or grandmother shortly after her arrival. When a beautiful array of people from around the world become citizens, do we rejoice? We would have when our own family ~~became citizens~~ became citizens.

When leaders in our society promote negative stereotypes of newcomers or make them a "scapegoat" for social or economic ills in times ~~of anxiety~~ of anxiety, are we appalled? ~~We would~~ We would have been ~~to hear~~ to hear our own ethnic groups degraded when they first arrived. When we learn how our society is being strengthened and renewed by the contributions of newcomers, are we grateful? Earlier generations were grateful for the contributions of those who entered this country through Angel and Ellis Islands or Miami. Recalling that our families were once the "stranger"—and remembering our Lord's call to love our neighbor as ourselves—can ~~expand our~~ expand our moral imagination, enable us to see the new "stranger" as our ~~neighbor, and~~ neighbor, and open us to welcome today's newcomers.

Our church also has a history of hospitality for refugees. Following World War II, when one out of every six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or displaced person, Lutherans, with the participation of 6,000 congregations, resettled some 57,000 refugees in the United States.² In the decade after the fall

~~of Saigon~~of Saigon in 1975, Lutheran congregations sponsored over 50,000 refugees

from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. During the 1980s various congregations provided sanctuary for persons whose lives were endangered by wars in Central America.³ In exercising hospitality to the stranger, many testified that ~~they received~~ ~~they received~~ ~~more than~~ ~~more than~~

Was your congregation involved in these resettlement efforts? Have you offered hospitality to other refugees or immigrants? If so, what was its significance for the newcomers? For the congregation?

they gave—as if they had welcomed angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:2). Their experience invites us to be gracious hosts as well as ~~as~~ ~~humble~~ ~~as~~ ~~humble~~ guests, that is, learners from the newcomers among us.

The leaders and congregations that have given us this legacy remind us that hospitality for the uprooted is a way to live out the biblical call to love the neighbor in response to God's love in Jesus Christ. They recall for us ~~God's~~ ~~God's~~ ~~God's~~ command to Israel: "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:34).⁴ They direct us to where Jesus said he is present: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25: 35). They call on Martin Luther to ask us: "How do we know that the love of God dwells in us? If we take upon ourselves the need of the neighbor."⁵ Our desire is to carry on their faith and practice, their exemplary way of faith being active in love. "We pledge to continue our church's historic leadership in caring for refugees and immigrants."⁶

Strengthening Our Ministry with the Most Vulnerable

We in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America minister with the most vulnerable of the newcomers through congregations, ~~the ELCA's~~ ~~AMMPARO~~ ~~strategy~~ and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). Where possible, we work ecumenically. Our ministry ~~accompanies migrant children and families in the U.S. and abroad,~~ resettles refugees, advocates on behalf of detained asylum seekers, ~~assists unaccompanied children,~~ offers pastoral and legal counsel to persons without legal status, aides persons with ~~the~~

Discuss the biblical call to care for the sojourner using ~~the AMMPARO~~ ~~strategy document as well as~~ "Who Is My Neighbor? A Statement of Concern and Commitment," produced by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. The statement draws on Scripture to address ~~anti-immigrant attitudes.~~

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citizenship process, and helps newcomers learn to live in a new country. This ministry requires compassion and competence, is time-consuming, ~~sometimes heart-breaking, and breaking~~ sometimes heart-breaking, and breaking, frequently and ~~unrecognized~~ frequently unrecognized. Opportunities

Are there refugees or detained asylum seekers in your area? If so, consider exploring ways your congregation might express your love for these neighbors by becoming a Welcoming Congregation.

abound for members, congregations, pastors, bishops, and all the expressions of our church to support, strengthen, and expand this ministry.

Refugees are persons who have been forced to leave their country

“because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution.” Through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, in partnership with the federal government, Lutherans help to resettle more than 10,000 refugees yearly (75,000 are allowed to enter the United States, 1998). Because congregations working with the LIRS network enrich refugees’ resettlement experiences, we encourage efforts that call upon and train members to assist refugees.

Persons fleeing dangerous situations in their countries arrive daily in the United States. These asylum seekers lack legal status for entering the country. To receive an opportunity to seek a grant of asylum (a legal protective status), they must prove a “credible fear of persecution.” Because of the difficulty in proving this fear, many asylum seekers are detained while their case is being processed. Thousands of persons, including children and women, are in detention, most of whom are indigent; they are often isolated from pastoral and legal services and subject to abuse and neglect. The ELCA through its AMMPARO and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service joins with other organizations to advocate on behalf of detained persons. In areas where there are detention centers, congregations are encouraged to work with these organizations to provide services for the detained and to seek alternatives to detention (for example, group homes).

Unaccompanied minors also enter the United States, either as refugees or without legal status. These children may be orphans, separated from their parents by war or disaster, abandoned, or even smuggled into the country.

“What can we do in our congregation?” A first step is to become acquainted with the immigrant situation in your area. Then ask what Lutheran or ecumenical ministries are present. You may contact your synod office for more information. To see if there is a church-related organization in your area, check the ELCA AMMPARO webpages or contact staff and contact Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Whatever their status, they should be seen first and foremost as children and youth in need of protection and care. The AMMPARO and LIRS network provides foster care and related child welfare services, facilitates family reunification, and advocates on national and international policy issues affecting unaccompanied children.

Newcomers without legal documents also are among the most

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vulnerable. Congregations are called ~~to~~
~~welcometo~~ —allwelcome—peopleall ;
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their legal status.⁷ Persons who once were or now are without documents are members of our congregations, and we want them to feel and ~~know that know in that—thein the~~ Church they are part of a safe and caring community. We encourage bishops and synods to show their support for congregations composed of or working with immigrants—who may or may not have documents.

Some congregations provide congregationally-based immigration services. They offer legal and para-legal advice and assistance to newcomers; even when the legal options are limited, their counsel keeps vulnerable people from becoming the victims of unscrupulous exploiters. These congregations offer English language courses and instruction on how to become a citizen. They help immigrants with housing, jobs, and health care. They accompany families with pastoral care and invite them into a worshiping community. They may look to other congregations for pro bono lawyers, teachers of English as a second language, nurses and doctors, and to secure other needed services. Lutheran child care centers and schools increasingly are serving newcomers.

Those who minister with vulnerable newcomers should not be isolated or disconnected from one another. In order to support and strengthen our church's ministry with immigrants, we encourage churchwide units to continue to work with congregations, synods, and Lutheran ~~Immigration and Immigration Refugee and Service~~ Refugee Service to

provide opportunities for these pastors and lay leaders to learn from and ~~support onesupport one~~ another.⁸

Newcomers in our church, pastors and congregations ministering with immigrants, and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service also are educators in our church and advocates for those who cannot speak for themselves. Out of their daily experience, they can teach the rest of us about the gifts newcomers bring to our church and country, the ~~often harshoften-harsh~~ consequences of ~~recentof recent~~ (1996) immigration and welfare laws on family ~~life,—orlife, or~~ the way immigrants who lack legal status are taken advantage of in working situations. They keep before us—so that we do not forget—the grim realities many immigrants face and the strength of character and resourcefulness newcomers demonstrate. They inform ~~us—ofus,—conditionsof~~ in conditions—otherin—countriesother countries and what the role of ~~theof the~~ United States has been. They provide our ~~church—withchurch with~~ experience

Pastors and congregations beginning to minister with newcomers in their communities and wanting a basic knowledge of immigration laws and terms can contact ELCA AMMPARO staff and Lutheran Immi-gration and Refugee Service.

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and knowledge to take part in public deliberation on ~~immigration,~~
~~refugeeimmigration,~~ ~~andrefugee,~~ ~~asylum~~ and ~~asylum~~ policies.

Advocating for Fair and Generous Laws

Our advocacy needs to be accompanied by continuing study. A comprehensive resource for pastors, seminary students, teachers, and other leaders in the church is Dana W. Wilbanks, Re-creating America: The Ethics of U.S. Immigration and Refugee Policy in a Christian Perspective (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

Immigration, refugee, and asylum policies express who we are ~~as~~ ~~as a~~ nation, influence the nation's future character, and affect the lives of millions of people. We encourage our members, in light of our history and our ministry with newcomers, to join with other citizens in our democratic society to support just laws that serve the common good. Our advocacy ~~needs to~~ ~~needs~~ ~~to~~ ~~take~~ ~~into~~ ~~account~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~account~~ ~~the~~

Commented [RW1]: It is recommended that this insert be removed; the changes of the past 20 years mean this book can no longer be recommended as "A comprehensive resource..."

complexity of issues, the diversity of interests, and ~~the~~ ~~partial~~ ~~the~~ ~~or~~ ~~partial~~ ~~relative~~ ~~or~~ ~~relative~~ justice of laws at the same time that it counters appeals rooted in hostility, racism, prejudice, indifference, and simplistic solutions. ~~We draw~~ ~~We~~ ~~draw~~ on the best of our nation's traditions as a refuge and haven for the persecuted and destitute when we affirm that "we support a generous policy of welcome for ~~refugees and~~ ~~refugees and~~ immigrants," and that we "will advocate for just immigration policies, including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees. We will work for policies that cause neither undue repercussions within ~~immigrant~~ ~~communities~~ ~~immigrant~~ ~~or~~ ~~communities~~ ~~bias~~ ~~or~~ ~~against~~ ~~bias~~ against them."⁹

The following objectives, set forth in a 1969 statement of the Lutheran Council in the United States of America, have been important for Lutheran church bodies and organizations for nearly forty years and have given content ~~to~~ ~~our~~ ~~to~~ ~~our~~ ~~understanding~~ ~~of~~ ~~understanding~~ ~~—~~ ~~fair~~ ~~of~~ ~~fair~~ and ~~generous~~ ~~immigration~~ ~~generous~~ ~~laws~~ ~~immigration~~ ~~laws~~:

1. To admit to our permanent population a steady proportion of newcomers:
 - a. ~~by~~ ~~facilitating~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~facilitating~~ ~~reunification~~ ~~the~~ ~~of~~ ~~reunification~~ of families;
 - b. by facilitating the entry of persons possessing special skills or other capacities needed by the American economy and culture;
 - c. by assuming the United States' proper share of international responsibility for the resettlement of refugees and other persons urgently in need of the compassionate haven of a new home land;
 - d. by admitting persons who choose the United States as their ~~new homeland and who impart to their American neighbors an~~

understanding of the culture, attitude, and interests of other races
and peoples ~~of the~~ of the world.

|

2. To admit annually a reasonable number of the persons described above on an objective basis of selection which, while discriminating, will not be discriminatory with respect to race, national origin, color, or religion, testifying thereby to the United States' recognition of the interlocking and mutual interests of all nations with regard to the migration of peoples, the interaction of cultures, and ~~respect of respect universal of human universal human~~ rights.

3. To provide reasonable access to nationality and citizenship for all immigrants admitted for permanent residence.¹⁰

With this understanding Lutheran advocacy supported the landmark 1965 immigration law that ended the four-decade-old quota system of admitting immigrants on the basis of ~~their of their~~ national origin and race. In place of that earlier policy that favored European nations, Lutheran advocacy supports the concept of one variable cap for immigrants ~~that in that principle in~~ ~~gives principle gives~~ residents of ~~all of all~~ nations equal opportunity to immigrate. (In 1998 ~~that cap that cap~~ is set at approximately 900,000 people.) Our advocacy will continue ~~to insist to insist~~ that family reunification should be the primary objective of immigration laws. It will oppose efforts to reduce the percentage of people admitted for family reunification reasons as well as costly financial requirements that prohibit immigrants with limited resources from being reunited with family members. It also will oppose policies and practices that actively recruit workers from developing countries to their detriment and to our country's benefit.

Among the many issues related to immigration policy, we highlight the following areas of concern where we think our country's laws can and should be improved:

Facilitating citizenship

We welcome the desire of immigrants to become citizens. We advocate for Congress to provide the necessary resources and direction for the ~~Immigration and Naturalization Service U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) INS~~ to ensure a reasonable, effective, and short process for citizenship. We call on the Immigration and Naturalization Service to address the backlog of applications and the lengthy wait and unnecessary administrative hassles many

For help in your advocacy, ask to be placed on the mailing lists of the [ELCA Advocacy Network](#), LIRS's "Action Alert" (See note 1), the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs "Legislative Update" (202/783-7507), and your state's public policy office. Contact your synod office for phone numbers. Ask the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service about its "Ambassador Circle."

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immigrants endure. ~~We support~~
~~support~~
the ~~Immigration and Naturalization Service~~USCIS in its efforts to develop a
~~climate of climate service of service~~ for its clientele.

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Commented [AV12]: INS is no longer a relevant agency. We should change it to USCIS

Benefits for lawful permanent residents

Although Congress has restored some benefits for legal immigrants who arrived before 1996, more should be done. The denial of benefits to permanent residents favors wealthier immigrants and creates unwarranted barriers for poorer ones. Most permanent residents ~~are~~ are an integral ~~part of~~ part of ~~our society~~ who abide by the law, pay Social Security and taxes, and contribute to the economic and cultural life of their communities. In order to help assure their well-being, especially of their children, we support legislation that gives them access to the same benefits citizens receive.

Newcomers without ~~legal status~~ legal status

While most newcomers are legal permanent residents or naturalized citizens, a significant number of people, including many agricultural workers, lack legal documents. Many undocumented persons have been here for years. They live under the fear of deportation. Those who become eligible to adjust their status are only allowed to do so by leaving the United States and then waiting years to re-enter. They often fear returning to a troubled land, and if they were to return, it would mean for many indefinite separation from their families in the United States. The existence of a permanent sub-group of people who live without recourse to effective legal protection opens the door for their massive abuse and exploitation and harms the common good. ~~We urge~~ We urge leaders and citizens to seek feasible responses to this situation that offer flexible and humane ways for undocumented persons who have been in this country for a specified amount of time to be able to adjust their legal status.

Refugee policy

Although there are tens of millions of ~~refugees~~ throughout ~~throughout the world~~ refugees ~~the world~~, the number admitted into the United States has been decreasing. We believe that our country has a responsibility to increase the number of refugees it admits. We also are concerned that race not be a prejudicial factor in decisions about resettlement, and we urge our government to do more to provide African refugees a fair opportunity to be resettled in our country. ~~We also~~ We also support fair and compassionate legislative solutions to the precarious plight of refugees ~~whose present~~ whose ~~temporary~~ present ~~legal status~~ legal ~~is~~ status is threatened.

Asylum

We advocate for a reliable, consistent, and sensitive implementation ~~of~~ the ~~of the~~ law governing asylum seekers. At ~~present~~ INS ~~INS~~ districts ~~treat similar~~ treat ~~cases~~ similar cases in vastly different ways. We oppose practices that create unreasonable obstacles and unattainable standards of proof for those seeking asylum. We support efforts to ensure that due process is followed and that the conditions of detention are humane. ~~We call~~ We call upon the

Immigration and Naturalization

Service to recognize the particular vulnerabilities of children by developing child-appropriate standards and procedures. We encourage that agency vigorously to use the channels of communication it has developed with refugee organizations to improve processes and conditions for asylum seekers.

~~Border-with~~Border with Mexico

We recognize the right of ~~all-countries~~all countries ~~to-control~~to control their borders and their duty to protect their citizens from the illegal entry of drugs and criminals. But we have serious doubts about the rightness and effectiveness of current policy to erect imposing barriers between the United States and Mexico. We support the search for alternatives to this policy that would more appropriately reflect the relationship of two friendly nations whose peoples and ~~economies-are~~economies are increasingly interdependent. Whatever the policy, border enforcement should always respect the human dignity of persons attempting to cross the border.

The newcomers in our church from around the world remind us that all of us in the Church of Jesus Christ are sojourners, “for here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13: 14). As we journey together through the time God has given us, may God give us the grace of a welcoming heart and an overflowing love for the new neighbors among us.

This message was approved by the Board of the Division for Church in Society and was adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on November 16, 1998. [The Church Council adopted informational updates related to the ELCA’s AMMPARO strategy in April 2018.](#)

Definitions

Asylum seekers

Persons who have fled their country because of personal danger, who arrive in the United States without legal protection, and who must prove a “credible fear of persecution” to receive an opportunity to seek legal protective ~~status~~ ~~or status~~ or asylum.

Immigrants

In immigration ~~law,~~ ~~and law,~~ and as generally used in the message, immigrants are lawful permanent residents or naturalized citizens who have come from another country and legally live in the United States. In common usage, immigrants may refer to all newcomers who now live in this country.

~~Lawful Permanent~~ Lawful Permanent Residents

Non-citizens who have received ~~authorization~~ ~~to authorization~~ live to permanently live permanently in the United States. They receive a “green card” to prove their status.

~~Newcomers without~~ Newcomers without legal documents

Persons who have entered the United States without a valid visa or ~~who have~~ ~~who~~ remained have remained in ~~the country~~ the country after their temporary visa has expired. The message also may refer to this group of people as “persons without legal ~~status~~” ~~or status~~” or “undocumented persons.”

Refugees

Persons who have “a well-founded fear of being persecuted for ~~reasons~~ ~~of reasons~~ of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” This definition from the United Nations’ 1951 “Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees” was adopted by the United States in the Refugee Act ~~of 1980~~ of 1980.

Notes

1. “For Peace in God’s World” (ELCA social statement, 1995), p. 13. This social statement, as well as “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture” (ELCA social statement, 1993), provide theological, global, and domestic context for this message. The proposed social statement on economic life to be considered at the 1999 ELCA Churchwide Assembly also will likely refer to the global ~~economic~~ ~~and economic~~ political and realities political realities that are causing the worldwide movement of peoples. “For Peace in God’s World” calls upon us to “foster a dynamic vision of difference in unity” and to “promote respect for human rights,” pp. 13-14.

2. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) is a national agency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in ~~America, The~~America, ~~Lutheran~~The ChurchLutheran Church—Missouri SynodMissouri Synod, and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to carry out ministry with uprooted people. LIRS traces its history back to 1939 and to this major resettlement effort following World War II. References to LIRS in this message include its 27 affiliates and other organizations in its network. ~~Lutheran social~~Lutheran ministriessocial organizationsministry organizations are integral affiliates in this network. LIRS's address is ~~390 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016-8803. Its phone number is 212/532-6350; its fax, 212/683-1329. xx. provide current address and contact info~~ and its e-mail, lirs@lirs.org. Its Web page is found at www.lirs.org. ~~In September 1999 LIRS will move its headquarters to Baltimore, Maryland.~~

3. For a history of Lutheran resettlement work until 1991, see Richard W. Solberg, *Open Doors: The Story of Lutherans Resettling Refugees* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992). At a time when some Lutheran groups and congregations declared their church buildings to be sanctuaries for persons who lacked legal status, The American Lutheran Church offered guidance on sanctuary ~~in the~~ social statement, "Human Law and the Conscience of Believers" (1984), pp. 15-19. ~~The~~ 1989 ELCA Churchwide Assembly resolved to ~~"express support to~~ congregations that are offering various forms of aid to refugees fleeing from Central America" (CA89.4.21).

43. The text uses the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translation except that it substitutes the Revised Standard Version translation "stranger" for the ~~NRSV~~ "NRSV "alien."

54. ~~Solberg, p.~~Solberg, p. 45.

65. "For Peace in God's World," p. 21. This social statement also addresses our responsibility for refugees in other parts of the world and calls upon us to address the conditions that lead to people being uprooted from their homes.

76. "This church acknowledges its responsibility of ministering to and advocating the human rights of undocumented aliens now in Canada and the United States." From "Implementing Resolutions for Human Rights Social Statement" (Lutheran ChurchLutheran Church ~~in~~ Americain America, 1978).

87. These churchwide units include the Division for Outreach, the Commission for Multicultural Ministries, the Division for Church in Society, the Division for ~~Congregational~~ Congregational, ~~and~~ Ministries, ~~the~~ and ~~Division~~ the ~~for~~ Division ~~Higher~~ for ~~Education~~ Higher ~~and~~ Education and Schools.

98. The first affirmation comes from "For Peace in God's World," pp. 20-21, and the second from "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture," p. 7. We who welcome newcomers also have responsibility to help them understand our diverse society and ~~shun~~ our ~~society's~~ sour ~~prejudices~~ society's ~~and~~ prejudices and racism.

109. "A Statement on Immigration Policies: Moral Issues and National Interest" (Lutheran Council in the United States of America, 1969), ~~pp.~~ pp. 4-5. ~~A slightly~~ A ~~different~~ slightly different version was first adopted by the National Lutheran Council in 1960. See ~~Solberg, p.~~Solberg, p. 76.

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EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



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Theological Education Advisory Committee (TEAC) Report

ELCA Church Council
April 2018

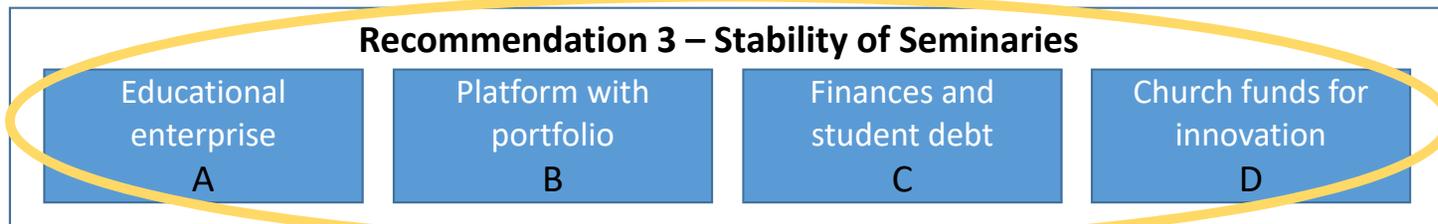
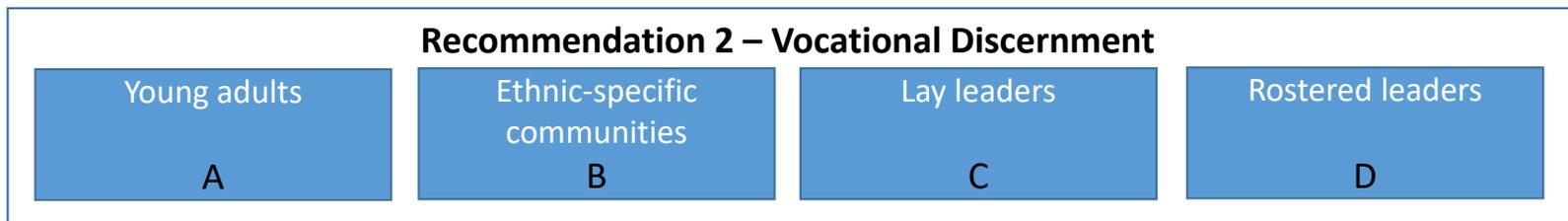
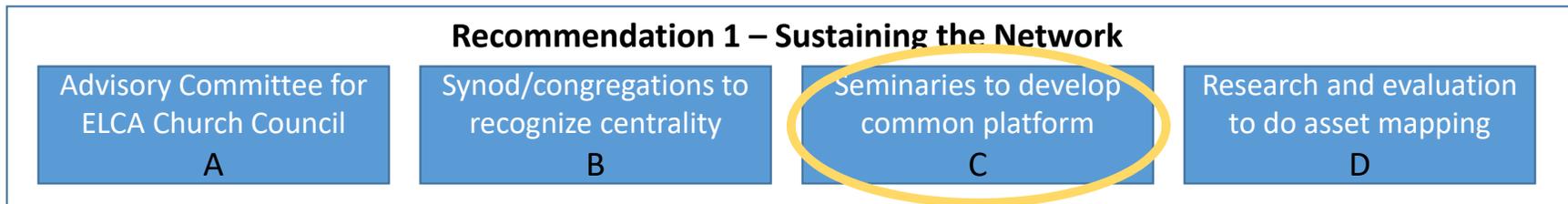
Reported by
John Lohrmann, TEAC Chair



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God's work. Our hands.

TEAC 1 Report

It's about all forms of theological education...



...and not only our seminaries



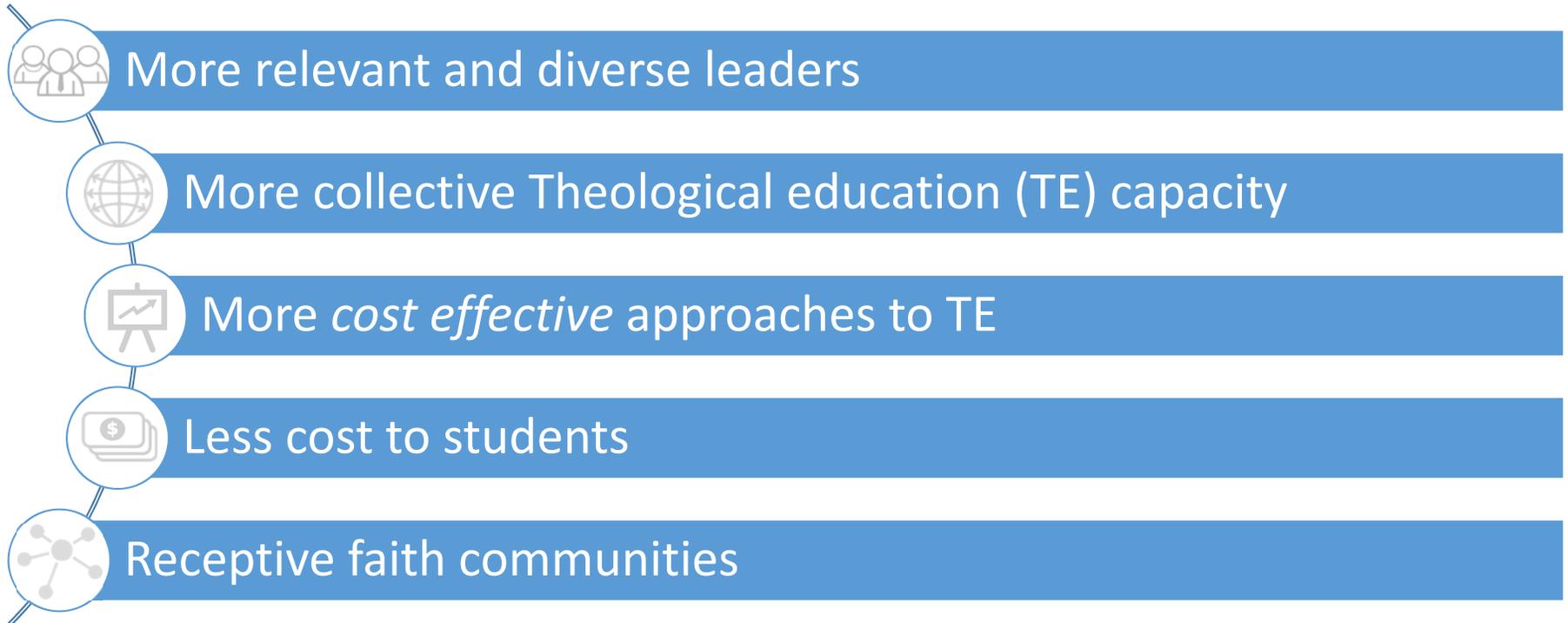
Church Council Directive

“To direct the Theological Education Advisory Committee to define a single-seminary governance structure; and to adopt enterprise-wide seminary fiscal metrics and to request that a report on the results be brought to the April 2018 meeting of the Church Council.”

November 2017



Required Outcomes



Evolution of Recommended Model

	Limited Central System (Model B)	Model B Governance Enhancements from Matrix Model Components	Evolved Philosophy to Collaborative Alliance
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate, centralized fiscal governing authority Delegated execution authority to subsidiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized and delegated (by Church Council and local boards) oversight for cost effective “Common Theological Education Enterprise” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership among seminaries (led by Luther, LSTC, and Wartburg) to address the most challenging leadership issues while stewarding church resources
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board fiduciary and mission authority Subsidiary Boards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donor relations Operating decisions Accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized, coordinative body (with delegated Church Council authority) directs the funding for common mission-based initiatives through a networked approach Local governing authority for institution-based decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exists within current policy and bylaws
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Churchwide funding directed by Church Council via permanent advisory board (i.e., TEAC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base budget funding from churchwide and synods authorized by the coordinative body under and incentive-based model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catalytic funding for experimentation will be sought from granting foundations and other interested supporters

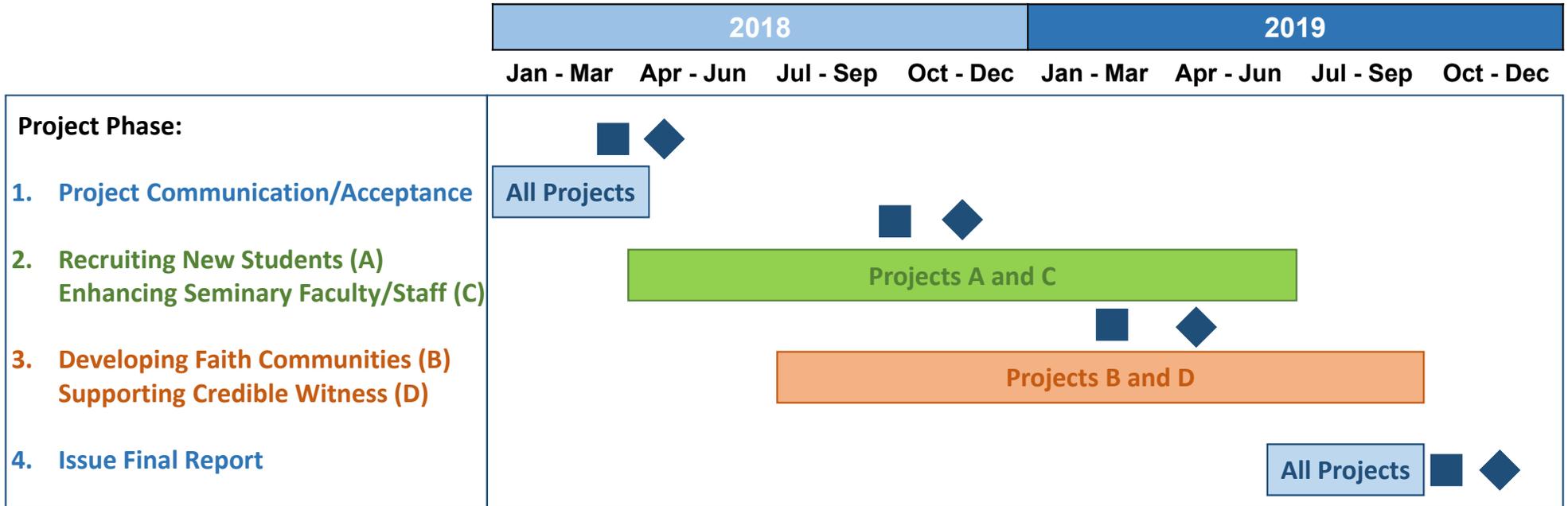


Recommended Model: *Collaborative Alliance*

Governance Structure	Focus	Funding	Additional Governance Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Network for experimentation• Church Council delegates authority to TEAC for accountability (in partnership for support and evaluation)• TEAC charge will be to evaluate enterprise-wide metrics to identify progress related to stabilizing and shifting resources, and sustaining seminaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaboration/joint experimentation in four areas:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruiting new students (<i>Project A</i>)• Developing faith communities (<i>Project B</i>)• Enhancing seminary staff/faculty (<i>Project C</i>)• Supporting credible witness (<i>Project D</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial funding needed for a consultant project director• Additional investments (e.g., travel, system enhancements, etc.) to be identified and evaluated• No initial changes to synod or churchwide funding levels; anticipate formula evolving over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seminary manual may be critical to ensure:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parameters for shared faculty• Capital investment ownership• Avoidance of accreditation and antitrust issues



Collaborative Alliance Project Timeline - Overview



Reporting Milestones:

- Conference of Bishops
- ◆ Church Council Meeting



TEAC Next Steps

Future Considerations

- Should the long-term goal of the Collaborative Alliance be to evolve into a ***“Cluster of One”***?
- How do we ***bring to bear resources*** of the church beyond the seminaries?
- What additional changes are needed for the funding models to fully ***support experimentation***?
- What ***policy and/or seminary manual updates*** are needed for this evolving model?



Theological Education Advisory Committee (TEAC) Report: *Enterprise Metrics*

ELCA Church Council

April 2018

Reported by

Christine Smith, Baker Tilly

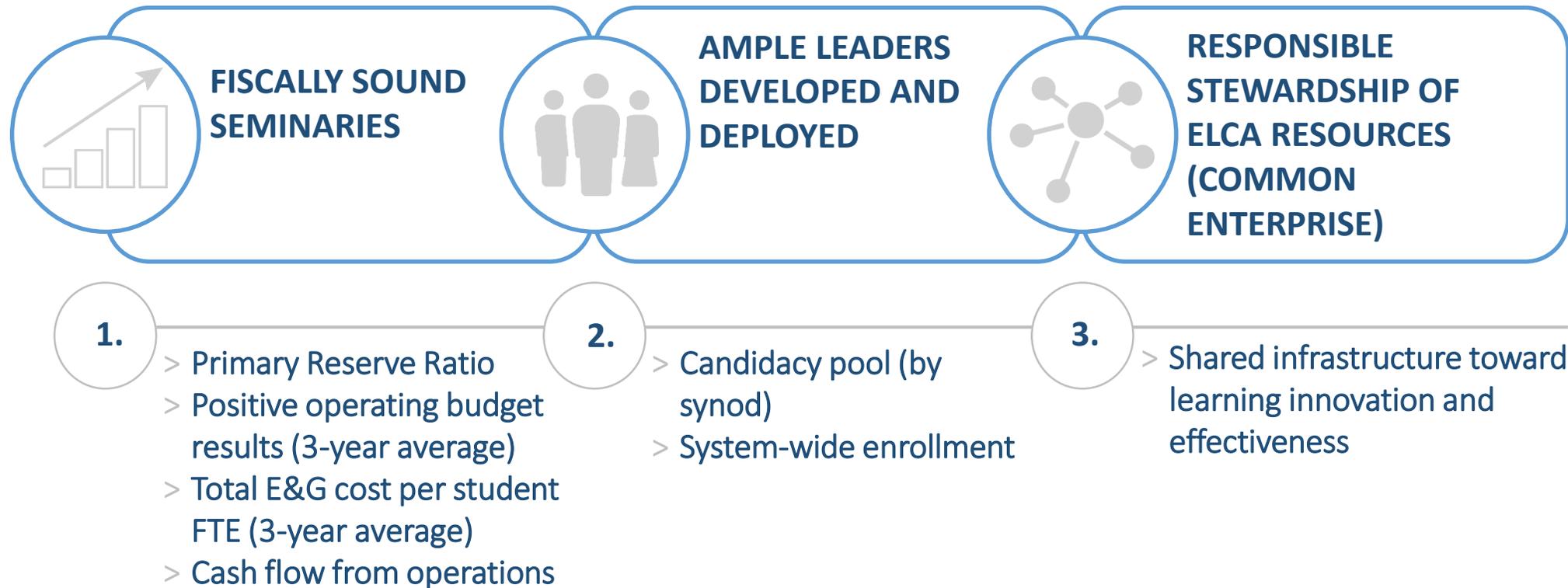
Javier Goitia, ELCA



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Enterprise-wide Metrics Overview

Intended for use across the seminary system in assessing progress towards long-term sustainability and conversations with Church Council, synod leadership and major donors



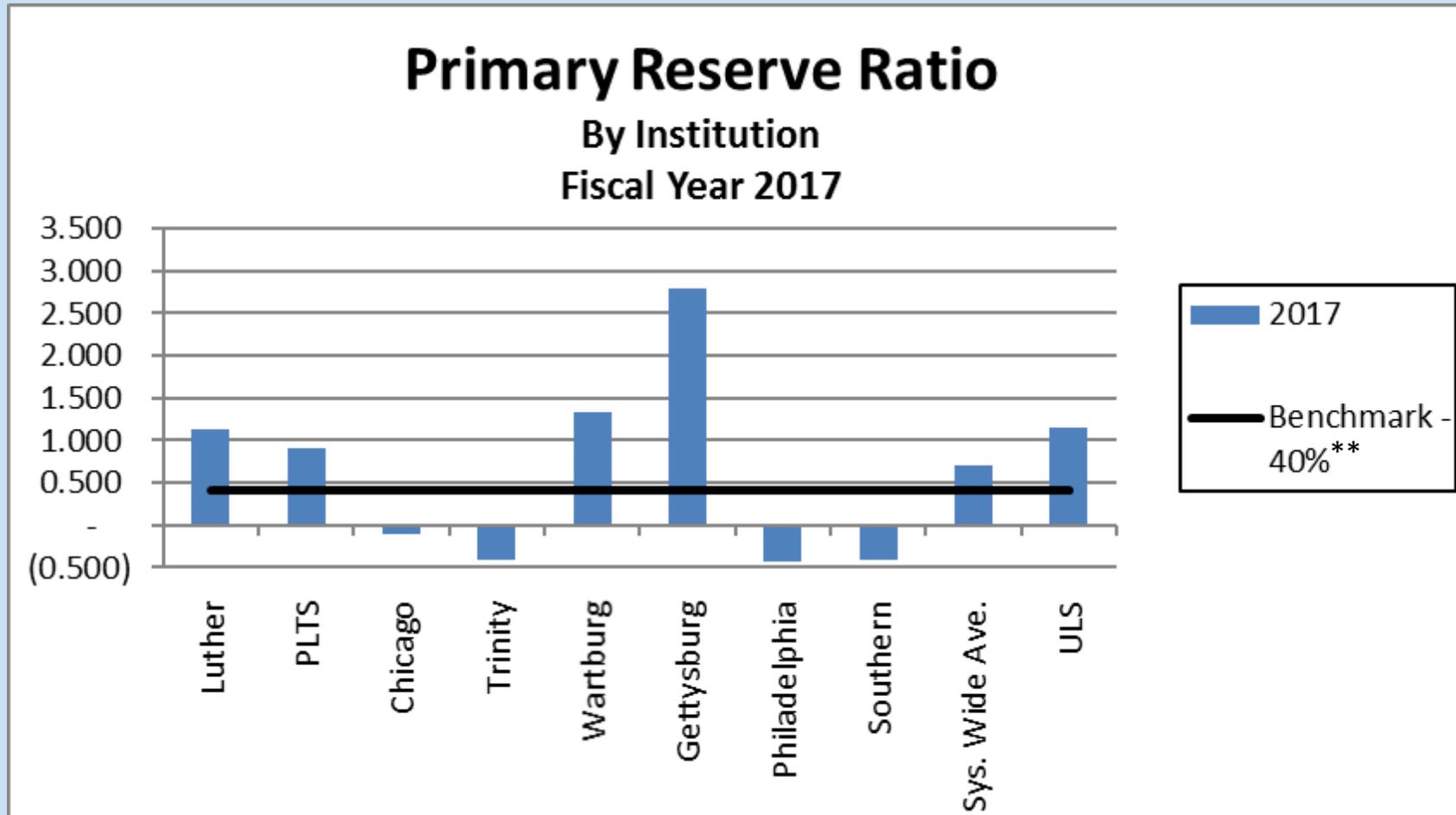
1. Enterprise-wide Metrics – Fiscally Sound Seminaries

1. Fiscally Sound Seminaries			
	Category	Measure(s)	Benchmark
1.1	Primary reserve ratio	Threshold Ratio	>. 40
1.2	Positive operating budget results	Level of net income surplus/deficit	+ Net income
		Variance amount of surplus/deficit	At or above mean
1.3	Total E&G Cost per Student FTE (3 year average)	Total E&G cost per student FTE (three year average of ATS peers and comparison among ELCA sems)	Variance from mean
1.4	Cash flow from operations	Cash income ratio	+ Number/Higher = More Flexibility



1.1 Primary Reserve Ratio

> Expendable Net Assets by Institution* / Total Expenses by Institution



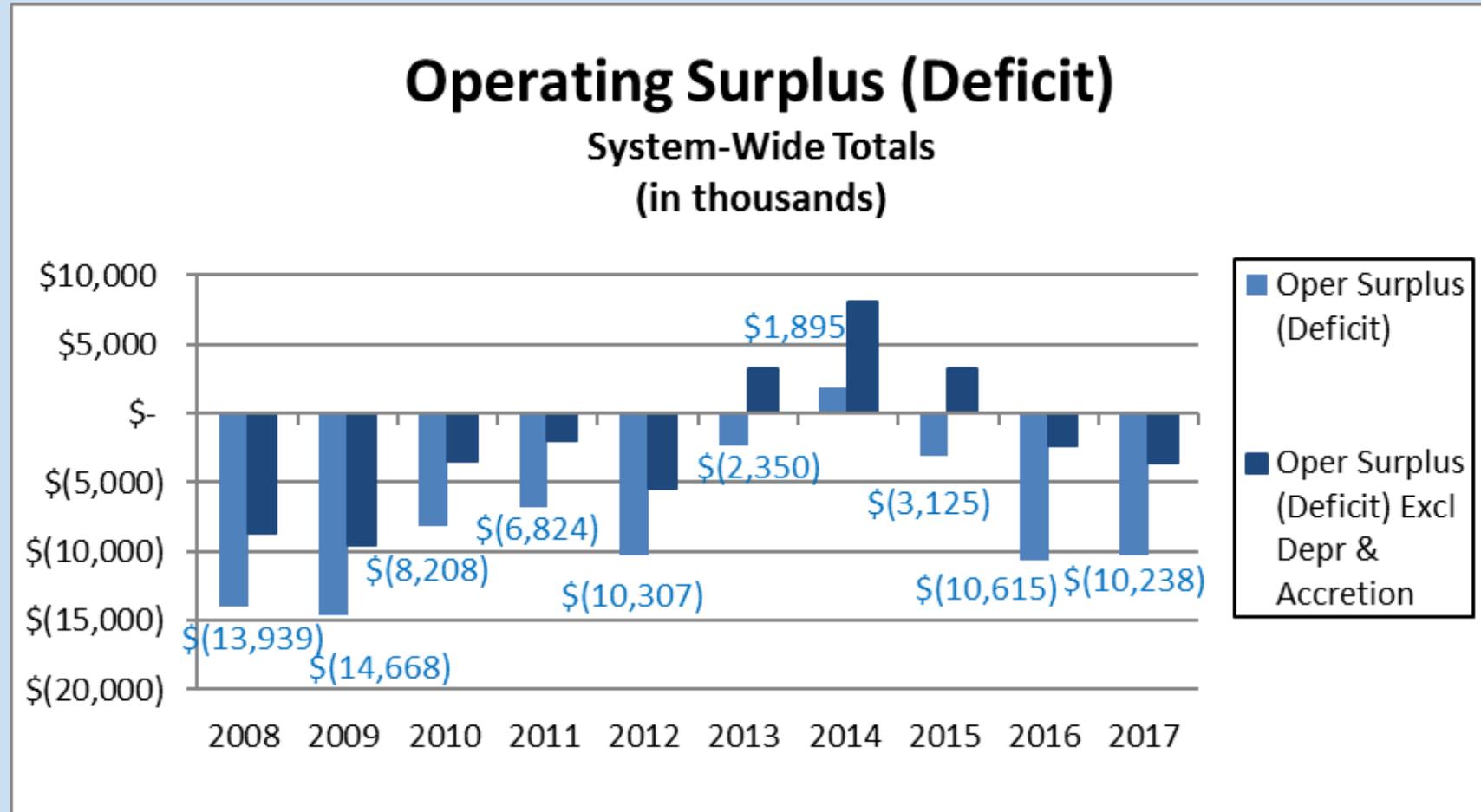
* Expendable Net Assets as defined by U.S. Department of Education

** Benchmark is industry standard *Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education, 7th Edition*, by Prager, Sealy, & Co., LLC, KPMG LLP, and Attain, LLC.



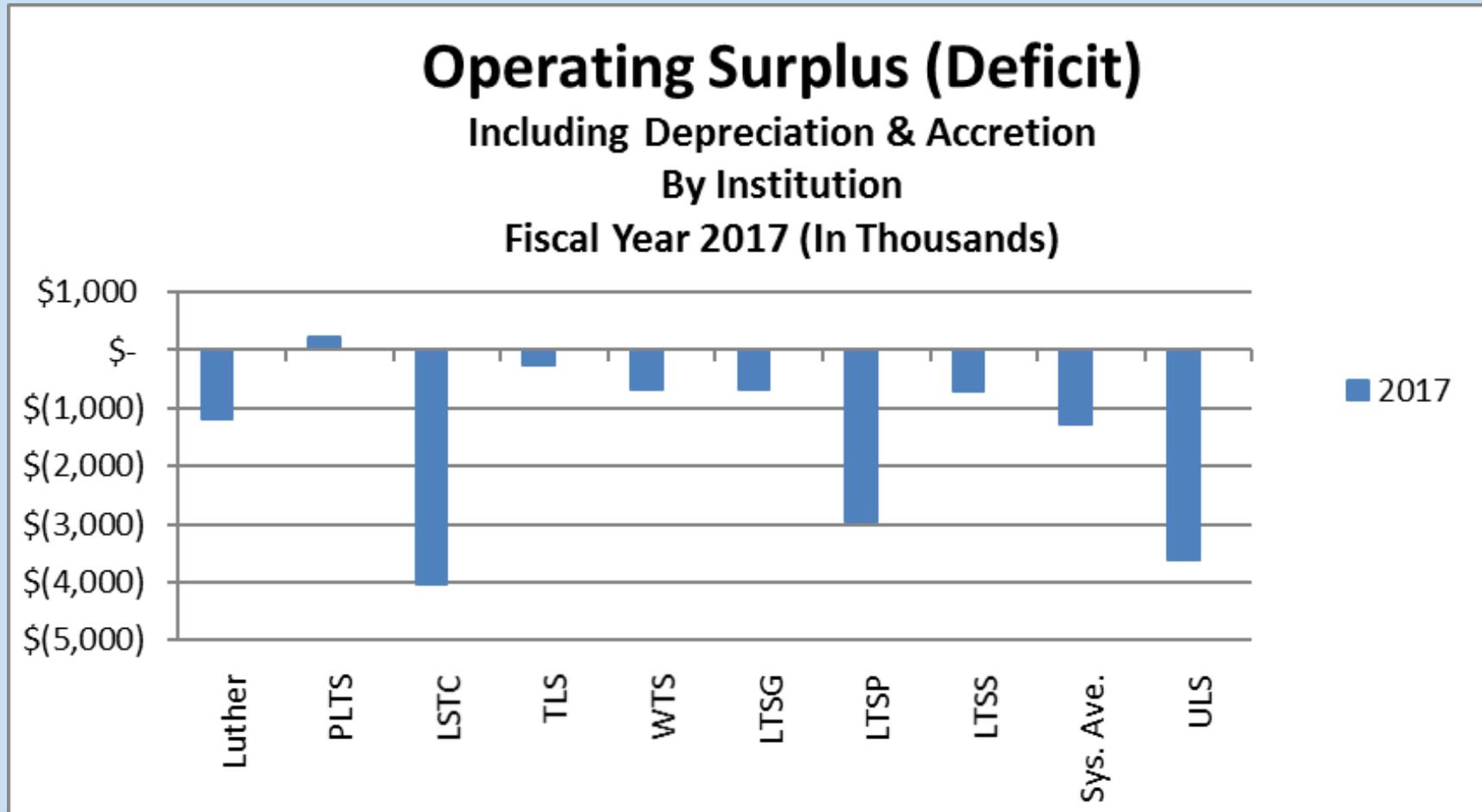
1.2 Positive Operating Budget Results

> Total Change in Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Net Assets System-Wide - Operating



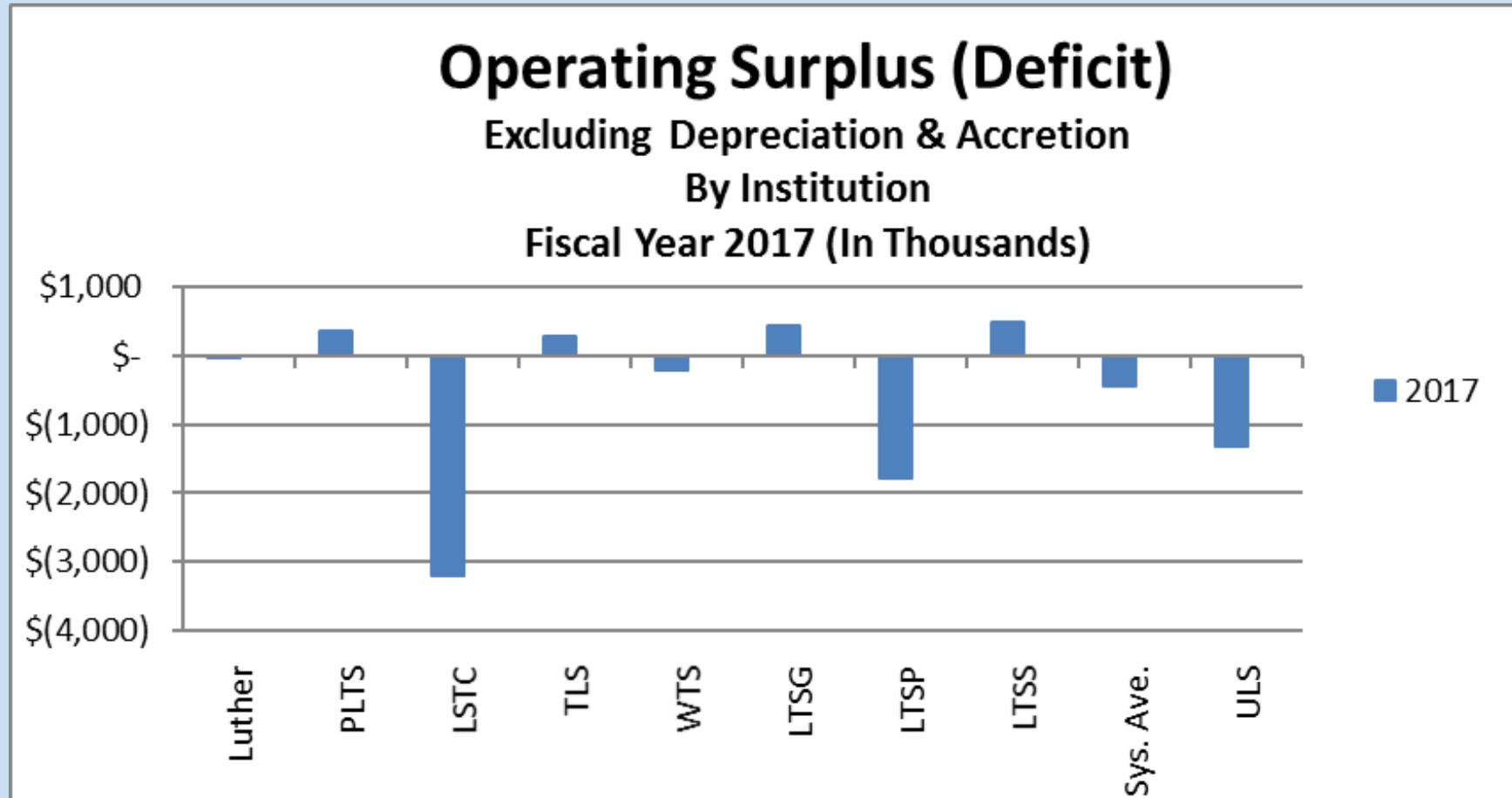
1.2 Positive Operating Budget Results

> Change in Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Net Assets by Institution *Including* Depreciation & Accretion - Operating



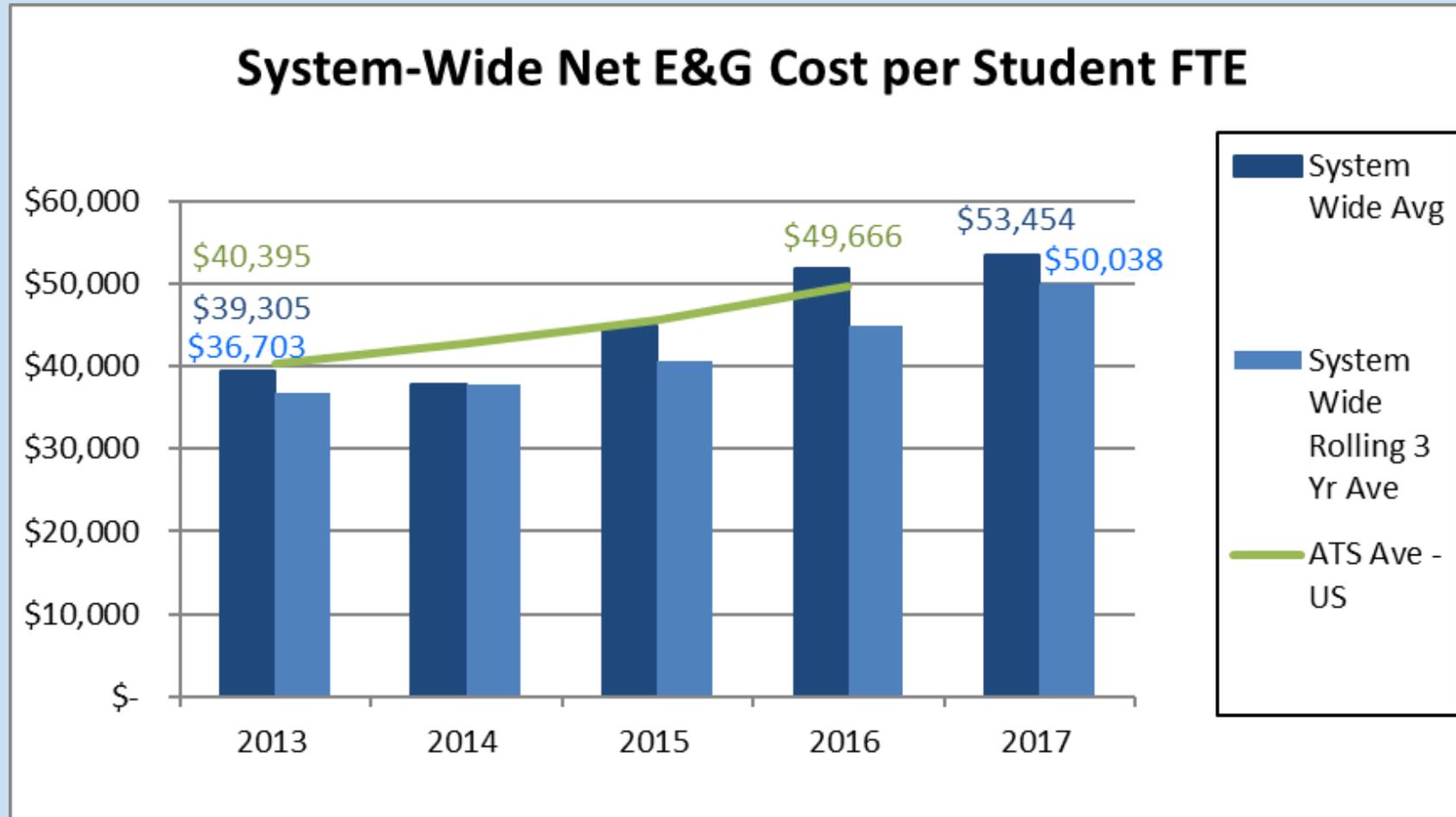
1.2 Positive Operating Budget Results

> Change in Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Net Assets by Institution *Excluding* Depreciation & Accretion - Operating



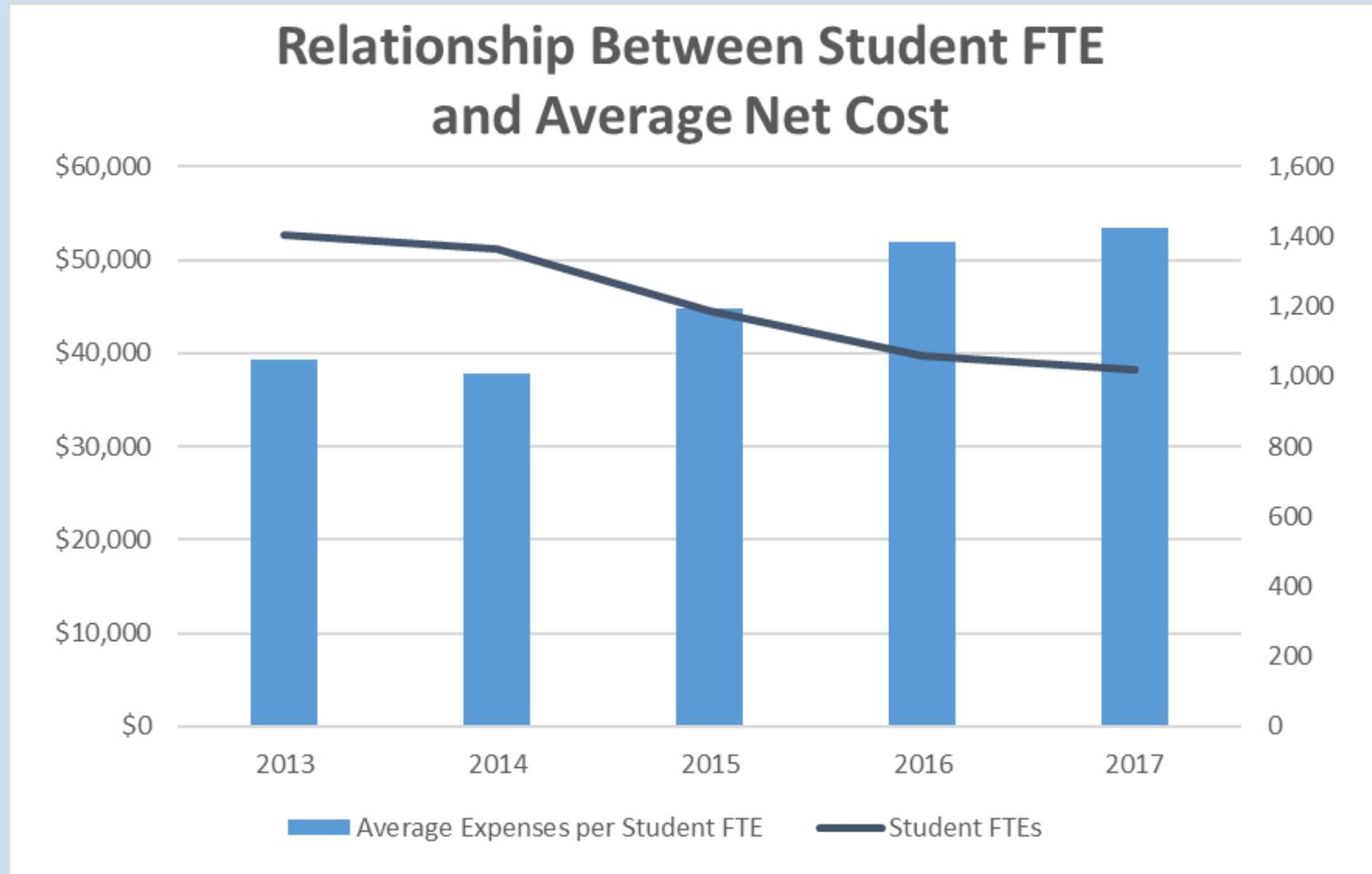
1.3 Total Educational and General Cost per Student FTE

> Total Educational & General Expenses System-Wide / Total Student Full-Time Equivalents (Fall Term) System-Wide



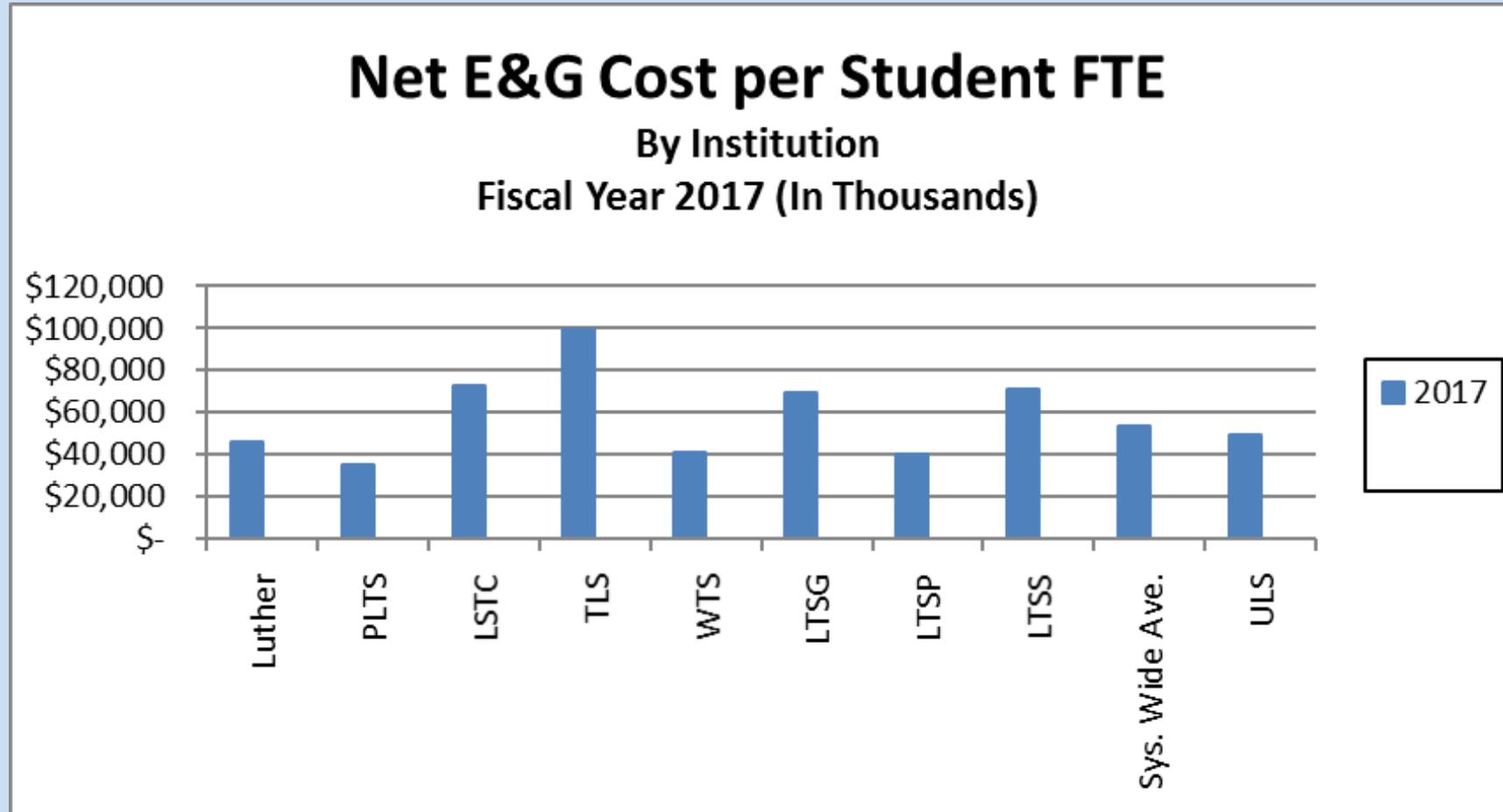
1.3 Relationship Between Student FTE and Average Net Cost

> System-Wide Average Educational Expenses / Student Full-Time Equivalents System-Wide



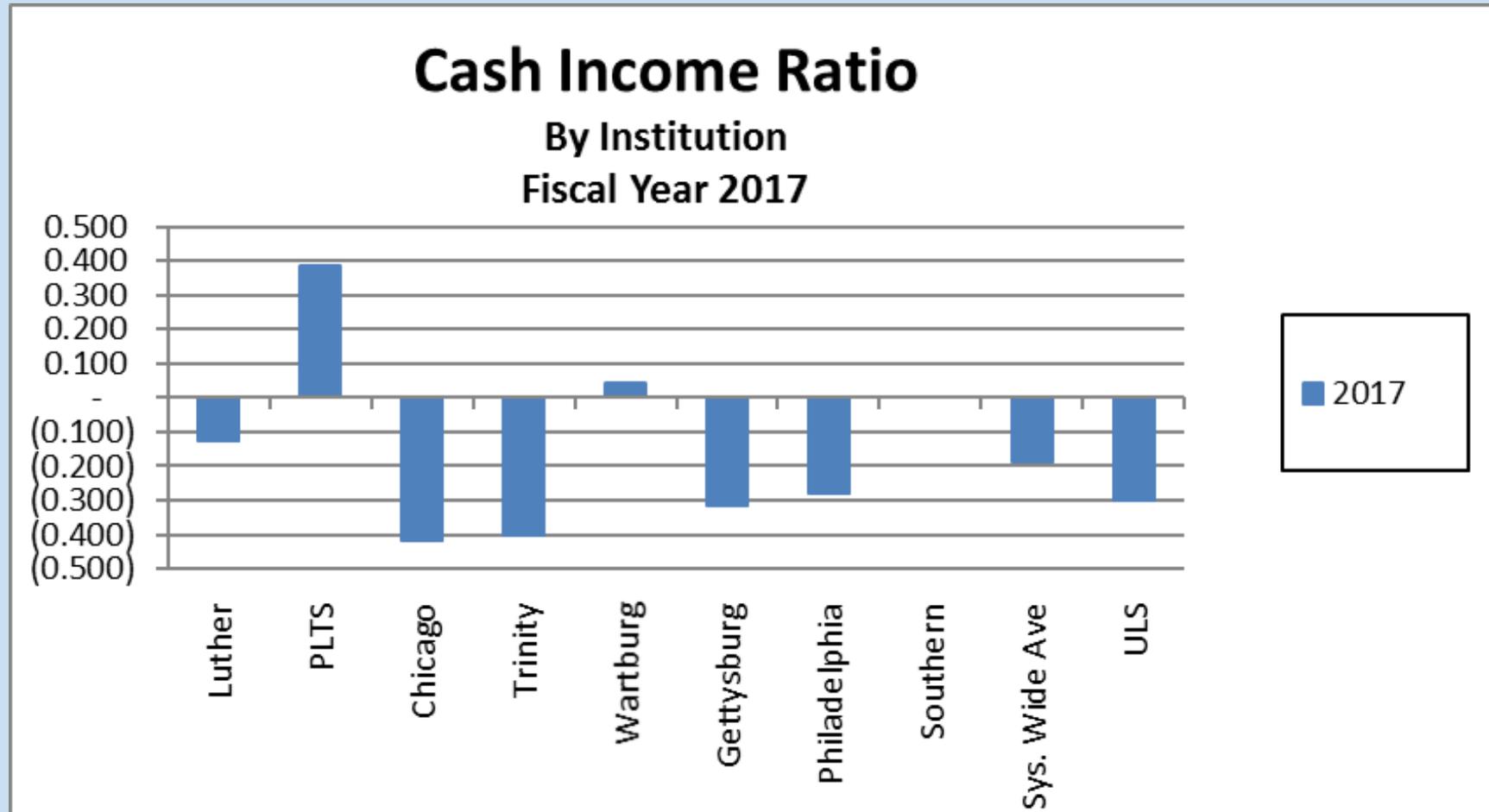
1.3 Total Educational and General Cost per Student FTE

> Total Educational & General Expenses by Institution / Total Student Full-Time Equivalents (Fall Term) by Institution



1.4 Cash Flow from Operations

> Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities by Institution / Total Unrestricted Income by Institution



2. Enterprise-wide Metrics – Ample Leaders

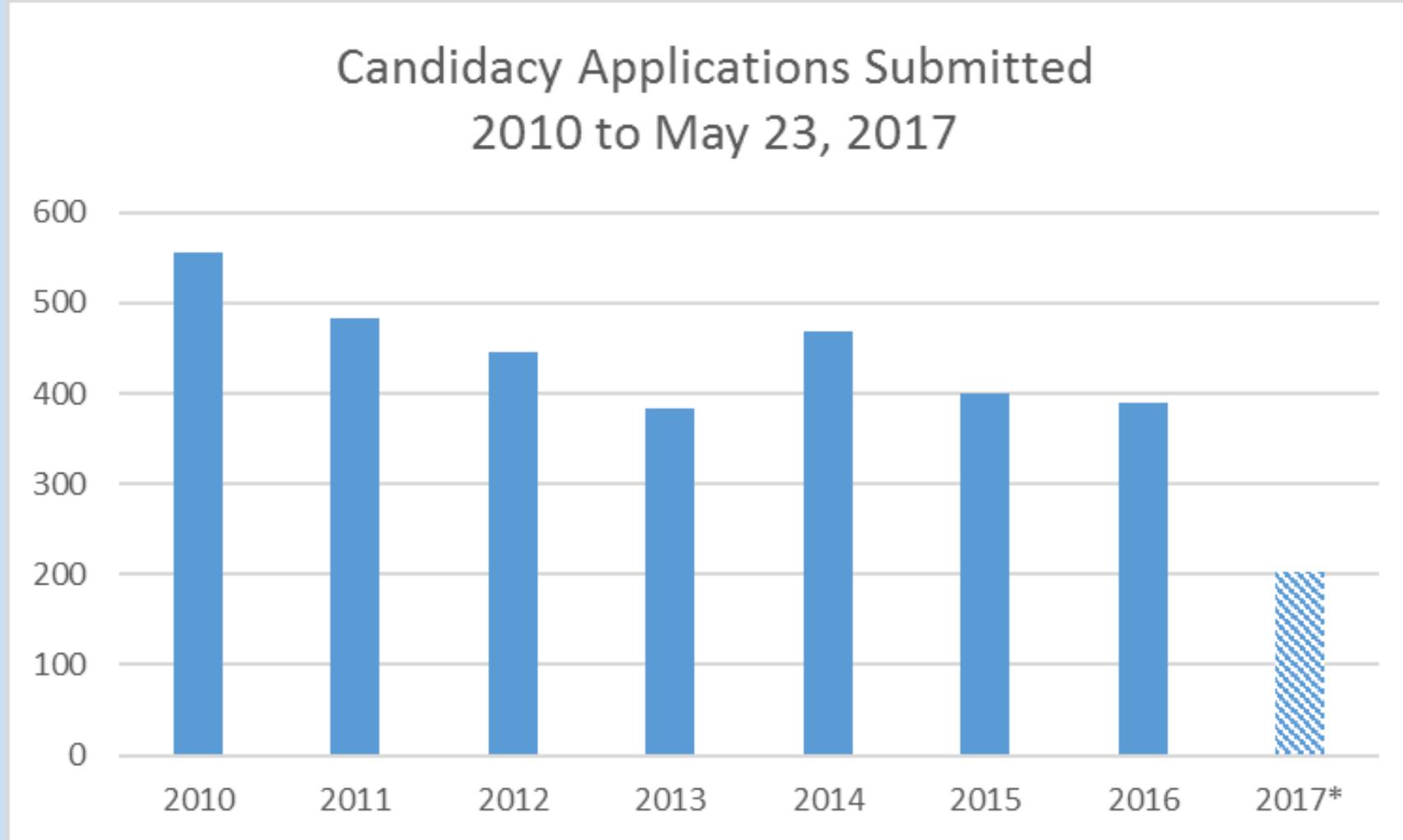
2. Ample Leaders Developed & Deployed			
	Category	Measure(s)	Benchmark
2.1	Candidacy Pool (by synod)	Candidates entranced/average worship attendance	At or above mean (productivity)
		Candidates approved/ average worship attendance ¹	Increased %
		% of candidates meeting diversity definition	> 10%
2.2	System-wide enrollment	“Unique” Seminary Inquiries (number and variety) ²	Growth above initial baseline
		Annual percentage increase in # of students	At or above mean
		Annual percentage increase in proportion of students of ethnic/racial background	Increasing % (2018 Goal >10%)
		Upward trend in % of faculty and staff diversity	Increasing % (Goal >10%)

¹ Average worship attendance is suggested as members confirmed is not consistently available

² Unique is defined as one individual who inquiries to one or more seminaries



2.1 Candidacy – Applications



* Application figure for 2017 represents only a portion of the year.



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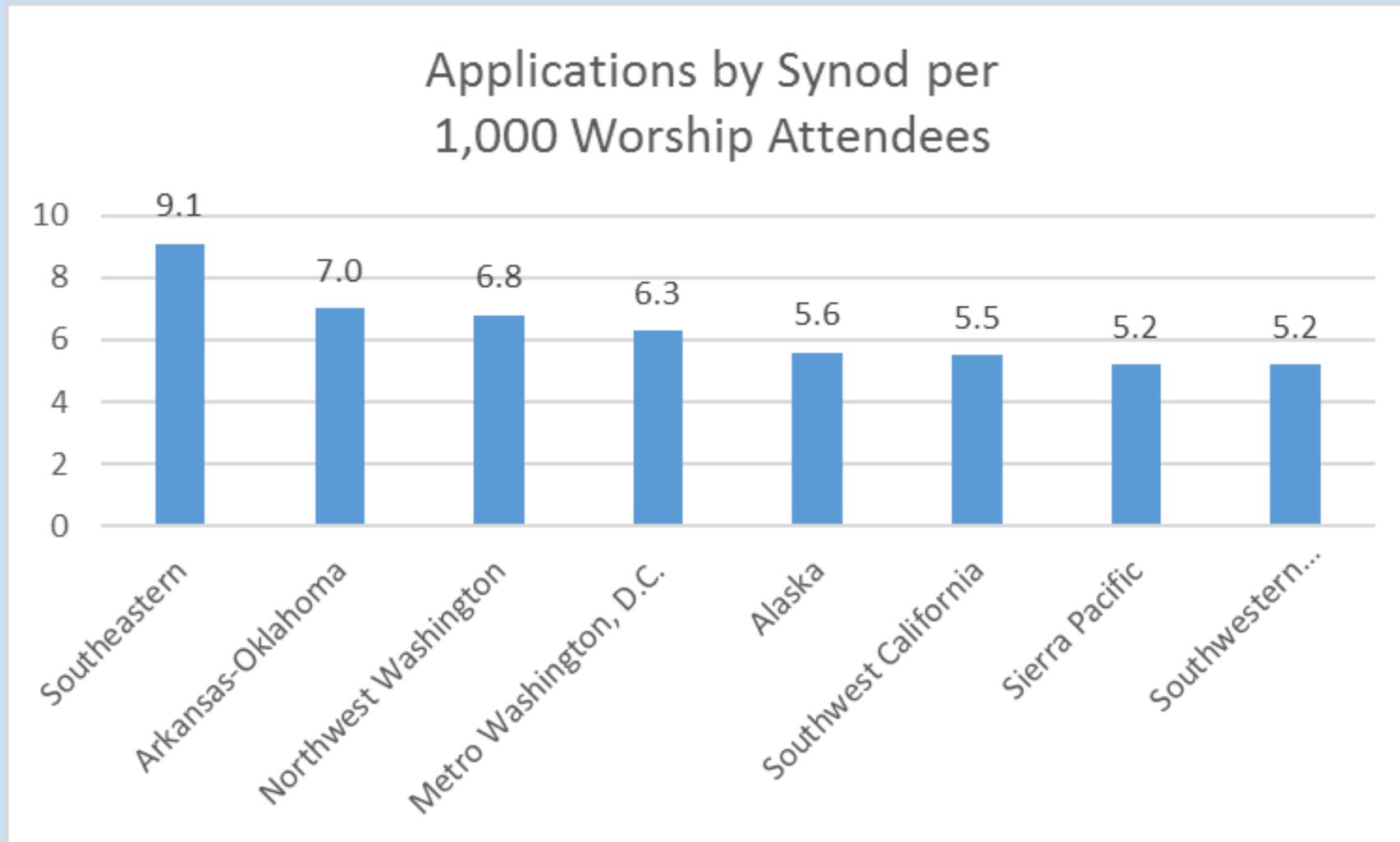
2.1 Candidacy – Ethnicity of Applicants

> Race/Ethnicity of Those Submitting Applications

	Number	Percent
Caucasian/White	2,810	84.4%
African American/Black	155	4.7%
Hispanic	127	3.8%
Other	105	3.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	97	2.9%
Native American/Alaskan Native	24	0.7%
Arab/Middle Eastern	11	0.3%
Total	3,329	100%



2.1 Candidacy – Applications per Worship Attendees



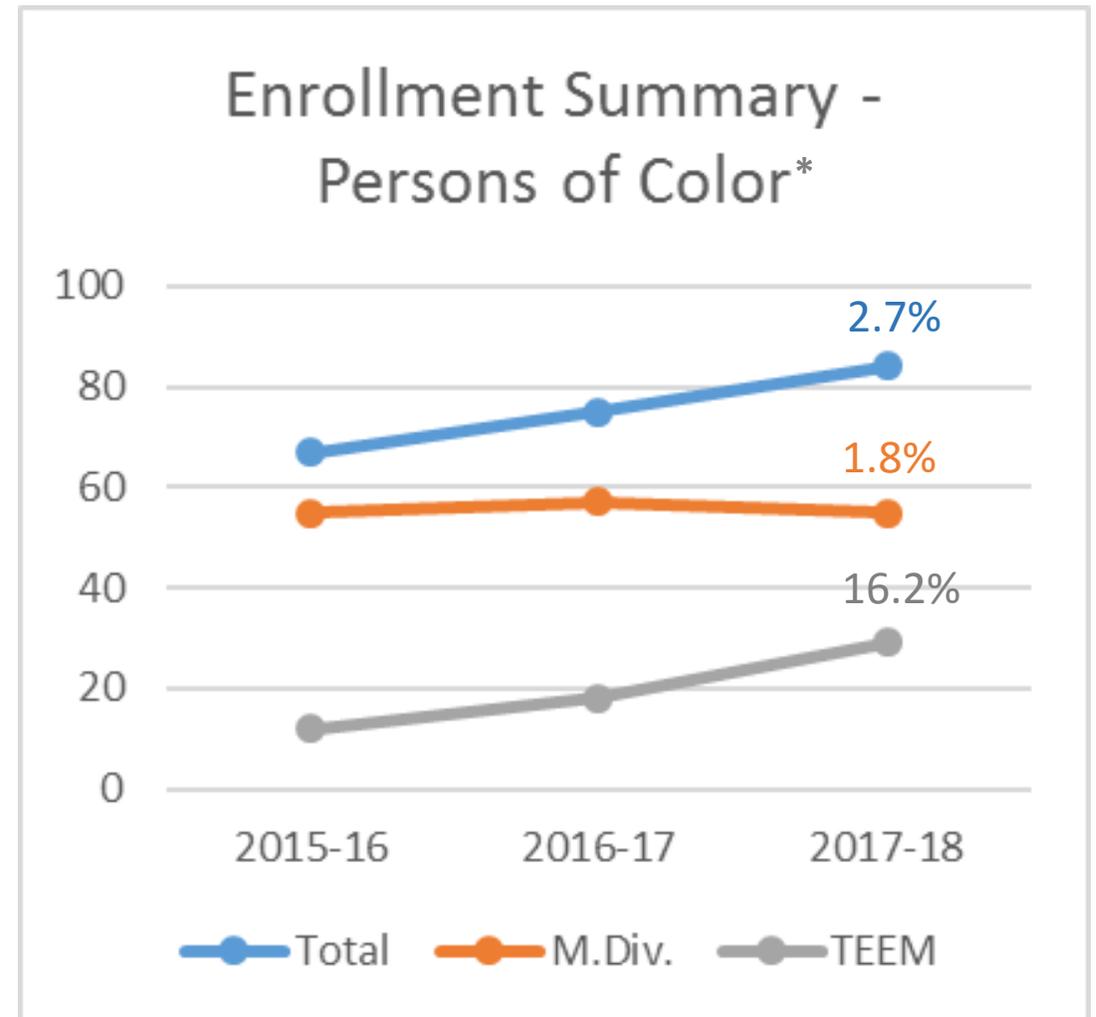
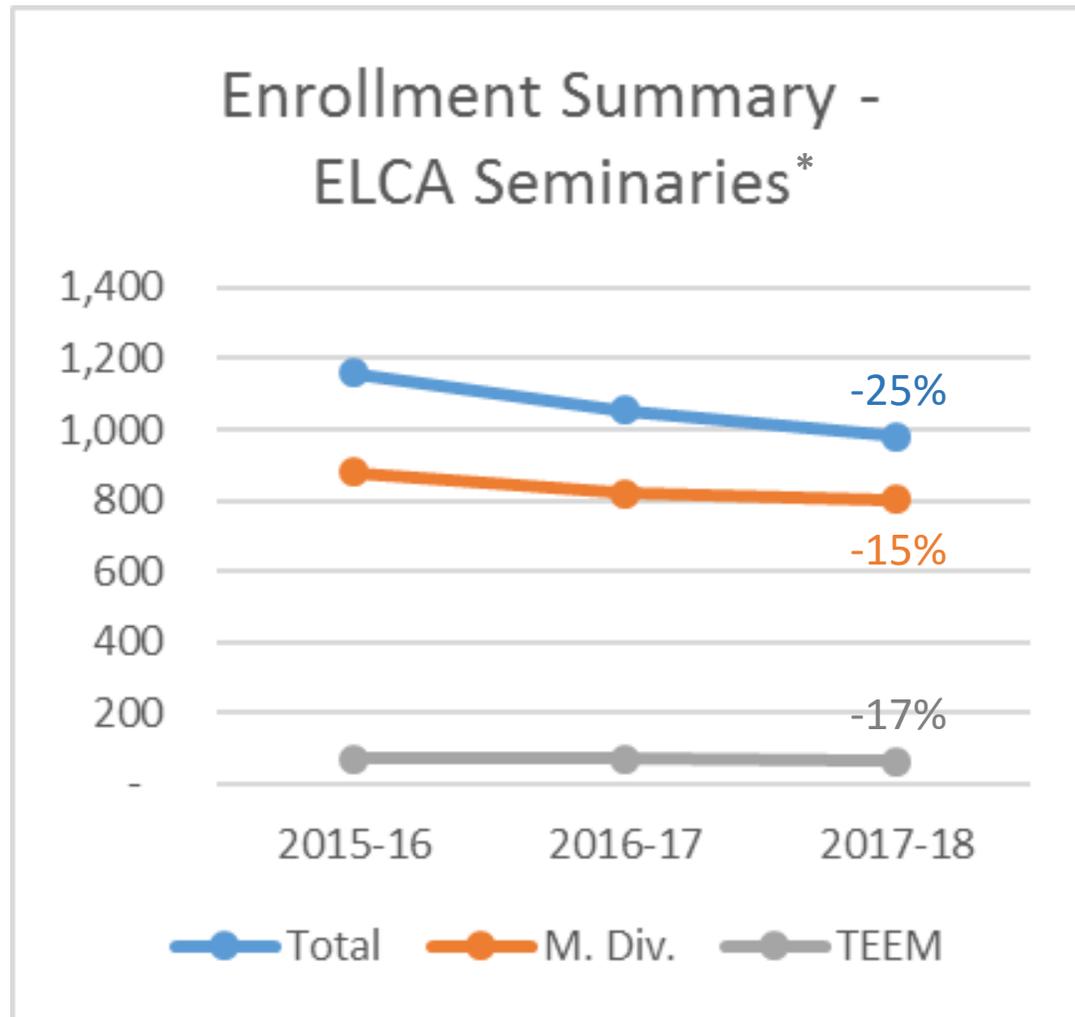
2.1 Candidacy – Applications by Size of Congregation

- > Number of Applications by Size of the Congregation (in Worship Attendance) with the Number of ELCA Congregations in Each Size Category in 2015

	Applications		ELCA Congregations	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
50 or less	370	11.5%	3,332	36.9%
51 to 100	700	21.7%	2,750	30.5%
101 to 150	612	19.0%	1,289	14.3%
151 to 350	959	29.7%	1,319	14.6%
351 to 750	429	13.3%	288	3.2%
751 or more	159	4.9%	50	0.6%
Total	3,229	100%	9,028	100%



2.2 Enrollment



* Percentages shown are the 3-year increase/(decrease) in enrollment.



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Enterprise-wide Metrics – Stewardship of Resources

3. Responsible Stewardship of ELCA Resources (Common Enterprise)

	Category	Measure(s)	Benchmark
3.1	Shared Infrastructure Toward Learning Innovation and Effectiveness	Increased sharing of expertise Number of shared faculty Qualitative factors (e.g., collaborative experimentation, guest lecturers, shared courses across geographies online, etc.)	Growth above initial baseline
		Shared approach to meeting emerging leader development needs	Demonstrated mechanism
		Increased funding available for collaborative pilots and innovative programs to address gaps (e.g., Latino programs, etc.)	Increased \$
		Survey measuring responsiveness to congregational needs and overall gaps	Improvement in results/action for issue items



ELCA Churchwide Organization Financial Overview

Church Council
April 7, 2018

results through January 31, 2018
(preliminary and unaudited)



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Financial Highlights

Revenue/Expense

- Current fund revenue: ahead of budget and prior year by 6% and 1%
- ▼ Current fund expenses: spending at 98.5% of budget, 2016/2017 excess/underspending provide operational support in 2018
- ▼ Mission support: exceeded \$44.125M 2017 goal, but continued year-over-year decline
- ELCA World Hunger: Overall revenue below budget and prior year, strong direct giving
- ELCA World Hunger & LDR: World Hunger and LDR revenue was equal to Mission Support revenue

● Green = on target

▼ Yellow = monitor

◆ Red = requires action



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Current Fund Results



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2017 Current Fund Summary

(In Thousands)

	Actuals	Variances From:	
		Budget	Prior Year
Revenue			
Mission Support	\$44,418	\$293	(\$755)
Other	21,469	3,692	1,350
Total Revenue	<u>\$65,887</u>	<u>\$3,985</u>	<u>\$595</u>
Des/Res Funds Released	\$3,060	(\$2,247)	(\$648)
Expenses	<u>\$66,190</u>	<u>\$1,020</u>	<u>\$1,254</u>
Net Operating	<u>\$2,757</u>	<u>\$2,758</u>	<u>\$1,201</u>

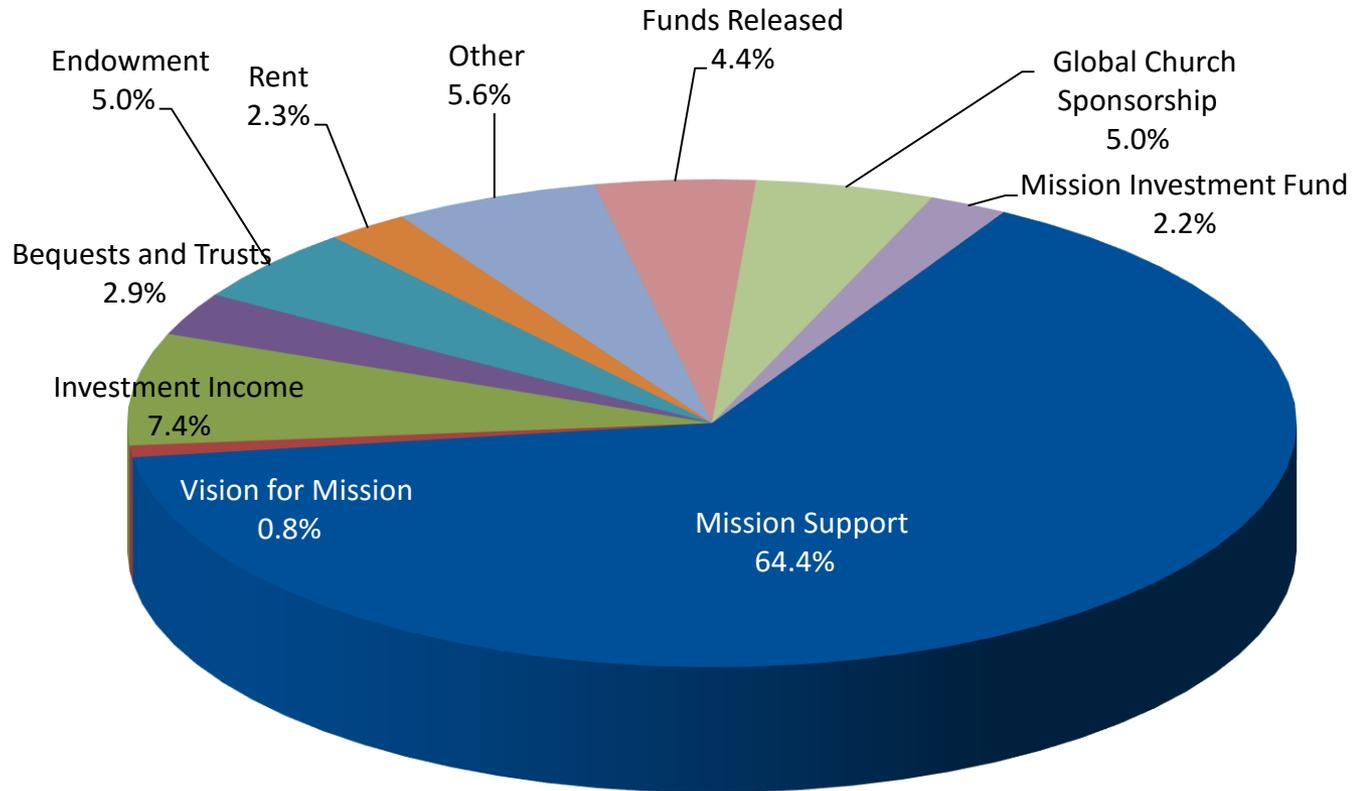


2017 Current Fund Revenue Sources

SOURCE	ACTUALS	VARIANCES FROM:	
		BUDGET	PRIOR YR
Mission Support	\$44,418,429	\$293,429	(\$754,751)
Global Church Sponsorship	\$3,415,100	(\$134,900)	\$175,654
Bequests and Trusts	\$1,971,270	(\$928,730)	(\$1,430,921)
Investment Income	\$5,120,466	\$3,824,966	\$2,734,192
Endowment	\$3,429,968	\$389,408	(\$60,226)
Mission Investment Fund	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$0
Vision for Mission	\$534,815	(\$265,185)	(\$86,259)
Rent	\$1,571,921	(\$339,399)	(\$343,051)
Other	\$3,925,336	\$1,145,336	\$359,696



2017 Current Fund Revenue and Support \$68.9M



2017 Current Fund Expenses

UNITS/OFFICES	ACTUALS	VARIANCE	SPENDING RATE
Domestic Mission	\$24,503,637	\$157,468	99.36%
Global Mission	\$14,066,007	\$231,953	98.38%
Mission Advancement	\$4,973,039	\$10,226	99.79%
Office of the Presiding Bishop	\$5,816,475	\$39,725	99.32%
Office of the Treasurer	\$8,994,846	\$2,344	99.97%
Office of the Secretary	\$4,026,514	\$45,616	98.88%
General Treasury	\$3,809,666	\$532,509	87.74%
TOTAL	\$66,190,184	(\$1,019,841)	98.48%



ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response



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2017 ELCA World Hunger Summary

(In Thousands)

	Actuals	Variances From:	
		Budget	Prior Year
Beginning Balance	\$5,266		
Revenue			
Direct Giving	\$19,330	(\$1,920)	\$337
Distribution Earnings-Endowment	623	73	40
Bequests, Miscellaneous	1,403	(797)	(943)
Total Revenue	\$21,356	(\$2,644)	(\$566)
Expenses	\$23,433	\$1,367	(\$2,027)
Net Revenue	(\$2,078)	(\$1,278)	(\$2,593)
Ending Balance	\$3,188		



Lutheran Disaster Response 2017

Income - \$22.9 Million

- Hurricane Response \$14.7M
- General Undesignated Funds \$ 7.3M
- South Sudan Relief \$ 0.5M

Expenses - \$4.6 Million

- Hurricane Response \$ 1.0M
- Nepal Region Earthquake Relief \$ 0.7M
- General Undesignated \$ 0.4M
- U.S. Severe Spring Storms \$ 0.4M
- Capacity Development \$ 0.4M





Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA



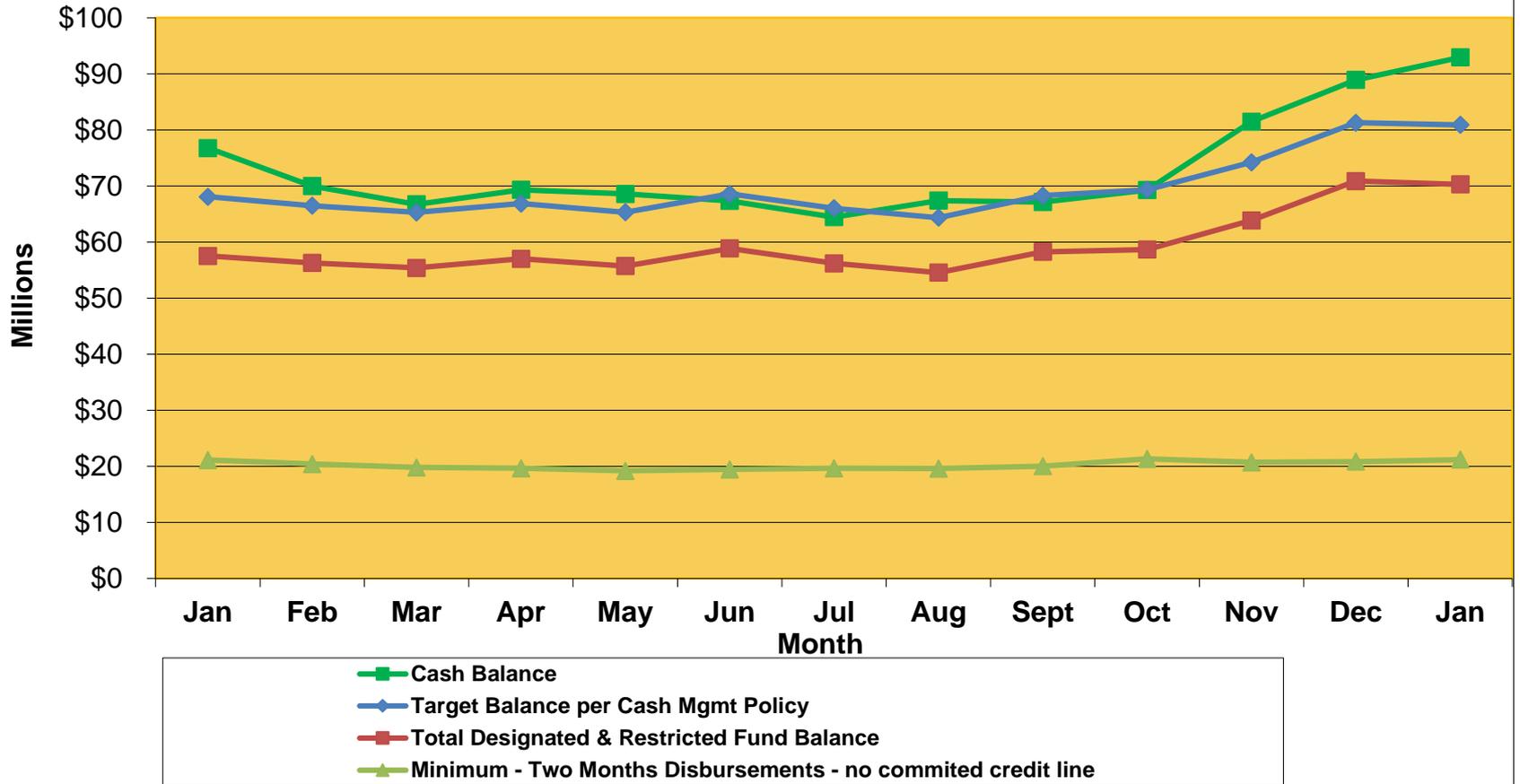
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Campaign for the ELCA Financial Summary 2017 (In Thousands)

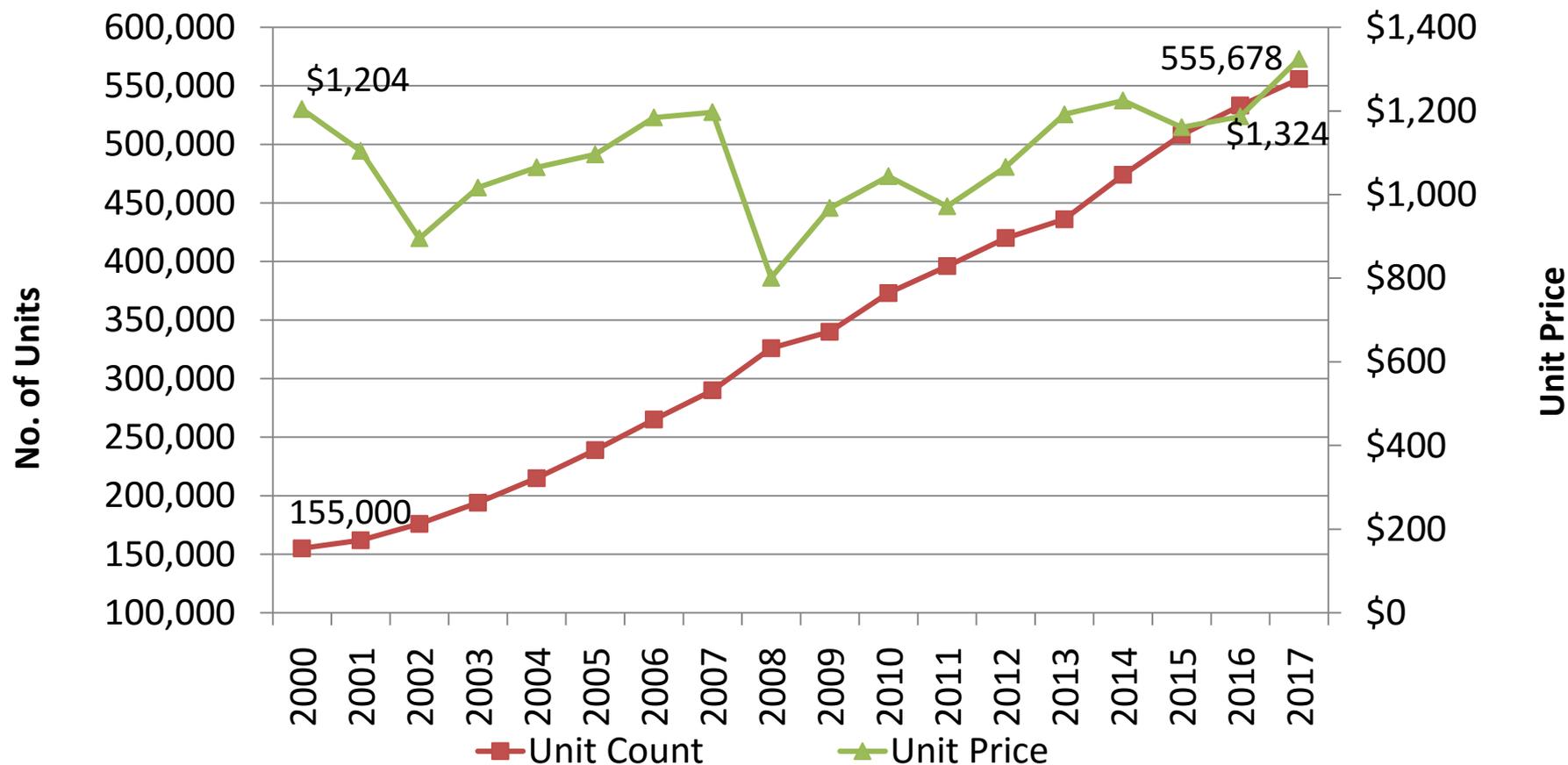
	Revenue	Revenue & Commitments	Campaign Goal	Percent of Goal
Where Needed Most	\$5,216	\$6,183	\$1,250	494.7%
Congregations	2,415	2,553	16,000	14.2%
Leadership	13,931	15,391	19,000	64.5%
Global Church	17,470	19,030	31,750	59.9%
Hunger and Poverty	99,991	100,850	130,000	77.6%
TOTAL	\$139,023	\$144,007	\$198,000	72.7%



Cash Management Policy Comparison vs. Actual Jan 2017 through Jan 2018

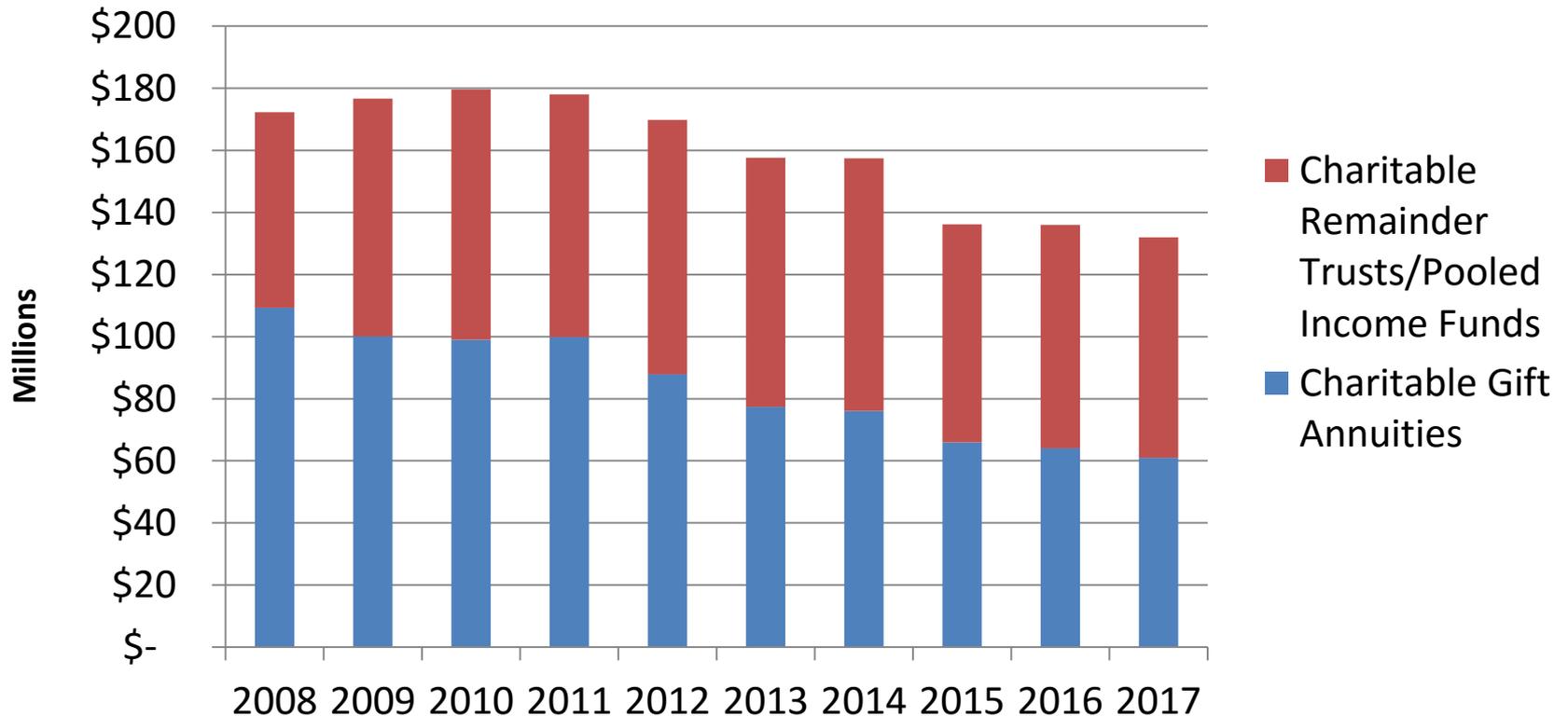


Endowment Fund Pooled Trust - \$736M



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ELCA Deferred Gift Programs Comparative Market Values



Future Directions 2025



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Future Directions 2025: Financial Resources by Major Fund/Purpose

Fund 1 - Unrestricted	\$62,835,069
Fund 3 - Restricted	1,632,079
Fund 4 - Designated	27,719,979
Youth Gathering	11,170,800
	<hr/>
	\$103,357,927



Future Directions 2025: Financial Resources by Goal

Goal 1 - Thriving Church	\$ 45,468,844
Goal 2 - Equipping Vocations	
Goal 3 - Welcoming Church/Diversity	5,302,519
Goal 4 - Peace/Justice/Reconciliation	25,796,000
Goal 5 - Connected, Sustainable*	26,790,565
	<hr/>
	\$ 103,357,928

* includes core operational costs totaling 19% of the overall budget

2017 Actual – 2018 Estimated Income

	2017 ACTUAL	2018 BUDGET
UNRESTRICTED		
Mission Support	\$44,418,429	\$43,463,125
Other	<u>13,707,331</u>	<u>10,207,390</u>
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED	58,125,760	53,670,515
TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	7,761,545	8,626,860
TOTAL REVENUE	65,887,305	62,297,375
Designated & Restricted Funds Released	3,060,342	4,843,295
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE AND SUPPORT	\$68,947,647	\$67,140,670
<i>LESS TOTAL EXPENSES</i>	<i>-\$66,190,185</i>	<i>-\$67,140,670</i>
Net Revenue/Over Expenses	\$2,757,462	\$0



2017 Actual – 2018 Budgeted Expense

	2017 Actual	2018 Budget
UNITS		
Domestic Mission	24,503,637	24,530,864
Global Mission	14,066,007	13,902,865
Mission Advancement	4,973,039	5,105,600
OFFICES		
Presiding Bishop	5,816,475	6,072,395
Treasurer	8,994,846	9,166,145
Secretary	4,026,514	4,057,200
OTHER		
General Treasury	3,809,666	4,305,601
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	66,190,184	67,140,670



Questions/Comments



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Bill Horne

Vice President



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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It's good to be with you all again!
**¡Es un placer estar de nuevo con
todos Ustedes!**



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Overview

- Living in Unity
- Annual Meeting of the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America (LECNA) and Network of the ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU)
- ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force
- Joint Leadership Tables



Overview

- Conference of Bishop Meeting
- Synod Assembly Cycle
- Always Being Made New: Campaign for the ELCA Update
- Random Thoughts



Living in Unity

Psalm 133:1-3

**How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down over the collar of his robes.
It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion.
For there the Lord ordained his blessing,
life forevermore.**



Living in Unity

- **Acts 2:42-47**
- **Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.**



Annual Lutheran Educational Conference of North America and Network of the ELCA Colleges and Universities

- Purpose was to provide an ELCA Update
- Highlight NECU connection to Future Directions 2025
- College and University Presidents want to strengthen its ELCA connection around its Lutheran Origins, ongoing identity and shared mission as part of the ELCA
- LCMS want to influence their church related colleges/universities and ELCA college/universities feel just the opposite



ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force

- Inter-Religious Policy Draft Statement
- Church Council Executive Committee Draft Discussion and Council Introduction-April 2018
- Church Council approval April 2019
- Churchwide Assembly Approval August 2019



Joint Leadership Tables-Commitments

- Congregational Vitality
- Leadership



Conference of Bishop Meeting

- Proposed Definition of Congregational Vitality
- Draft Entrance Rite for Ministers of Word and Service



Synod Assembly Cycle and Youth Gathering

- Rocky Mountain Synod, May 3-5
- Pacifica Synod, May 18-19
- Nebraska Synod, May 31-June 2
- Youth Gathering, June 26-July 1



Always Being Made New: Campaign for the ELCA

- 5th and Final Year of Campaign
- Call to Action
- Church Council Leadership and Support



Random Thoughts

- Leadership Table Collaboration is the way forward
- It takes all of our efforts to get the important work done well
- Church Council must ensure ELCA voices are heard and take action to move things along in a timely manner.
- God is calling the ELCA to do God's mission in the world—I believe we are all committed to getting it done in Christ name



Thank You
Gracias



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