




# Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

November 11, 2014

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

**FROM:**  The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, secretary

**SUBJECT:** Report of Actions of the Church Council (Nov. 7-10, 2014)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Lutheran Center, Chicago, Ill., Nov. 7-10, 2014. Here is a summary of particular actions along with background information.

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## 1. CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINATION AND ELECTION

### *Background:*

Mr. Michael Mason (5C) resigned from the Church Council. In accordance with ELCA bylaw 13.41.05. and constitutional provisions 14.15. and 19.03., Secretary Wm Chris Boerger declared a vacancy on the council.

The Central/Southern Illinois Synod (5C) nominated Mr. Vernon K. Veal, Bloomington, Ill., from its lay male membership to complete the term of Mr. Mason ending in 2019.

### ***Church Council Action:***

**To elect Mr. Vernon K. Veal, Bloomington, Ill. (5C), to the Church Council for a term ending in 2019.**

## 2. REVISION OF 2015 FISCAL YEAR SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS

### *Background:*

The Church Council's Budget and Finance Committee reviewed income estimates and the spending authorizations for the current fund and World Hunger. It recommended revisions to spending authorizations for fiscal year 2015.

### ***Church Council Action:***

**To approve a revised 2015 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$69,650,020; and  
 To approve a revised 2015 fiscal year World Hunger spending authorization of \$20,000,000.**

### **3. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, INVESTMENT SCREENS AND PLANNING**

#### *Background:*

The ELCA's concern for corporate social responsibility is expressed through issue papers, investment screening, shareholder resolutions and advocacy. Work of the corporate social responsibility program is based on this church's social statements and messages, as well as Churchwide Assembly and Church Council social policy resolutions. The program functions in close cooperation with Portico Benefit Services, other ELCA-related organizations and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. The Church Council has established a processes for writing, revising and approving issue papers that address specific social concerns related to investments and for developing social criteria investment screens.

Oversight and implementation of the corporate social responsibility program are shared by the ELCA and Portico Benefit Services and staffed by a part-time consultant. As part of a succession plan and planning for the future of the program, Portico and the ELCA will draft a shared part-time position description and will determine shared salary and benefit cost allotments, asking the current consultant, Ms. Patricia Zerega, to continue in that role.

#### *Church Council Actions:*

**To approve the Private Prisons Social Criteria Investment Screen;**

**To approve the amendments to the following corporate social responsibility issue paper and economic social criteria investment screens, but to request that the original issue papers be archived for historical and research purposes:**

- **Environment Social Criteria Investment Screen**
- **Extractive Industries Issue Paper**
- **Military Weapons Social Criteria Investment Screen**

**To affirm the proposed succession plan as a necessary next step in joint planning around corporate social responsibility work between the churchwide organization and Portico Benefit Services; and**

**To request the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit and Portico Benefit Services to provide a progress report in the April 2015 meeting of the Church Council and a final report with recommendations no later than the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council.**

### **4. APPROVAL OF DISABILITY MINISTRIES CASE STATEMENT**

#### *Background:*

While considering action to launch "the 25th Anniversary Campaign for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as a major fundraising effort of this church," the 2013 Churchwide Assembly added and approved "a goal of \$4 million for disability ministries, to advocate for inclusion of persons with disabilities in the life of this church, to train leaders both clergy and lay so that they would be equipped to work with persons with disabilities, to work with synods to create local committees for disability ministries, and to equip persons living with disabilities for lives of leadership and service in this church." To implement the assembly action, the Mission Advancement and the Congregational and Synodical Mission units worked with an advisory team to develop a case statement for the campaign.

#### *Church Council Action:*

**To receive the Disability Ministries Case Statement from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit;**

**To thank the advisory team for their imaginative, thoughtful and diligent work to form and equip the ministries of the ELCA to reach more people with the good news of Jesus Christ;**

**To approve the implementation of the Disability Ministries program into the Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA as detailed in the case statement; and**

**To encourage all expressions of this church to continue to consider ways to support the Campaign for the ELCA in order for the ELCA to be better-positioned to do God's work in Jesus' name throughout the world, for decades to come.**

## **5. APPROVAL OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES CASE STATEMENT**

### *Background:*

While considering action to launch “the 25th Anniversary Campaign for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as a major fundraising effort of this church,” the 2013 Churchwide Assembly added and approved:

To instruct the Church Council to add an additional campaign priority of encouraging, recognizing, and forming lay youth and young adult leaders, and to add an additional \$4 million to the campaign goal specifically for the formation, recognition, and encouragement of lay young adult and youth leaders;

To call on the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to form an advisory team, funded out of the campaign, to seek out and support the networks and efforts of lay young adult and youth leaders, to include among those on that team lay young adult leaders recommended by ELCA congregations, ELCA campus, youth, and outdoor ministers, as well as leaders from ELCA affiliated and/or associated organizations at the discretion of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, to charge that same team with searching for new ideas and fresh voices emerging in the church, and to charge that same team with assisting in the acquisition of and advising on the allocation of funds received as part of the additional \$4 million dollars of the campaign goal seeking to re-imagine the ministries of the ELCA through the eyes of lay young adults and youth leaders in the body of Christ

To implement the assembly action, the Mission Advancement and the Congregational and Synodical Mission units worked with an advisory team to develop a case statement for the campaign.

### *Church Council Action:*

**To receive with appreciation the “Youth and Young Adult Ministries Case Statement” prepared by youth and young adults and their stakeholders;**

**To affirm the objectives listed in that “Case Statement” as a list of potential efforts that could form the ministry and vision for how the churchwide expression could support youth and young adult engagement across this Church;**

**To thank the advisory team for their imaginative, thoughtful and diligent work to form and equip the ministries of the ELCA to reach more people with the good news of Jesus Christ;**

**To request that the goal be set at \$2 million for current fund gifts for Youth and Young Adult Ministries as part of Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA and that a goal of \$2 million be set for the creation of a permanent endowment to support youth and young adult ministries into the future; and**

**To encourage all expressions of this Church to continue to consider ways to support the Campaign for the ELCA in order for the ELCA to be better positioned to do God’s work in Jesus’ name throughout the world for decades to come.**

## **6. CONFERRAL OF THE HONORARY TITLE OF “PRESIDING BISHOP EMERITUS”**

### *Background:*

Voting members of the 2013 Churchwide Assembly informally inquired about the possibility of conferring the title of “presiding bishop emeritus” to then Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson. The Executive Committee of the Church Council, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, reviewed related practices and implications for conferring such titles. The review included reports regarding the use of titles in ecumenical and international contexts and a survey of whether synods confer the title ‘bishop emeritus’ to former synodical bishops.

### *Church Council Action:*

**To confer the honorary title of “presiding bishop emeritus” to the Rev. Herbert W. Chilstrom, the Rev. H. George Anderson and the Rev. Mark S. Hanson.**

## **7. APPROVAL OF THE AMENDED CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL POLICIES**

### *Background:*

Employees of the churchwide organization of the ELCA are expected to read, understand and comply with the Personnel Policies of the Churchwide Organization. A review of the policies resulted in several proposed amendments to sections dealing with such matters as avoiding conflicts of interest, the new employee's introductory period, accuracy of information, flexible schedules, reporting harassment or other inappropriate behavior, the use of social media and preventing workplace violence.

### *Church Council Action:*

**To approve the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies.**

## **8. SUPPORT FOR THE SPECIAL NEEDS RETIREMENT FUND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

### *Background:*

The 1993 Churchwide Assembly established [CA93.08.100] the ELCA Special Needs Retirement Fund to provide "both for additional pension contributions for pastors in situations of low compensation, and for pensioners who are receiving at or near the minimum pension." A Special Needs Retirement Fund Management Committee was organized to assist the ELCA Board of Pensions in implementing this action. A special task force reported that the first half of the mandate was not workable; only the employee and employer may make contributions into a retirement account, and a third party is precluded from making "additional pension contributions." The management committee asked that greater efforts be made to honor compensation guidelines set by the synods and that the committee be directed to concentrate its efforts on fulfilling the intent of the assembly action.

### *Church Council Action:*

**To recognize and support the Special Needs Retirement Fund Management Committee's efforts to provide financial support for annuitants who are receiving at or near the minimum pension as an adequate response to CA93.08.100.**

## **9. POSTPONEMENT OF DISCERNMENT ADDRESSING REGENERATIVE MEDICINE**

### *Background:*

The 2011 Churchwide Assembly directed the Office of the Presiding Bishop to assess the feasibility of developing a social message on regenerative medicine, including, but not limited to, a range of stem cell technologies. The theological discernment team asked the Church Council for postponement of a report and possible recommendations due to continued staff capacity limitations as well as priority given to develop a social message on gender-based violence.

### *Church Council Action:*

**To acknowledge both the continuing limited staff capacity and the continuing relevance of important moral and social questions around regenerative medicine; and**

**To postpone until the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council a report and possible recommendations from the Theological Discernment Team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding the feasibility of developing a social message on regenerative medicine, including, but not limited to, a range of stem cell technologies.**

## **10. OTHER NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

### *Background:*

The Church Council has the responsibility of electing people to fill terms on certain committees and on boards of separately incorporated ministries, social ministry organizations, and seminaries. ELCA bylaws 8.31.03. and 8.31.04. outline basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries.

***Church Council Actions:***

**To elect Mr. James Zils and Mr. Richard Wehrheim to the ELCA Audit Committee for two-year renewable terms ending November 2016;**

**To re-elect to the board of directors of National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. to a three-year term expiring in 2018: Mr. Wayne C. Hanson;**

**To elect to the board of directors of National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. to three-year terms expiring in 2018: The Rev. Galen F. Hora and the Rev. Jeff R. Johnson;**

**To elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc., to a three-year term expiring in October 2017: Ms. Lisa Negstad;**

**To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia to a three-year term expiring in 2018: The Rev. Charles Miller; and**

**To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a six-term expiring in 2020: The Rev. J. Mamy Ranaivoson.**