

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN AMERICA**

Church Council

MINUTES

August 4, 2019

**Prepared by the
Office of the Secretary**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES
Aug. 4, 2019
Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

The 95th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) convened with the Conference of Bishops and synod vice presidents on Aug. 4, 2019, in the Ballroom and Ballroom Hall B at the Hyatt Regency in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Members of the Church Council gathered with the Conference of Bishops and synod vice presidents at 1:00 p.m. in the Hyatt Regency Ballroom B for worship. The Rev. Paul D. Erickson, bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, presided and the Rev. Joyce M. Graue, member of the Church Council, preached. Ms. Tracey A. Beasley, vice president of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, served as assisting minister; Deacon Lexanne Graves, vice president of the South Carolina Synod, and the Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld served as lectors. Deacon Jennifer Baker-Trinity, program director for resource development, served as musician.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

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

Voting members

Officers:

Pr. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop
Mr. William B. Horne II, vice president
Pr. Wm Chris Boerger, secretary
Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer

Chair of the Conference of Bishops:

Pr. William O. Gafkjen, bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod

Church Council:

Pr. Hans E. Becklin	Mr. Gary A. Pederson
Mr. Allan J. Bieber	Ms. Meri Jo Petrivelli
Ms. Lisa Burk	Pr. Ricardo Rivera
Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman	Mr. Clarence M. Smith
Mr. Reid A. Christopherson	Pr. Jonathan Splichal Larson
Pr. Dena M. Gable	Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford
Pr. Joyce M. Graue	Ms. Leslie J. Swenson
Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson	Pr. James H. Utt
Pr. Chad M. Huebner	Mr. Vernon K. Veal
Ms. Maren Hulden	Pr. William O. Voss
Mr. James M. Hushagen	Ms. Emma K. Wagner
Mr. James J.F. Jennings	Pr. Michael R. Ward (<i>excused</i>)
Pr. Peder J. Johanson (<i>excused</i>)	Mr. Philip Wirtanen
Ms. Emilee M. Le Blanc	Ms. Sonja Wolfe
Mr. John W. Lohrmann	Ms. Man-Hei Yip
Mr. Joseph T. Nolte	Mr. Seth M. Zimmann
Pr. Linda Nou	

Representatives of the Conference of Bishops

Bp. H. Jeffrey A. Clements, Region 5
Bp. Steven H. Delzer, Region 3
Bp. Suzanne D. Dillahunt, Region 6
Bp. R. Guy Erwin, Region 2
Bp. Richard H. Graham, Region 8

Bp. Brian D. Maas, Region 4
Bp. John S. Macholz, Region 7
Bp. Pedro M. Suárez, Region 9
Vacant, Region 1

Resource people

Office of the Presiding Bishop:

Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration
Ms. Rhondean Johnson, executive for human resources
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, assistant to the presiding bishop for ecumenical and interreligious relations
and assistant to the presiding bishop for theological discernment
Pr. Walter S. May, Assistant to the Bishop and Executive for Synodical Relations
Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe, Natural Systems Coordinator
Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, assistant to the presiding bishop for governance
Deacon John E. Weit, interim assistant to the presiding bishop for worship (*excused*)

Office of the Secretary:

Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel
Ms. Aja M. Favors, associate general counsel
Ms. Marit E. Johnson, manager for official documentation
Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, executive for Office of the Secretary administration

Unit staff:

Ms. Jocelyn Fuller, director for strategic communications
Pr. Philip C. Hirsch, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit
Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, executive director of the Mission Advancement unit
Pr. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director of the Global Mission unit
Pr. David C. Wunsch, director for operations of the Global Mission unit

Separately Incorporated Ministries:

Mr. Timothy Blevins, president and CEO, 1517 Media
Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director, Women of the ELCA
Ms. Eva M. Roby, president, Mission Investment Fund
Pr. Martin A. Seltz, vice president for publishing and executive director for ELCA relations, 1517 Media
Pr. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, president, Portico Benefit Services

Press:

Ms. Megan Brandsrud, Mission Advancement
Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, Mission Advancement

**Sunday, Aug. 4, 2019
Plenary Session I
Ballroom B**

CALL TO ORDER AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

(Agenda I.A.)

Background:

Agenda items were distributed electronically. Additional items were distributed at the meeting to the members of the Church Council and invited resource people.

Church Council action:

Mr. William B. Horne II, vice president of the ELCA and chair of the Church Council, called the joint meeting of the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops and synod vice presidents to order at 2:45 p.m. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, led the meeting in prayer.

Vice President Horne drew attention to the meeting resource materials and the deadlines for proposing new business and for removing items from *en bloc* consideration. He reviewed various elements of the proposed agenda.

A motion was made to adopt the agenda.

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

VOTED:

CC19.08.27 To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

Vice President Horne declared that the agenda was adopted.

REPORTS OF THE OFFICERS

PRESIDING BISHOP

(Agenda I.B.1)

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, gave a summary of business items for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Those items included the proposed social statement "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action;" the proposed policy statement "A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment;" a "declaration" of apology to people of African descent; the entrance rite for Word and Service ministry; elections for officers, Church Council members and committee members; and the celebration of the conclusion of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

TREASURER

(Agenda I.B.1)

Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA opened her report with an update on the financial results through June 30, 2019. The Office of the Treasurer continues to monitor financial trends. Mission Support is 3.3% below budget from July 2018. The Office of the Treasurer is working with synods to understand if this trend will continue. She also noted that some synods are above their promised Mission Support giving.

Other sources of income have helped bridge the difference in the shortfall of Mission Support. These sources of income are up by about \$1 million over what was budgeted. Other income consists of bequests and trusts, endowment income, direct gifts, investment income, and rental income. Expenses were favorable to the spending authorization by \$2 million. Net revenue over expenses was favorable by \$3 million.

World Hunger had an increase of \$1 million in revenue in comparison to June 2018. Giving trends suggest a shift of individuals giving directly to World Hunger rather than giving through congregations and synods. Lutheran Disaster Response income was \$3.3 million compared to \$1.6 million in June 2018. Members' generosity was in

response to flooding and wildfires that occurred in the first six months of the year. Lutheran Disaster Response received \$0.75 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant money to do work in Texas related to hurricane Harvey. FEMA chose five faith-based organizations to work with in the surrounding areas of Houston. In the past FEMA only worked with government organizations.

SECRETARY

(Agenda I.B.1)

The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, secretary of the ELCA, opened his report by referring individuals to the statistics in his written report. This year's return rate for the annual congregational report was 77%. Three synods had a 100% return rate. They were the Northern Great Lakes Synod, the Slovak-Zion Synod, and the La Crosse Area Synod. Secretary Boerger encouraged vice presidents and bishops to communicate the importance of this report. He reminded meeting participants that the results of congregational reports do not demonstrate the success or failure of what congregations are doing, but rather gives the Office of the Secretary a better view on what questions should be asked.

Other items to be addressed by the Churchwide Assembly include constitutional amendments. One area of proposed amendments includes the entrance rite for ministers of Word and Service. Elections to Church Council and various committees will occur before the vote on constitutional amendments. Because of this timing, deacons will still be considered lay persons for this election cycle. If the amendment to ordain deacons passes, they will not be eligible for reelection in a lay person position. He asked members to read the Nominating Committee report before the time for elections as there could be more nominations from the floor.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

(Agenda I.C.)

Vice President Horne stated that after 30 years of service, Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, executive of the Mission Advancement unit, will be retiring from the churchwide office on Aug. 31, 2019.

Church Council action:

A motion was made to recognize Ms. Jackson-Skelton.

There being no discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

**CC19.08.28 To thank Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton for her faithful service as the executive director of the Mission Advancement unit; and
 To extend the council's appreciation for her wisdom and insights which have assisted the Church Council in its work.**

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY OVERVIEW

(Agenda I.D.)

Presiding Bishop Eaton and Secretary Boerger provided an overview of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly along with a question and answer session. A council member asked if Secretary Boerger could explain the role of Church Council members at this assembly. Secretary Boerger asked council members to go to the mic to explain council recommendations. He stated it would be helpful to explain why the original recommendation was proposed so that voting members can have more background information. He also noted that the submissions tab for Churchwide Assembly forms would not go live until Monday, Aug. 5 after registration. Individuals must use their voting member ID number to complete the submission.

BREAK

Vice President Horne announced that the offering from the afternoon's worship totaled \$3427.70. The offering was designated for Lutheran Disaster Response. The joint meeting of the Church Council, Conference of Bishops and synod vice presidents of the ELCA recessed at 3:16 p.m. The three groups divided into their individual meetings. Each meeting began at approximately 3:45 p.m. The groups met in the following rooms at the Hyatt Regency in Milwaukee, Wisconsin:

- Church Council: Ballroom B
- Conference of Bishops: Ballroom C
- Vice Presidents of the ELCA: Ballroom D

**Sunday, Aug. 4, 2019
Plenary Session II
Ballroom B**

The Church Council of the ELCA resumed at 3:45 p.m. in Ballroom Hall B at the Hyatt Regency in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM *EN BLOC*

(Agenda II.A.2)

Secretary Boerger stated that one item was removed from *en bloc* consideration. The item concerning Hope Lutheran in San Mateo, California, was discussed separately.

***EN BLOC* APPROVAL OF CERTAIN ITEMS**

(Agenda II.A.2)

An *en bloc* resolution was presented to the Church Council of routine or noncontroversial actions. Opportunity was provided to members to remove items from *en bloc* for separate consideration. A single vote on those items remaining *en bloc* is taken without debate or amendment.

VOTED:

CC19.08.29 To take action *En Bloc* on the items listed in *En Bloc* items.

A. Synod Mission Support Plans

The ELCA Church Council has responsibility for reviewing and taking action on synod Mission Support plans as an interdependent expression 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). Since the Budget and Finance Committee did not meet prior to this Church Council meeting where the recommendations to the Church Council usually are made, the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer recommended the following actions:

Revisions to 2019 Synod Mission Support Plans

Since the April 2019 Church Council meeting, two revisions to 2019 Mission Support plans have been received. One synod requested to decrease the projected amount to be shared. One synod requested to decrease their percentage sharing.

VOTED:

CC19.08.29a1 To acknowledge with appreciation the action of the Minneapolis Area Synod to maintain the percentage of sharing of 2019 Mission Support contributions by congregations for synod and churchwide ministries but estimating an adjustment in the projected amount to be shared; and
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.

VOTED:

En Bloc

CC19.08.29a2

As a grateful church that affirms the partnership of congregation, synod and churchwide expressions, we affirm the percentage of sharing of 2019 Mission Support by congregations for synod and churchwide ministries by the Northern Great Lakes Synod.

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.

B. Revisions to 2020 Synod Mission Support Plans

Since the April 2019 Church Council meeting, two 2020 Mission Support plan revisions were received. One synod has requested to decrease their percentage sharing and decrease projected dollar amount to be shared. One synod has requested to hold their percentage sharing and decrease the projected dollar amount to be shared.

VOTED:

En Bloc

CC19.08.29b1

As a grateful church that affirms the partnership of congregation, synod and churchwide expressions, we acknowledge the action of the Lower Susquehanna Synod and affirm the percentage of sharing of 2020 Mission Support by congregations for synod and churchwide ministries and estimating an adjustment in the projected amount to be shared;

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 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.

VOTED:

En Bloc

CC19.08.29b2

To acknowledge with appreciation the action of the Minneapolis Area Synod to maintain the percentage of sharing of 2020 Mission Support contributions by congregations for synod and churchwide ministries but estimating an adjustment in the projected amount to be shared; and

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.

C. Ratification of Church Council Committees

Following the elections at the Churchwide Assembly, newly elected members will indicate their preferences for committee assignments prior to the November 2019 meeting. A final listing of committee membership for the triennium will be ratified by the Church Council at its November 2019 meeting upon recommendation by the Executive Committee.

At its November 2019 meeting, the Church Council also will appoint members to related advisory or liaison appointments for the time period from 2019 to 2022. Members of the Board Development Committee will be appointed by the Executive Committee in November 2019.

VOTED:

En Bloc

CC19.08.29c

To ratify the following appointments of continuing members of the ELCA Church Council to Church Council committees for the 2019–2022 time period:
Budget and Finance Committee: Dena Gable, James Jennings (chair);
Legal and Constitutional Review Committee: Cheryl Chatman, Gary Pederson (chair) and Phil Wirtanen;
Planning and Evaluation Committee: Chad Huebner(chair), Lisa Burk, and Ricardo Rivera; and
Program and Services Committee: Joe Nolte, Emma Wagner (chair), and Sonja Wolfe.

D. Churchwide Assembly Rules of Organization and Procedure

Since the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee did not meet prior to this Church Council meeting where the recommendations to the Church Council usually are made, the action came directly to the Church Council for consideration from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary.

The Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary made some revisions to the Rules of Organization and Procedure. Most notably, the deadlines were amended and language regarding form submissions was clarified.

VOTED:

En Bloc

CC19.08.29d

To recommend adoption of the following proposed action by the voting members of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly:

To adopt the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that are already in force).

E. Response to Synod Memorials/Resolutions

E.1. This memorial from the New England Synod was reclassified as a resolution and the Executive Committee referred it to the Office of the Secretary for a response.

E.1. Christ’s Great Commission

New England Synod (7B) [2017]

WHEREAS, the evangelical mandate of Christ to his apostles in Matthew 28:18-20 calls us to make his teaching and presence known throughout this earth’s nations; and

WHEREAS, the discipleship and gospel entailed in that Great Commission is obscured and diminished if the dissemination of its witness is thought of as exclusively intended for or achieved in the conversion of others to Christianity; and

WHEREAS, Christian discipleship and witness bids us reach out with a love that not only gives account of our faith but also genuinely values and respects our neighbors; and

WHEREAS, the current wording of the ELCA's constitutions in C4.02.c. and its parallels ("reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ") can too easily be heard to narrow the definition and motivation of our outreach and stand a contradiction of the good faith of witness; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is committed to fostering unity among the children of God for the sake of the world; and

WHEREAS, in the Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community (adopted by the ELCA Church Council, April 18, 1994) this church officially expressed "our urgent desire to live out our faith in Jesus Christ with love and respect for the Jewish people" and offered "prayer for the continued blessing of the Blessed One upon the increasing cooperation and understanding between Lutheran Christians and the Jewish community"; and

WHEREAS, in the ELCA's Guidelines for Lutheran-Jewish Relations this church affirms that "an encounter with living and faithful Judaism can be profoundly enriching for Christian self-understanding"; and

WHEREAS, in the ELCA's Guidelines for Christian-Muslim Relations we affirm that "the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls Christians to mutual understanding and friendship with Muslim people in the United States and around the world. By learning about Islam and seeking opportunities to know Muslim people better, we bear witness to God's saving love incarnate in Jesus"; and

WHEREAS, "the Scriptures have no single teaching about the relationship between the people of the covenant and those who practice other religions" (Engaging Others, Knowing Ourselves: A Lutheran Calling in a Multi-Religious World); and

WHEREAS, "reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ" goes beyond the previous C4.01., "The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world," in which we are called and sent to bear witness, not to "bring" which is the work of the Holy Spirit; and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther teaches in the Small Catechism that we believe that we cannot by our own "understanding or strength believe in Jesus Christ our Lord or come to him, but that the Holy Spirit calls us through the Gospel"; and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther's theology of the cross calls into question all human efforts to speak with certitude about the pathways of God; and

WHEREAS, in the light of the growing positive and rich multi-faith engagement of the 21st century, we have come to a new humility about the question of God's relation to other religions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to initiate a process to change C4.02.c. and its constitutional parallels with language such as: "Carry out Christ's Great Commission by giving a good account of our hope in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the resources of the ELCA enlist and consult its teaching theologians, bishops and other leaders in the drafting of such an amendment for consideration at its subsequent Churchwide Assembly.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.04.16b3]

To receive the resolution from New England Synod regarding Christ's Great Commission;

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Secretary in its consideration of amendments to *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*; and

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

Response from the Office of the Secretary (August 2019)

The Office of the Secretary has reviewed the reclassified resolution and had conversations with the chair of the ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force. The Office of the Secretary recommends the action of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly on "A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment: A policy statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" to be the response to this resolution. Furthermore, based on the action of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the Office of the Secretary will propose revised constitutional language in its consideration of

amendments to the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA to the Church Council for consideration at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

VOTED:

En Bloc

CC19.08.29e1

To receive with gratitude the resolution from the New England Synod concerning Christ's Great Commission;

To acknowledge the action of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on "A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment" as the response of the Church Council;

To direct the Office of the Secretary to propose revised constitutional language to the Church Council for consideration at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly; and

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

E.2. Inequality, Discrimination and Sexism

Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2019]

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod Council develop a year of celebration of women's ordination during 2020, include a celebration and special recognition upon the 50th anniversary of women's ordination at our annual gathering, promoting women preachers, teachers and speakers at all events during this year, and provide materials and encouragement to congregations to do the same; and be it further

RESOLVED, that upon the passage of the social statement *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* all congregations in the synod be encouraged to study this document; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod Council encourages the ELCA Church Council to take action to address the issues of inequality, discrimination and sexism.

VOTED:

En Bloc

CC19.08.29e2

To receive with gratitude the resolution from the Northwest Washington Synod concerning inequality, discrimination, and sexism;

To acknowledge the action of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as the response of the Church Council; and

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

F. Approval of ELCA Foundation Bylaws

According to constitutional provision 15.15., the Endowment Fund of the ELCA (doing business as ELCA Foundation) "hold[s] and manage[s] endowment assets and offer[s] pooled investment services for endowment funds of this church and its related congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions."

The ELCA Foundation is submitting an amendment to Section 2.2 of their bylaws for Church Council's consideration. The proposed bylaw amendment is as follows:

SECTION 2.2 Terms. Individuals shall be elected by the Church Council Churchwide Assembly to serve six three-year terms as trustees of this corporation with the possibility of two consecutive re-elections. The members of the Board of Trustees initially elected by the Churchwide Assembly in 2019 shall be divided into three classes as nearly equal in number as possible, so that the terms of office of one third of the members of the Board of Trustees shall expire every second year at the conclusion of the regular Fall meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America one class shall be deemed

to be elected to their first term and be eligible for election to two more terms, one class shall be deemed to be elected to a second term and be eligible for election to one more term; and one class shall be deemed to be elected to a third term and not be eligible for further election. A member of the Board of Trustees shall hold office for the term for which he or she was elected through the end of the meeting at which January 1st after his or her successor has been elected and until such successor has qualified, or until the member's prior death, resignation or removal. A period of at least two three years shall have elapsed between the expiration of a member's term of office and the commencement of the member's next term of office, if any. Any member of the Board of Trustees may be removed by the Secretary of the ELCA executive committee of the Board of Trustees upon two successive absences that have not been excused by the board. Any vacancy occurring because of the death, resignation or removal of a member of the Board of Trustees shall be filled by the Church Council of the ELCA for the unexpired term of such member of the Board of Trustees.

VOTED:

En Bloc

CC19.08.29f To approve the amended bylaws of the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Secretary Opinion to Hope Lutheran, San Mateo, California

Background (Secretary Report, January 29, 2019)

A petition was submitted by Hope Lutheran Church in San Mateo, California, requesting the secretary provide constitutional interpretation on calling their interim pastor because Bishop Mark W. Holmerud, Sierra Pacific Synod, did not attest the call. When a resolution comes from a synod council to the Church Council, the Executive Committee needs to refer the response to an office or a unit in accordance with ELCA Bylaw 14.41.01.b.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.01.02]

To assign the Sierra Pacific's referral of the Petition of Hope Lutheran San Mateo to the Office of the Secretary for suggested action and a timeline on how that action would take place.

Response from the Office of the Secretary (August 2019)

Hope Lutheran Church, San Mateo, Calif. submitted a petition to the Sierra Pacific Synod Council under **9.53.07**. This petition request was forwarded by the Sierra Pacific Synod Council to the Church Council. Until this case, **9.53.07** has been used as the basis for legislative petitions such as resolutions or memorials. Accordingly, the Church Council has treated this as a legislative petition, not a judicial petition. This petition asks for a finding that Bishop Mark Holmerud acted improperly.

Bishop Holmerud appointed the Rev. Daniel Severson as interim pastor of Hope in 2015. With this appointment, both Pastor Severson and Hope Lutheran agreed, in writing, that Pastor Severson would not be a candidate for a regular call at Hope. Before the synod provided the congregation with any potential candidates, however, the call committee requested permission to consider Pastor Severson for the call; that request was denied. After receiving candidates for the position, the call committee declined to recommend any for call.

The call committee instead approached Pastor Severson about this call. After at first declining, he ultimately agreed to be interviewed and the call committee recommended his call. Bishop Holmerud informed him and the leadership of the congregation that if the call was voted, he would not attest the call. At an improperly called congregation meeting, and then at a legally called meeting, the congregation voted to call Pastor Severson. Bishop Holmerud did not attest the call and informed Pastor Severson that his appointment to serve as interim pastor was terminated. He also informed Pastor Severson that his on leave from call status was expiring. Not being under call and without on leave status, he was removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church.

The petition seeks a declaration that Bishop Holmerud acted improperly in refusing to attest the call and the restoration of Pastor Severson to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

Church Council discussion:

Secretary Boerger stated that Hope Lutheran viewed this item from a legal process rather than a legislative process. Secretary Boerger supported Bishop Holmerud's decision.

A council member asked for clarification as to why Pastor Severson was removed from the roster. Secretary Boerger stated that if a pastor does not request "on leave from call" status, they may be removed from the roster if they do not have a call. Each synod handles calls for interim pastors differently. The Sierra Pacific Synod does not call interim pastors to serve the same congregation as the full-time pastor. Pastor Severson's on leave from call status was ending; he was told that he needed to reapply for on leave from call status, but he did not reapply. Because of this lapse, he was removed from the roster.

Church Council action:

There being no further discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC19.08.30 **To thank the Sierra Pacific Synod for its resolution forwarding the petition from Hope Lutheran Church, San Mateo, Calif. to the Church Council;**
To receive and adopt the recommendation of the ELCA secretary attached hereto as the response to this petition; and
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod and the congregation of this action.

Secretary Boerger was excused at 3:57 p.m. to attend the Conference of Bishops meeting.

CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY CITATION IN HONOR OF SECRETARY WM CHRIS BOERGER

(Agenda II.A.)

The council discussed the following action item to honor Secretary Wm Chris Boerger for his years of service as secretary of the ELCA.

VOTED:

CC19.08.31 *To recommend the following for adoption by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

WHEREAS, Secretary Wm Chris Boerger has excelled at preserving and promoting the importance of the LAW in the life of this church, both in his comprehensive knowledge of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and in his commanding grasp of the impact of civil law on the mission of the church in the world, all while continuing to pursue with enthusiasm and clarity his life's calling to preach and teach the GOSPEL at every opportunity;

WHEREAS, Secretary Boerger has fulfilled his constitutional responsibilities as secretary with attentiveness and care, joining with his predecessors in describing the Office of the Secretary as a service unit for the whole church; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Boerger has helped the three expressions of this church realize their unique polity for the whole church; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Boerger has demonstrated that sense of interdependence in his responsiveness to congregations; his collegiality with members of the Conference of

Bishops, synod officers, and staff; and his open-door policy to churchwide colleagues; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Boerger has contributed valuable insight to the boards of 1517 Media, Portico Benefit Services, and the Mission Investment Fund; and

WHEREAS Secretary Boerger has faithfully read the constitutions of this church monthly and the Augsburg Confession every Lent; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Boerger has embodied not only “God’s Work. Our Hands.” but also “God’s Work. Our Feet.” with his colorful collection of sock apparel; and

WHEREAS, Secretary Boerger in his proclamation of the Word continually points people to the “font that both claims us and sends us;” therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this church expresses its deepest appreciation to the Rev. Wm Chris Boerger for the many ways in which he has lived out his vocation in this church through the years, but particularly as secretary of this church; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, upon action of the Church Council, confers upon the Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2013-2019, the *Servus Dei* Award; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this church gives thanks to God for this dedicated servant of the gospel who, in word and deed, boldly proclaims, “We are church. We are Lutheran. We are church together. We are church for the sake of the world.”

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE NOVEMBER 2019 CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

(Agenda II.B.1)

The November 2019 meeting of the Church Council will be held November 7–10, 2019 at the Lutheran Center in Chicago. Orientation for newly elected members of the Church Council will be Friday, September 13, 2019 at the Lutheran Center.

Mentors have been identified for the incoming class of Church Council members.

ORIENTATION TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, assistant to the presiding bishop for governance, led council members in an orientation session. She noted that Vice President Horne assigned council members to particular roles and committees for the assembly. She noted that Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman and Mr. Reid A. Christopherson were the cochairs for the Memorials Committee and Ms. Emma K. Wagner and Mr. James J.F. Jennings were the cochairs for the Reference and Counsel Committee.

UPDATE ON VISION AND EXPECTATIONS REPLACEMENT

The Rev. Philip C. Hirsch, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit, provided an update on the *Vision and Expectations* review process. The Domestic Mission unit brought together eight people from across the United States—especially groups that felt underrepresented or not represented in the previous document.

The group examined the origins of *Vision and Expectations* from the October 1990 Church Council Minutes. The original intent of the document was as a prescriptive document to be used as a “teaching opportunity of shared expectations.” However, the document has been used as a juridical document. The group’s suggestion is to create a new document rather than rework the current *Vision and Expectations*.

There will be an open question to the church in which individuals can submit 250 words or less of what they feel should go into the document. Submissions will be accepted through the website that will also provide updates on the process. The working group will meet again in October.

A council member asked if the working group is considering renaming the document. Rev. Hirsch stated that the document will be renamed. Previous Church Council minutes show that this document has been contentious since its inception. He noted that one future possibility is to ask candidates for ministry if they have read the section of the ELCA constitution that holds rostered ministers accountable instead of asking candidates if they are living in accordance with *Vision and Expectations*. Candidacy committees could also ask if candidates have read *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*.

ADJOURNMENT
(Agenda II.C.)

The 95th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adjourned at 4:47 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 4, 2019.