

April 1, 2009

TO: Bishops of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Vice Presidents of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Secretaries of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Members of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Members of the Cabinet of Executives
Regional Coordinators

FROM: Secretary David D. Swartling

SUBJECT: Report of Actions of the Church Council (March 27–30, 2009)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Lutheran Center, Chicago, Illinois, on March 27–30, 2009. A variety of matters received attention. Here is a summary of particular actions along with background and explanatory information.

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**1. RECOMMENDATION ON SOCIAL STATEMENT
“HUMAN SEXUALITY: GIFT AND TRUST”**

Background:

“Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” is the text of the proposed social statement on human sexuality of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Work on this statement was authorized at the 2001 Churchwide Assembly. If approved by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, it will be the tenth social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The development and adoption of social statements are guided by the document “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns.”

In accordance with these policies and procedures, the

Church Council received “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” at its March 2009 meeting and voted to transmit it, with some minor and editorial amendments, to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. The text of the recommended proposed social statement will be available April 2 at www.elca.org/faithfuljourney.

Church Council Action:

To transmit the following to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly:

To adopt “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” as a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with the “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2006).

2. RECOMMENDATION ON SOCIAL STATEMENT IMPLEMENTING RESOLUTIONS

Background:

In accordance with the recommendation of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, implementing resolutions for the social statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” will come to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly as a separate action.

Church Council Action:

To transmit the following action to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly:

1. To embrace as a church our legacy of a rich theological tradition that proclaims God’s gracious love expressed in Jesus Christ as the basis of our salvation, hope, and unity, and to call upon members of this church on this basis to commit themselves to finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements;
2. To call upon this church to affirm the various studies created for the “Journey Together Faithfully” series as resources for ongoing deliberation and discernment, and to direct the program unit for Church in Society to maintain their availability as long as demand continues;
3. To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop to identify and publicize available liturgical resources for use by rostered leaders, individuals, and families at the time of divorce;
4. To encourage Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, to consider developing education curricula with particular attention to the needs of children, middle school students, high school youth, and their parents for understanding Christian values and making responsible choices;
5. To recognize that organizations like Women of the ELCA, Lutheran Men in Mission, Lutheran Youth Organization, and campus ministries foster and support friendships; to encourage them to lift up and celebrate the value of strong friendships and to support the formation of voluntary associations for nurturing them;
6. To call upon all congregations, pastors, and other rostered leaders to reach out in welcome to all in accord with previous Churchwide Assembly actions as reaffirmed by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly [CA05.05.18]), and to assist members to understand what it means to be hospitable to all in the name of Christ regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity;
7. To call upon the ELCA to amend the eligibility provisions of the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program, consistent with the policies of

this church;

8. To call upon this church to encourage the availability and funding of comprehensive sex education programs in public schools, as well as in Lutheran private schools;
9. To affirm the 2001 ELCA Message, “Commercial Sexual Exploitation” and its continuing value for the mission and ministry of the ELCA;
10. To call upon this church’s advocacy and corporate social responsibility ministries to support and advocate measures consistent with this social statement;
11. To express appreciation for the work being done by the churchwide organization, synods, institutions, and congregations to prevent sexual harassment and misconduct; to encourage strengthening these efforts by all expressions and ministries of this church; and to ensure the availability of effective resources for dealing with sexual misconduct and sexual harassment within this church.
12. To call upon teaching theologians, bishops, pastors, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, educators, and others to continue to extend theological and biblical reflection as well as theoretical and practical understanding of human sexuality through intellectual discourse, moral deliberation, continued research, discussion, and writing;
13. To recognize that the ELCA has adopted a strategy that will guide its response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic, and to call upon all units and expressions of this church to support that strategy;
14. To call upon all congregations, synods, early childhood education centers, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, seminaries, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, public policy advocacy ministries, and all churchwide units to carry out the substance and spirit of this statement; and
15. To call upon Church in Society and other appropriate churchwide units to oversee a process of implementation and accountability for this social statement and to report on implementation to the Church Council in early 2012.

3. RECOMMENDATION ON MINISTRY POLICIES

Background:

The Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies was requested by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, which asked that the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality “address and make recommendations on changes to any policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church” [CA07.06.27]. The document was released by the task force in February 2009 along with the proposed social statement, “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust,” which was requested by the 2001 Churchwide Assembly. As recommended by the task force, each resolution was considered separately.

Church Council Actions:

To transmit the following actions to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly:

1. **RESOLVED**, that the ELCA commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships.
2. **RESOLVED**, that the ELCA commit itself to finding a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church.
3. **RESOLVED**, that, in the implementation of these resolutions, the ELCA commit itself to bear one another’s burdens, love the neighbor, and respect the bound consciences of all.
4. **WHEREAS**, guided by the Holy Spirit, this church raises up, calls, supports, and maintains rosters of ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers for public ministry in service of the mission of Christ and seeks faithfully to discern in each situation what will best serve that mission; and
WHEREAS, this church maintains these four rosters according to policies and procedures that are developed and applied according to the specifications of chapters 7 and 20 of its *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions*; and
WHEREAS, this church has a polity, processes, and procedures that trust designated individuals and bodies to use churchwide standards to make decisions about fitness for rostered ministry in general and for call to a specific ELCA ministry; and
WHEREAS, some members, congregations, candidacy committees, and synods of the ELCA have discerned gifts and skills for rostered ministry in some people who are or contemplate being in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships and have indicated their conviction that rostering and calling such people would serve the

mission and ministry of this church; and

WHEREAS, other members, congregations, candidacy committees, and synods of the ELCA acknowledge those gifts and skills for ministry, but believe that this church must maintain an expectation of celibacy for any gay or lesbian person, whether or not that person is in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship, and thus believe that this church cannot call or roster people in such relationships; and

WHEREAS, the Church of Christ sometimes has been surprised by the actions of the Spirit, as is reported in the book of Acts when the inclusion of Gentiles was affirmed; and

WHEREAS, public accountability of rostered leaders in the ELCA is essential to nurturing the trust that is necessary for effective ministry; and

WHEREAS, although there is no generally recognized civil or ecclesial status that corresponds to heterosexual marriage for publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, this assembly has committed itself to find ways to recognize, support, and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships; and

WHEREAS, present ELCA policies prohibit the rostered service of any and all people in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, but this assembly has committed itself to find a way for people in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that Evangelical Lutheran Church in America call upon its members to commit themselves to respect the bound consciences of those with whom they disagree regarding decisions on the call and rostering of individuals in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, in this church and with churches ecumenically and globally; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church, because of its commitment to respect the bound consciences of all, declare its intent to allow structured flexibility in decision-making regarding the approving or disapproving in candidacy and the extending or not extending of a call to rostered service of a person who is otherwise qualified and who is living or contemplates living in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America make provision in its policies to eliminate the prohibition of rostered service by members who are in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the appropriate churchwide unit(s) be directed to develop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council be directed to approve, appropriate guidelines for a process by which congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization could hold people publicly accountable in their relationships who are in or contemplate being in lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships and who seek to be on the rosters of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Committee on Appeals be directed to develop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council be directed to approve, appropriate amendments to “Definition and Guidelines for Discipline” and the Vocation and Education program unit be directed to draft, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council be directed to approve, appropriate amendments to the “Vision and Expectations” documents and the Candidacy Manual to accomplish the intent of this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, that additional policies be developed, as necessary, so that those whom this church holds responsible for making decisions about fitness for rostered ministry in general and for call to a particular specific ELCA ministry may discern, and have guidance in discerning, the fitness for ministry of a member living in a publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationship; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that this church continue to trust its established processes and those to whom it has given the responsibility to discern who should and should not be rostered or called to public ministry in this church.

4. PROPOSED 2009 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

Background:

At its November meeting, the Church Council approved proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. (The Churchwide Assembly will adopt rules at its first plenary.) As part of its deliberation, the council voted to strike the following draft provision in Part Ten of the proposed rules:

Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations or Resolutions from a Social Statement Task Force

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations or resolutions originating from or relating to the

subject of a social statement task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to such recommendations or resolutions.

The Church Council also voted against another proposed amendment in Part Ten to require a two-thirds vote on proposals that would change ELCA policies. The social statement will require a two-thirds vote to pass pursuant to ELCA bylaw 12.12.01. Any implementing resolutions or the ministry policy recommendation will require, under the Rules of Organization and Procedure proposed at the November 2008 meeting, a majority vote for passage under *Robert’s Rules of Order*.

Prior to the February 2009 meeting of the Executive Committee, the Office of the Secretary received five synodical resolutions addressing the vote required in the proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure for the Churchwide Assembly relating to the social statement, its implementing resolutions, or the ministry policy recommendation and its resolutions. Additional resolutions have been received since that time. Although the resolutions varied somewhat, most seek a two-thirds vote on some or all of the issues addressed in the social statement or ministry policy recommendation.

At its February 2009 meeting, the Executive Committee voted [EC09.02.07]:

To receive the resolutions of the Central/Southern Illinois, Allegheny, Northeastern Iowa, Southwestern Texas, and Lower Susquehanna synods related to the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly;

To refer the resolutions to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council and to request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the March 2009 meeting of the Church Council; and

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

At its meeting on March 27, 2009, the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee extensively discussed ways to respond to the synodical resolutions that the Executive Committee had referred to it and to present language for Part Ten of the Rules of Organization and Procedure for purposes of discussion by the Church Council.

The Legal and Constitutional Review Committee presented the following to the Church Council without recommendation:

To amend the action previously taken by the Church Council with respect to Part Ten of the

Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly [CC08.11.37] by addition of the following paragraph:

Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations, Resolutions, Memorials, or Other Motions Originating From, or Relating to a Social Statement Task Force Report

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations, resolutions, memorials, or any other motions (including motions to amend or substitute motions) originating from, or relating to the subject of, a social statement task force report presented to this assembly.

Church Council Actions:

After considerable discussion, the Church Council voted against adding the proposed rule. The vote was 10–21 with two abstentions, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and Secretary David D. Swartling.

On another matter related to the Rules of Organization and Procedure, the Church Council at its November 2008 meeting had adopted an action [CC08.11.36], which included the following provision:

To authorize the presiding bishop and secretary of this church to prepare revisions that may be found necessary for the rules prior to their publication in the *Pre-Assembly Report* and to recommend any changes to the Church Council at its March 2009 meeting.

The secretary had made minor editorial and scheduling changes to the proposed rules, which will be posted in early April at the Churchwide Assembly Web site: www.elca.org/assembly. The Church Council at its March 2009 meeting approved the following action:

To amend the proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly by making the changes identified in Exhibit G, Part 2; and

To authorize the presiding bishop and secretary of this church to prepare further editing and scheduling revisions that may be found necessary for the Rules prior to their publication in the *Pre-Assembly Report*; and

To report any changes to the Church Council at its August 2009 meeting.

5. PROCESS TO STUDY THE ECOLOGY OF THE ELCA

Background:

In 1982, the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the Lutheran Church in America committed themselves to joining to form a “new Lutheran church” so that the new church would glorify God and faithfully serve Christ’s mission in the world. In order to implement this commitment, a Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) was formed. For five years, the Commission faithfully and diligently engaged in study, reflection, and counsel regarding the myriad aspects involved with the merger of predecessor church bodies and the formation and organization of this new church. The recommendations from the CNLC incorporated a bold vision for mission and ministry that were grounded in underlying theological and organizational principles, including the interdependence of the three “expressions” (i.e., congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization) of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its numerous partners in ministry.

The world and this church have changed since the ELCA came into existence in January 1988. After 20 years, expected growth in membership and mission support in the ELCA have not met expectations. Indeed, the churchwide organization income has remained essentially flat during its history, meaning that fewer dollars, adjusted for inflation, currently exist for ministry than was available in mission support in the first years of its existence. In addition, giving patterns to this church and general philanthropic giving patterns have changed over time. These trends have meant that some parts of the interdependent ecosystems of the ELCA and its partners have thrived, while others have not.

Despite several efforts at restructuring, the underlying ecology of the ELCA and its partners has not changed materially. The current global financial crisis has placed stress upon the interdependent ecosystems that make up this church. The churchwide organization, synods, and congregations are addressing contingency planning as they face an uncertain economic future. Questions abound whether traditional patterns of interrelationships can be sustained and whether they represent the most effective and missional approaches to cooperative ministry.

In this environment, it is critical to be proactive in evaluating the ways that interdependent partners support and accompany one another in their common missional efforts. Such an evaluation must not be myopic and limited only to the churchwide organization, but must consider the ecology of all the interdependent ecosystems.

At the same time, with current budget limitations, an extensive study of the magnitude of the Commission for the New Lutheran Church would not be financially feasible in the present financial environment.

It is proposed that a study group be formed to begin the assessment process. The study group would be composed of key leaders and representative partners of this church and would be asked to make recommendations regarding such an evaluation, including its scope, cost, and timeline. It is anticipated that such a group would form in the near future, begin its work, and bring a report and recommendations to the Church Council in April 2010. It also is anticipated that a comprehensive report and recommendations would be brought to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council Action:

To acknowledge that the principles of organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America call us to be one church consisting of “interdependent partners sharing responsibly in God’s mission” in which this church is called to be in relationship with institutions and agencies, including seminaries, colleges, and universities, as well as other partners, so that together we can build capacity for evangelical witness and service in the world;

To recognize that more than 20 years have passed since the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America came into existence, that the relationships among this church and partner institutions and agencies have evolved substantially, and that assumptions that undergirded the original organization, governance, and interrelationships of this church may no longer apply or apply in a different way in the 21st century;

To recognize further that significant societal and economic changes have taken place that raise profound issues regarding the organization and governance of this church, its interrelationships with partner institutions and agencies, and the ways in which ministry can be accomplished most effectively;

To acknowledge the desire by this Church Council to address these difficult and complex issues by beginning a process to evaluate the organization and governance of this church and the interrelationships among its expressions and partner agencies and institutions for the purpose of bringing a comprehensive report and recommendations to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly;

To authorize Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, in collaboration with the Executive Committee of the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops, to appoint a study group for the purpose of formulating a plan to undertake such an evaluation; and

To request that the study group bring a report and possible recommendations through the Executive Committee in consultation with the Planning and Evaluation Committee for the April 2010 meeting of the Church Council and that such report include the membership of a task force to conduct the evaluation, an outline of potential topics to address, a timetable, budget implications, and such other issues as the study group believes will facilitate the evaluation.

6. STRATEGY ON HIV AND AIDS

Background:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including its predecessor church bodies, has a long history of work related to HIV and AIDS. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and several representatives from this church have participated in the International AIDS Conference and the ecumenical pre-conference event in both 2006 and 2008. Following the conference in 2006, Presiding Bishop Hanson encouraged consideration by the Church Council and the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of a request to develop a comprehensive churchwide strategy on HIV and AIDS.

A planning group was organized, which included representatives from the Church in Society unit, the Global Mission unit, the Communication Services unit, and the Office of the Presiding Bishop. In September 2007, a consultation was convened involving members of an existing inter-unit staff working group on HIV and AIDS, missionaries, advocacy staff, and others. Prior to the meeting, staff conducted an inventory of existing work, policies, and funds that support AIDS ministries in this church. The meeting consisted of an asset-mapping process designed to lead to the development of a comprehensive strategy on AIDS ministries in this church.

The 2007 Churchwide Assembly called for a churchwide strategy for responding to HIV and AIDS to build on and deepen current denominational engagement with the pandemic in the U.S. and around the world [CA07.03.12].

The 2007 Churchwide Assembly took an additional action [CA07.06.35]: “. . . to instruct the Church Council to take steps to develop a plan to provide up to an additional \$1 million in funding to implement the HIV and AIDS strategy.” The action was referred to the Church Council, the Office of the Treasurer, and the Office of the Presiding Bishop not only to encourage its continued support of the development and funding of this church’s strategy on HIV and AIDS, but also to defer action related to funding requirements for the implementation of the HIV and AIDS strategy until a strategy with funding requirements is adopted by the

Church Council. The “additional \$1 million” referred to in the assembly action is now understood to be included in the \$10 million goal for funding the strategy.

Since the 1980s, the ELCA has worked with partners in Africa to address HIV and AIDS. In 2001, at the urging of companion churches, the ELCA launched the World Hunger Appeal’s “Stand with Africa” campaign, which supports education, advocacy, and fund-raising that enable ELCA members to walk faithfully with companions in Africa as they address the devastating interrelated dynamics of HIV and AIDS, civil strife, poverty, and food security issues. “Stand with Africa” addresses HIV and AIDS not just in medical terms, but as a disease of poverty.

Beginning in 2007 and 2008, the ELCA considered the wisdom of engaging in a possible malaria initiative at the same time it lives out its commitment to intensify its HIV and AIDS response and develops a comprehensive churchwide HIV and AIDS strategy, as mandated by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. From the beginning of the conversations, ELCA staff emphasized with partners in the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI)—Lutheran World Relief, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and the United Nations Foundation—that engagement in malaria work would not come at the expense of its HIV and AIDS commitment. Rather, the two would need to be held together strategically in the ELCA, both in interpretation and in work with companions. Developing synergy with existing health-related and HIV and AIDS efforts would need to be a high priority in the ELCA’s engagement with malaria work.

By the fall of 2008, the ELCA’s HIV and AIDS efforts and the multi-partnered LMI were separated as far as the other LMI partners and the financial campaign component were concerned. The ELCA views its work with HIV and AIDS as a priority for this church, evidenced by the call for this strategy. In addition to this important focus, the ELCA at its 2009 Churchwide Assembly also will consider the proposed Lutheran Malaria Initiative. Combating these two diseases of poverty with parallel and complementary efforts is the thrust of the proposed action considered by the Church Council in March 2009 for referral to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly for action. At its November 2008 meeting, the Church Council and its advisors had the opportunity to review and respond to the draft strategy document.

In addition to regular review by Church Council, churchwide staff, and other previously participating review groups, the HIV and AIDS strategy has been shared with many groups in an effort to gain perspectives on the strategy from varying viewpoints. Groups and

individuals include the Conference of Bishops, ELCA clergy of color, Lutherans Concerned/North America, Lutheran AIDS Network (LANET), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and people living with HIV or AIDS. Additionally, there was continuing review by the domestic and international staff of the ELCA as well as rostered and lay leaders, some of whom work with ministries and organizations related to HIV and AIDS. Ecumenical feedback also was received, including responses from the United Church of Christ and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Church Council Action:

To adopt the ELCA Strategy on HIV and AIDS;

To add the voice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to that of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches in recognizing one of the most important lessons the church has learned in the past 25 years: “the body of Christ has AIDS”;

To call on the ELCA—its members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and related agencies and institutions—to implement this strategy, thereby embracing the goal of becoming an HIV and AIDS-competent church and contributing to the efforts of the wider global community:

- 1. To halt the spread of HIV through effective prevention, treatment, and care;**
- 2. To eliminate the stigma and discrimination experienced by those who are HIV-positive; and**
- 3. To reduce the conditions of poverty and marginalization that contribute to the spread of HIV;**

To express thanks for the many individuals, groups, and global companions who have contributed to the development of this strategy and have encouraged and assisted this church as it prepares to embrace HIV and AIDS work on a larger scale, both domestically and internationally;

To commend the Conference of Bishops for its engagement of the spirit of the HIV and AIDS strategy by being tested at its March 2009 meeting;

To acknowledge the new threshold of domestic ministry among people living with HIV and AIDS in the United States that is represented by this strategy;

To commend the Lutheran World Federation for its leadership within the Lutheran communion—in particular its “Breaking the Silence” initiative and its call for all member churches to develop an HIV and AIDS strategy that reflects their particular context and that grows out of shared Lutheran theology and experience;

To pledge to join the Lutheran World Federation in an intensified global campaign that will focus attention and resources on those regions most affected by HIV and AIDS, in particular, sub-Saharan Africa;

To express appreciation for the partnership of companion churches, ecumenical and interfaith partners, and international and domestic organizations in the ELCA's past global engagement and as the ELCA seeks to live out this new strategy internationally and domestically;

To encourage synods and congregations to embrace this strategy, both on their own territory and through their global companion synod relationships, coordinating their efforts with each other and with the Global Mission program unit;

To celebrate the significant HIV and AIDS work that was carried out through the World Hunger Appeal's second-mile initiative, "Stand With Africa: A Campaign of Hope" and to commit to continue that work through this new HIV and AIDS strategy;

To thank World Hunger donors for their faithful giving to the "Stand with Africa" campaign and to invite them and others into continuing this work through the generous funding of this strategy;

To anticipate synergies in addressing global health issues—in particular, diseases that are intensified by poverty—as a possible Lutheran Malaria Initiative is developed in the 2009–2011 biennium;

To forward the HIV and AIDS strategy to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly for information and affirmation; and

To request that the 2009 Churchwide Assembly approve the raising of \$10 million to begin and build over the next three years (2009-2012) to support the HIV and AIDS strategy through additional designated gifts within the World Hunger Appeal, acknowledging that the \$1 million goal encouraged by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly is to be included in the \$10 million goal.

7. LUTHERAN MALARIA INITIATIVE

Background:

A unique opportunity for engagement by Lutheran partners to address "diseases of poverty," including malaria, came to Lutheran World Relief (LWR) in 2007, when LWR staff members were approached by the United Nations Foundation (UNF). UNF encouraged LWR to explore the possibility of embarking on a unique partnership to mobilize the "Lutheran constituency" in this country against malaria. The specific opportunity involved a possible multimillion-dollar grant from the UNF, which had received funds to combat malaria from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. These funds

could assist LWR to develop its capacity to mobilize Lutherans to combat malaria. The campaign would include both a significant educational component and a major fundraising component.

When approached by UNF, LWR staff understood that the goal of mobilizing U.S. Lutherans and engaging in international program work on malaria would require the full engagement of both the ELCA and The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS). Since July 2007, LWR and ELCA churchwide staff from a number of units, including the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Church in Society, Global Mission, Communication Services, and Development Services, have engaged in intensive conversation about what such a proposal might look like and whether to participate. At various stages, but with increasing intentionality, these conversations included the LCMS. LCMS leadership has affirmed that LCMS is a full partner in LMI with LWR and the ELCA, and is committed to the joint partnership goals of education, advocacy, and raising funds to contain malaria. The LCMS meets in convention in 2010.

In the summer of 2007, an initial feasibility study was conducted by Community Counseling Services (CCS) on behalf of LWR. CCS recommended that a campaign goal of \$75 million over five years is realistic. An initial suggested breakdown of this goal was the following: LWR, \$30 million; ELCA, \$25 million; and LCMS, \$20 million. Money raised in this campaign would be channeled through the following:

- Church- or church-related entities, specifically: (1) LWR, as it builds its capacity to provide malaria-related services in Africa (particularly in West and East Africa); (2) the ELCA, as it engages companion churches in all regions of Africa and within the wider context of the Lutheran World Federation; and (3) LCMS, as it develops projects in eight African countries; and
- The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector, and affected communities.

The ELCA considered the wisdom of engaging in a possible malaria initiative at the same time it lives out its commitment to intensify its HIV and AIDS response and develops a comprehensive churchwide HIV and AIDS strategy, as mandated by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. ELCA staff emphasized from the beginning of the conversations with LWR, LCMS, and the UNF that engagement in malaria work would not come at the expense of its HIV and AIDS commitment. Rather, the two would need to be held together strategically, both in interpretation and in work with companions.

The Church Council has taken two actions related to the Lutheran Malaria Initiative. The actions [CC07.11.80 and CC08.04.12] authorized the development of the initiative and integration of it with the HIV and AIDS strategy, the anticipated churchwide appeal, and the World Hunger program and appeal. The actions also called for the council to receive updates on the development of the initiative at the April 2008, November 2008, and March 2009 meetings.

Church Council Action:

To recommend adoption of the following resolution by the voting members of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly:

To approve continued development of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI) by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in partnership with Lutheran World Relief (LWR), The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), and the United Nations Foundation (UNF);

To join with domestic and global partners to address malaria as a disease intensified by poverty within the context of comprehensive and sustainable community development and in close cooperation and partnership with this church’s companion churches in Africa and the Lutheran World Federation;

To begin work related to LMI in the next biennium (2009-2011), specifically involving preparation of resources, pilot projects at sites to be determined, solicitation of individual donors, and collaboration with synods and congregations for anticipated LMI fundraising engagement following the 2011 Churchwide Assembly;

To develop the Lutheran Malaria Initiative in ways that reinforce efforts by the World Hunger Appeal both to achieve its \$25 million goal and continue to raise designated funds to address another disease intensified by poverty: HIV and AIDS;

To authorize continued receipt of designated LMI gifts under the auspices of the World Hunger Appeal, with such funds to be allocated through a specific budget for this initiative;

To request that a report and possible recommendations for a possible churchwide campaign for the Lutheran Malaria Initiative be brought to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly; and

To anticipate that this whole church—members of every age, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, agencies and institutions, the Women of the ELCA, Lutheran Men in Mission, the Lutheran Youth Organization, colleges and universities, seminaries, social ministry organizations, camping ministries, and all others will learn about malaria and

other diseases intensified by poverty and prayerfully support the Lutheran Malaria Initiative as it grows into readiness for a possible major fundraising campaign in synods and congregations following authorizing action by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

8. DEFERRAL OF CHURCHWIDE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Background:

At the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, a Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding was formed to study ELCA current development and stewardship programs, and to develop recommendations regarding future ELCA resource development initiatives to fund new ministries.

The Blue Ribbon Committee completed its work in April 2007 with a recommendation to test the feasibility and readiness of a churchwide funding initiative intended to reflect this church’s philosophy of mission funding as one church in three expressions where each expression carries out various parts of this church’s work.

In order to meet the charge from the Churchwide Assembly, a feasibility study oversight committee selected from key internal and external ELCA constituencies was formed to manage the readiness assessment and feasibility study process.

The primary objectives of the feasibility and readiness assessment project were to:

1. Design, plan, and implement a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility and readiness of the ELCA churchwide organization to conduct a successful major churchwide fundraising campaign to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the ELCA; and
2. Conduct research and make specific recommendations regarding: campaign goal, programmatic case for support including specifically the integration of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative and funding of ELCA HIV and AIDS strategy, volunteer leadership, major gifts prospects, structure and infrastructure, budget, and the external environment.

This feasibility and readiness assessment study process was initiated to deliver a report to the Church Council in March 2009 with recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly regarding a major churchwide funding initiative for mission.

In May 2008, Growth Design Corporation (GDC) of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was retained as counsel to design and implement the feasibility and readiness assessment process. A steering committee was established to oversee the process. Thereafter, GDC met with numerous ELCA leaders and evaluated the fund-raising capacity of the ELCA. It also developed an initial case study and worked

with the Development Services unit and ELCA Foundation staff to identify major donor prospects and priorities for a possible fund appeal. As a result of this work, twin priorities of church renewal and leadership development emerged, as well as an emphasis on connecting the expressions of this church and its partners in ministry. These priorities would need to be meshed with the HIV and AIDS strategy and the Lutheran Malaria Initiative. A focus developed on planning and positioning a fund-raising appeal tied to the ELCA's 25th anniversary celebration in 2012.

As work on the readiness assessment and feasibility study process progressed, national and global economic conditions deteriorated significantly. In light of the economic situation, the steering committee, in consultation with Development Services staff, and the Administrative Team recommended that this church grow in its readiness for a churchwide resource development initiative to be considered at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council Action:

To receive the summary of “The Report of the Readiness Assessment and Feasibility Study Project: Finding and Recommendations in Relation to a Churchwide Resource Development Initiative”;

To thank the members of the Feasibility Study Steering Committee for their oversight of the study process: Ms. Kristi S. Bangert, Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, Bp. Allan C. Bjornberg, Mr. John R. Emery, Ms. Carol Erickson, Ms. Christine Grumm, Ms. Cynthia J. Halverson, Mr. David P. Novak, Ms. Ann Sponberg Peterson, Bp. Peter Rogness, Pr. John R. Sabatelli, Pr. A. Craig Settlage, Mr. Robert Shafis, Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, and Pr. Larry G. Westfield;

To express appreciation to the 106 churchwide staff, bishops, rostered leaders, donors, and friends for their willingness to receive the draft case statement and share their response and counsel;

To encourage Development Services and the ELCA Foundation to move towards implementation of capacity-building recommendations in the next biennium (2009– 2011); and

To request that a report and recommendations for a possible churchwide campaign be brought to the April 2011 meeting of the Church Council for possible consideration by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly with the request that the report address an affirmation of readiness; an assessment of capacity, including staffing implications; and a proposed budget.

9. 2009 CURRENT FUND AND WORLD HUNGER SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS

Background:

Over the past month, the churchwide organization has been in the process of closing the books for the 2008 fiscal year, receiving altered mission-support plans from synods for 2009, and adjusting the 2009 income budget to reflect both the 2008 financial results and the changed plans from synods. At the time of preparing the adjusted income estimates, 35 synods had altered their mission-support plans for a total decrease of over \$2.3 million from their prior plans. As a result, the churchwide organization must change its spending plans. The Office of the Presiding Bishop has worked closely with unit and section executives to prepare revised 2009 spending plans.

The March 2009 revised spending plan for the current fund represents a reduction of \$5.6 million from the revised plan authorized by the council in November 2008. The March 2009 revised spending authorization for World Hunger represents a decrease of \$1.9 million from the plan the council authorized in November 2008.

Church Council Action:

To approve a revised current fund spending authorization of \$76,808,900 for fiscal year 2009; and

To approve a revised World Hunger spending authorization of \$18,700,000 for fiscal year 2009.

10. 2010–11 BIENNIUM BUDGET: CURRENT FUND AND WORLD HUNGER

Church Council Action:

To recommend to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly the following:

2010 Budget Proposal

To approve a 2010 current fund income proposal of \$76,692,000;

To approve a 2010 World Hunger income proposal of \$18,700,000;

2011 Budget Proposal

To approve a 2011 current fund income proposal of \$76,778,000;

To approve a 2011 World Hunger income proposal of \$19,000,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

11A. REVISIONS TO 2009 SYNOD MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS

Background:

The Church Council has responsibility for reviewing and approving or withholding approval for synodical mission-support plans. Since the November 2008 Church Council meeting, revisions for 2009 mission-support plans have been received from 35 synods.

Church Council Action:

To affirm with sincere appreciation the increases in the percentage for the sharing of 2009 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synod: Western North Dakota Synod;

To affirm the revised 2009 mission-support dollar estimates for the sharing of mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Alaska, Eastern Washington-Idaho, Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountain, South Dakota, Northwestern Minnesota, Northeastern Minnesota, Saint Paul Area, Southeastern Minnesota, Central States, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Northern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa, Western Iowa, Northern Great Lakes, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee, La Crosse Area, Northwestern Ohio, New Jersey, New England, Southeastern Pennsylvania, West Virginia-Western Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, and Florida-Bahamas synods; and

To acknowledge the decision of the following synods to request a reduction of their previously established percentage for the sharing of mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries; to affirm their prayerful efforts in continuing to be strong partners; to encourage them to restore their percentage to their previous level in the future; and to commit to supporting them in this process through continuing conversation and collaboration on behalf of our shared ministries: Oregon, Southwest California, Pacifica, Eastern North Dakota, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, Upstate New York, and Northeastern Pennsylvania synods.

11B. 2010 SYNOD MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS

Background:

Mission-support plans for 2010 from 54 synods have been received.

Church Council Action:

To affirm with sincere appreciation the increases

in the percentage for the sharing of 2010 mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Alaska, Southwestern Washington, Eastern Washington-Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Sierra Pacific, Western North Dakota, South Dakota, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Western Iowa, Metropolitan New York, Northwestern Pennsylvania, West Virginia-Western Maryland, South Carolina, and Caribbean synods;

To affirm the 2010 mission-support dollar estimates for the sharing of mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Northwest Washington, Southwest California, Pacifica, Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountain, Northwestern Minnesota, Northeastern Minnesota, Southwestern Minnesota, Minneapolis Area, Saint Paul Area, Southeastern Minnesota, Nebraska, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Southwestern Texas, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, Central/Southern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa, Northeastern Iowa, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, La Crosse Area, North/West Lower Michigan, Northwestern Ohio, Southern Ohio, New Jersey, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Slovak Zion, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Lower Susquehanna, Upper Susquehanna, Delaware-Maryland, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Virginia, Southeastern, and Florida-Bahamas synods; and

To acknowledge the decision of the following synods to request a reduction of their previously established percentage for the sharing of mission-support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries; to affirm their prayerful efforts in continuing to be strong partners; to encourage them to restore their percentage to their previous level in the future; and to commit to supporting them in this process through continuing conversation and collaboration on behalf of our shared ministries: Northern Great Lakes, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Northeastern Ohio, and North Carolina synods.

12. ELECTION RESULTS

A. CHURCH COUNCIL

Background:

When a vacancy on the Church Council occurs, the Office of the Secretary seeks two nominees from the same synod in which the council member held membership in a congregation. The Church Council then elects one person to serve out the unexpired term.

The Rev. David W. Peters resigned from the Church Council to accept a position as the director for evangelical mission for the Montana Synod. The Montana Synod Council forwarded the following names to replace him for a term that ends in 2013:

Pr. Tim A. Tostengard, Billings, Mont. (1F)
Pr. Philip R. Wold, Sheridan, Wyo. (1F)

Church Council Action:

The Church Council elected the Rev. Philip R. Wold.

B. SOCIAL MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

Background:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America serves as a corporate member of certain inter-Lutheran organizations and affiliated social ministry organizations. The role of corporate members includes the responsibility to elect representatives to the organization's board of directors as prescribed in the organization's governing documents. The relationship of the ELCA to certain inter-Lutheran organizations and affiliated social ministry organizations is expressed through the Church in Society program unit.

The ELCA serves as a corporate member of Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn, N.Y.; the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, Sioux Falls, S.D.; Lutheran Services in America, Baltimore, Md.; Mosaic, Inc., Omaha, Neb.; and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Baltimore, Md. In the case of Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn, N.Y., the ELCA's annual election of board members complies with their constitutional requirement that this action constitute an annual meeting of the corporate member. The Church in Society program unit has forwarded to the Church Council the following nominations for positions on the boards of these organizations.

Church Council Action:

To elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc., to a three-year term expiring in 2012: Mr. Mark Klever;

To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service: Ms. Kathi Anderson and the Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., to three-year terms expiring in December 2011; and

To elect to the board of trustees of Lutheran Medical Center: Ms Lynda Anderson to a two-year term expiring in 2011 and Mr. Darin P. McAtee to a three-year term expiring in 2012.

C. BOARDS OF ELCA SEMINARIES

Background:

Bylaw 8.31.02. outlines basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries. Subsection 8.31.02.a. provides for churchwide representation: "At least one-fifth nominated, in consultation with the seminaries, by the appropriate churchwide unit and elected by the Church Council." This process of nomination and election is accomplished by these steps:

1. The appropriate seminary president notifies the director for theological education of an upcoming board vacancy and the term of that board position (as specified in the seminary's governing documents).
2. The director for theological education contacts the seminary president in order to consult on filling the vacancy and, with the concurrence of the executive director of Vocation and Education, reaches an agreement on a single nomination.
3. The director for theological education submits that nomination in a letter also signed by the executive director to the secretary of the ELCA for inclusion in the agenda of the Church Council. This letter will include a brief candidate vita and a summary of the gifts this person brings to this service.
4. The Church Council is asked to ratify the nomination at its next meeting.
5. The Office of the Secretary notifies the seminary president of the action taken on the nomination, sending a copy to the director for theological education for the unit's records.

Church Council Action:

To elect as a member of the board of directors of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn: the Rev. Gemechis Desta Buba, to a three-year term expiring in 2012;

To elect as a member of the board of directors of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Ill.: Ms. Kathryn Hasselblad-Pascale, to a three-year term expiring in 2012;

To re-elect as members of the board of directors of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Ill.: Mr. J. Arthur Gustafson and the Rev. Durk K. Peterson, to two-year terms expiring in 2011; and

To re-elect as members of the board of directors of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Penn.: Ms. Priscilla Kinney, Dr. Nelvin Vos, and the Rev. E. Roy Riley Jr., to three-year terms expiring in 2012.