

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES
April 11-13, 2008
Lutheran Center
Chicago, Illinois**

The fifty-ninth meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was convened in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center at Chicago, Illinois. The meeting began on Friday, April 11, 2008, with committee meetings and a service of Evening Prayer, led by the Rev. Susan Langhauser.

ORGANIZATION OF MEETING
(Agenda I.A.-I.F.)

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

Voting Members

Officers:

Pr. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop
Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president
Mr. David D. Swartling, secretary
Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, treasurer

Church Council:

Pr. David P. Anderson	Mr. John S. Munday
Ms. Rebecca Jo Brakke	Mr. Mark W. Myers
Ms. Judith Anne Bunker	Ms. Ann C. Niedringhaus (<i>excused</i>)
Ms. Deborah L. Chenoweth	Pr. J. Pablo Obregon
Pr. Rachel L. Connelly	Pr. David W. Peters
Mr. John R. Emery	Pr. J. Paul Rajashekar
Ms. Karin Lynn Graddy	Ms. Lynette M. Reitz
Mr. Mark S. Helmke	Pr. John C. Richter
Ms. Norma J. Hirsch	Ms. Sandra Schlesinger
Pr. Keith A. Hunsinger	Pr. Norene A. Smith
Pr. David E. Jensen	Pr. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson
Mr. Mark E. Johnson	Mr. David Truland (<i>excused</i>)
Pr. Susan Langhauser	Ms. Judith Tutt-Starr
Pr. Jonathan W. Linman	Mr. Richard L. Wahl
Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr.	Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace
Pr. Steven P. Loy	Mr. Gary L. Wipperman

Representatives of the Conference of Bishops

Bp. Allan C. Bjornberg	Bp. Gerald L. Mansholt
Bp. Leonard H. Bolick	Bp. Murray D. Finck
Bp. Callon W. Holloway (<i>excused</i>)	Bp. Peter Rogness
Bp. Marie C. Jerge	Bp. Paul Stumme-Diers
Bp. H. Gerard Knoche (<i>excused</i>)	Bp. Martin D. Wells

Advisory Members

Youth:

Ms. Briana R. Watts

Mr. Samuel F. Schlouch

Advisors:

Pr. Chi Shih Chen, Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders

Mr. Michael D. Bash, chair of the board of trustees, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers (*excused*)

Mr. Kent L. Henning, colleges and universities

Ms. Kristin Kvam, Consulting Committee for Justice for Women

Pr. Khader N. El-Yateem, chair, Multicultural Ministries program committee

Mr. Joseph A. Husary, president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (*excused*)

Pr. Phillip D. W. Krey, seminaries

Pr. O. Dennis Mims, president, African American Lutheran Association (*excused*)

Pr. Sarah Lee-Faulkner, chair, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission program committee

Pr. Nelson H. Rabell-Gonzalez, Association of Latino Ministries (*excused*)

Ms. Carmen Richards, president of the board, Women of the ELCA (*excused*)

Pr. Frederick Strickert, chair, Global Mission program committee

Mr. Kai S. Swanson, chair, Vocation and Education program committee

Pr. Roger A. Thompson, chair, Church in Society program committee

Mr. Larry Thiele, president, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association

Ms. Suzanne Wise, social ministry organizations

Resource Persons

Office of the Presiding Bishop:

Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for leadership development

Pr. Kathie Bender Schwich, executive for synodical and constituent relations

Pr. Marcus R. Kunz, executive for discernment of contextual and theological issues

Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, executive for governance and institutional relations

Section Executives and Staff:

Pr. Michael L. Burk, executive for worship and liturgical resources and chaplain to the Church Council

Mr. Kenneth W. Inskeep, executive for research and evaluation

Pr. Donald J. McCoid, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations

Pr. Darrell D. Morton, assistant to the presiding bishop for federal chaplaincy ministries

Pr. A. Craig Settlage, director for mission support

Ms. Else B. Thompson, executive for human resources

Office of the Secretary:

Pr. Ruth E. Hamilton, executive assistant to the secretary

Mr. Phillip H. Harris, general counsel

Ms. Mary Beth Nowak, executive assistant to the secretary

Pr. Paul A. Schreck, executive assistant to the secretary

Mr. David A. Ullrich, associate general counsel

Office of the Treasurer:

Section Executives and Staff:

Ms. Karen Rathbun, executive for management services (*excused*)

Ms. LaRue R. Unglaube, executive for information technology

Pr. Jeffrey R. King, support specialist, information technology

Program Unit Executives:

Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director, Women of the ELCA
Pr. Sherman G. Hicks, executive director, Multicultural Ministries
Pr. Rebecca S. Larson, executive director, Church in Society (*excused*)
Ms. Beth A. Lewis, president, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers
Pr. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (*excused*)
Pr. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director, Global Mission
Pr. Stanley N. Olson, executive director, Vocation and Education

Service Unit Executives:

Ms. Kristi S. Bangert, executive director, Communication Services
Ms. Cynthia J. Halverson, president, Foundation of the ELCA, and executive director, Development Services
Mr. John G. Kapanke, president, Board of Pensions
Mr. Daniel J. Lehmann, editor, *The Lutheran* magazine
Ms. Eva M. Roby, executive vice president for administration, Mission Investment Fund (*excused*)

Press:

Mr. John R. Brooks, director, ELCA News Service
Ms. Elizabeth M. Hunter, *The Lutheran* magazine
Mr. Frank F. Imhoff, associate director, ELCA News Service
Ms. Melissa Ramirez-Cooper, ELCA News Service

Ecumenical Guests:

Canon Victoria L. Garvey, The Episcopal Church
The Rev. Teresita Valeriano, North American representative, Lutheran World Federation
Pr. Mary Ann Neevel, United Church of Christ (*excused*)
Moravian Church in America [position vacant]
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [position vacant]
Reformed Church in America [position vacant]

**Saturday, April 12, 2008
Plenary Session I**

The first plenary session of the fifty-ninth meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America began with a service of Morning Prayer, led by the Rev. Michael L. Burk, executive for worship and liturgical resources and chaplain to the Church Council. The Rev. Martin A. Seltz served as musician.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña called to order the first plenary session at 8:17 A.M. He thanked Ms. Beth A. Lewis, president and chief executive officer of Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, for hosting the previous evening's reception. He welcomed all those present, calling attention to those who were attending for the first time. Vice President Peña made a number of routine announcements about the council's procedures. He reminded members of the presence of the Prayer Team and invited members to submit Joys and Concerns.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

(Agenda 1.G.)

Background:

Agenda items had been distributed by mail and electronically. Additional items were distributed at the meeting to the members of the Church Council, representatives of the Conference of Bishops, advisory members, and resource persons.

Church Council Action:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña called on Mr. David D. Swartling, secretary, to read the action pertaining to adoption of the agenda. Vice President Peña called for a second, then opened the floor to discussion. There being no discussion, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC08.04.01 To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

INTRODUCTIONS

Vice President Carlos E. Peña asked those in attendance to introduce themselves.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(Agenda I.H.)

Background:

The minutes of the November 9–11, 2007, meeting of the Church Council had been distributed to council members. The minutes of the council's Executive Committee meetings on November 8, 2007, December 6, 2007, January 17, 2008, and February 25, 2008, also had been distributed.

Council members were asked to provide in writing to the Office of the Secretary any minor or typographical errors in the distributed text of the minutes so that corrections could be entered into the protocol copies of the minutes.

Church Council Action:

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña, Secretary David D. Swartling read the proposed action. Vice President Peña called for a second, then opened the floor for discussion. There being none, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

**CC08.04.02 To approve the minutes of the November 9–11, 2007, meeting of the Church Council; and
To ratify actions of the council’s Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the November 8, 2007, December 6, 2007, January 17, 2008, and February 25, 2008, meetings.**

REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

(Agenda II.A.1.; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 1)

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, reported as follows: “There really are three parts to my report. One is the written report that you received yesterday. That is Section A, Part 1, that you do not need to turn to. I hope you read it. I hope you receive it as complementary to the reports of my colleagues who work in the churchwide organization because all of our reports together really become the report on the current implementation of the Plan for Mission that was adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee. The report I share with you gives lots of examples of how this whole church is living into and living out of that Plan for Mission.

“The second part of my report really will occur later this morning. It will be our important continuing conversations about our commitment to be an anti-racist and intentionally multicultural church. Last night I went home intending to work on this report and got caught up instead in an MSNBC special called ‘Meeting David Wilson.’ I do not know if you saw it, but it was a three-hour public conversation on race at Howard University. It was led by David Wilson, an African American, and was a documentary on tracing his ancestral roots back to his ancestors in Ghana who had been sold as slaves. In that process he met another David Wilson, white, a descendant of the slave owners who had owned the ancestors of the David Wilson who was featured in the documentary. It reminded me of another documentary that we showed in this room to our employees and colleagues, ‘Traces of the Trade,’ a wonderful gift, I think, of the Episcopal Church, which was a white family, a prominent family in Rhode Island, retracing their ancestors as slave traders. When you take those two poignant documentaries, weave them into the very lively conversations in this society, in part spun off by the election but also by increasing questions and conversations about preaching and the proclamation of the prophetic word, as well as the ELCA’s own commitment to intentionally engage issues of race and racism and gender and sexism in our commitment to being a diverse, inclusive church, the conversations we will have later this morning are very important.

“The third part of this report is one which I will invite you into. It is a continuing conversation, but I believe now that it is important that we take it to a deeper level, about the mission to which we discern God is calling this church. I invited the bishops into this conversation in our retreat day in California in March. We as a Cabinet of Executives entered into this conversation in our recent meeting, and now I will invite you into it today. It is not to replace the Plan for Mission. It is not to say that plan is being set aside. But I do think for the next [few] months between now and August of 2009, I hope that as leaders of this church—Church Council, Cabinet of Executives, and Conference of Bishops—we will have a deepening conversation about mission. As a Book of Faith church, that conversation must begin with the Word engaging us, and then we, as that Word engages and shapes us, engage our context. So I, as my practice is when I am going to use Scripture, go to the Daily Lectionary because otherwise the temptation is just to go to the same passages we love and know so well. So the Daily Lectionary for today is passed out to you, the Ezekiel 34 passage. It is one of two passages that is assigned as we now lean toward tomorrow, which is Good Shepherd Sunday. Let me tell you what I propose in my report. I want to invite you to be open to this Word engaging you and you engaging one another around this room. . . . As you will hear from Diane Jacobson, Stan Olson, and others, this wonderful resource that Augsburg Fortress has provided you, ‘Opening the Book of Faith,’ gives four different ways that we can enter into the Word of God in our study. There is not just one way to study the Bible, but because of time limits I am only going to choose one of those four ways. They offer a devotional reading, which we could do; a literary reading, which we could do; . . . a historical reading; and a Lutheran theological reading, which is what I am going to propose that we do. Mindful that we are going to leave the engagement with the Word [to go] into a conversation about mission, think about how this

text engages our conversation and thinking about mission.

“I am going to read this text for and to you. Whether you do better letting a text soak in by hearing it or reading it along with me, that’s up to you. Then I am going to invite you into conversation about how this text speaks to you and to us.”

Presiding Bishop Hanson read Ezekiel 34:1-16 aloud, then he offered prayer. He next asked those present to discuss in small groups the text in light of four questions:

- Judgment. This word from the Lord speaks judgment. Where did you hear the words express it most strongly? Where did you feel it most deeply as a judgment on you? Why?
- Promise. This word from the Lord is full of promise. Which words of promise “warm your heart”? Which words of promise capture the imagination of your faith? Which words of promise move you, make you eager to do something?
- Christ. Is Jesus the fulfillment of what is promised in this text? If so, what does this mean for you? For us?
- Mission. What is God up to? How do you see God working this mission through you in your baptismal calling? Through us together as the ELCA?

Following small-group discussions, Presiding Bishop Hanson called attention to the previously distributed document “What’s on my mind regarding mission?” The document contained an outline of the next section of his report.

Presiding Bishop Hanson said: “We are a church body 20 years of age. If you go back to our predecessor churches, what was occurring often when they were 20? Merger. They were becoming preoccupied with getting bigger. Merger conversations were important; they consumed lots of time and resources. We are 20. I am not inviting us into a conversation about merger, but I do believe the question before us at 20 is mission. . . . We are maturing, deepening the sense of our own identity. We continue to claim the gifts that we have received from predecessor church bodies and the first 20 years of our life. We are discerning the gifts but beginning to shape an understanding of how those gifts might be used in this context, this diverse, changing, challenging world. So when I invite us into a deeper conversation about mission and missiology, I do not want us to dig ourselves into a hole. One way we could do that is if we think that this is only a conversation about our own survival as a denomination. If we think that we have got to be about mission because we are aging and declining and we remain homogeneous, then we do not deserve to mature; we probably deserve to die.

“But this is a conversation about the work to which God calls us and for which we are set free in Christ and gifted by the Holy Spirit. It is really about a conversation that seeks to release what the Spirit gives us for the sake of God’s mission. I love the movie ‘The Diving Bell and the Butterfly.’ . . . The character, immobilized by an incapacitating stroke, becomes a person through whom we experience the whole movie. If you have seen it, you recall that he can communicate only by blinking his eyes in response to letters of the alphabet given to him as he writes the story of what he is going through. He speaks through that blinking response to letters this phrase: ‘I have lost everything but this. They have not taken from me my memory or my imagination.’ The conversation I am inviting this church into is one that needs to be shaped by living memory of God’s promises and God’s people as that comes to us first through the Word but also through the narrative of our own faith stories and those of the communities in which we live and serve. But it also needs to be a conversation about holy imagination, thinking about what we can do and be in Christ’s name for the sake of the Gospel and the life of the world in this changing context. I am not inviting us into another long strategic planning process. . . . I think we are still benefitting from the strategic planning process we engaged in when I became presiding bishop that lasted about two years; 30,000 people participated in it. It gave birth to the Plan for Mission, and that Plan for Mission has caused us to reshape the churchwide organization, our programs, our priorities, our staffing. Now our programmatic units are developing their own strategic plans in order to further implement that Plan for Mission. We do not need another strategic planning process because I believe that the one we have been involved in is serving us well.

“We do need continued theological conversation about mission and missiology, but we do not need to let a few learned scholars take this work and do it on our behalf. They need to become leaven with us in this broad conversation throughout this church. We love our theology, and it is one of our gifts. But we can also become frozen in the conversation and forget that the conversation is reflection on mission that shapes further engagement in mission, and it

is a constant process of action and reflection. . . .

“When we survey the landscape in this conversation and time of holy imagination about mission, we have some wonderful contributions being made. I only cite a couple. Certainly, the work of our missiologists that is ongoing, that gather every fall. Certainly the work of Rafael Malpica-Padilla in global mission around accompaniment. The lively discussions we had as a Conference of Bishops with our teaching theologians in January around accompaniment and the lively debate on whether accompaniment is methodology that we have turned into a theology or is it a way of living in the world shaped by our understanding of what God is calling us to do and to be together. Rick Bliese agitated us all and said that we do not have a missiology as Lutherans. Other churches do; we do not, so we look for methodologies and turn them into a theology, whether it is accompaniment (which I do not happen to think is only a methodology) or it is natural church development or whatever. Then Steve Bouman showing up He stirs the room every time he walks in, calling us to think of ourselves as the descendants of an immigrant people now called by God to be a church among the new immigrants in our land, standing there as repairers of the breach and restorers of the city.

“A couple of weeks . . . ago, I sent an e-letter, which I occasionally do, to our rostered leaders. I was reflecting on the Pew study that got all of our attention about the changing patterns of religious affiliation in the United States and the significant rise of those who claim no religious belief, especially in the young adult population—not surprising but illuminating what we have sensed. Then I was also responding to a question that a pastor asked me in Connecticut after I had spoken. He came up to me and said, ‘So, Bishop, in two words or less, what is the priority for this whole church in your eyes?’ And I said, ‘That we be an evangelizing church in a Lutheran key.’ . . . Then I chose to write to our rostered leaders about what that begins to look like. I think that at age 20, it is time we start acting our name. We claim to be Evangelicals, and we spend most of our energy telling people how we are not like those other evangelicals. We claim to be Lutherans, but we are worried that we have to set aside what it means to be Lutheran to get our market share of members in a consumer-oriented, competitive religious marketplace. We are Church, an ecclesiological understanding that we as Lutherans belong to one holy catholic and apostolic Church, diverse, firmly united in Christ, gifted by the Spirit for the sake of the world. It is core to who we are.

“Jim Collins in *Good to Great* cites two characteristics of corporations that moved from good to great. He said this: ‘They infused the entire process of their growth with the brutal facts of reality.’ I think we have to keep confronting the brutal facts of this church, the facts that, under my watch as presiding bishop, we have lost over 300,000 baptized members. . . . That is the equivalent of a synod. The brutal fact that in the period 2000–2006 the populations of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas, those four states, increased by 6.4 million people. Worship at ELCA congregations in those four states in the same period decreased by 20,000 people. The brutal facts that we are still 97 percent white and 15 years older in average age than the U.S. population. But the brutal fact is that we are a gifted, wealthy church. Endowment and memorial funds held by our congregations in trusts, savings accounts, cemetery funds, and cash together are over 2 billion dollars. Have we begun to imagine—think about that Ezekiel passage—what God could do to use 2 billion dollars and 4.77 million baptized Christians for the sake of feeding God’s sheep rather than feeding the shepherds? Feeding God’s sheep the promise of the Gospel, the hope of healing for HIV and AIDS and malaria, the possibility of feeding peace in a world warring and violent. . . .

“Two years after the birth of the ELCA, the Churchwide Assembly adopted a statement on ecumenism that incorporated the commitments of the predecessor church bodies; this document has had a profound impact on the life of this church for 20 years. It has provided a road map, a theological, confessional, biblical grounding for why we are committed to the visible unity of the body of Christ, but also a way to make that commitment concrete. Are we ready at the 2009 assembly to adopt a similar statement about mission that would guide, shape, provide a road map and a grounding for this church in its next chapter in life?

“Several of you last night did what I have experienced since December 23rd wherever I go. That is the first thing that people want to talk with me about, the CBS special ‘In God’s Name.’ If you did not see it, perhaps you have heard that I was privileged to be one of 12 religious leaders in the world featured in a documentary by the Naudet brothers, who filmed the 9/11 documentary, having been riding on a fire engine, and were at the 9/11 site, the World Trade Center. Out of that experience they went on their own quest, their own existential, spiritual quest and spent a year and a half with 12 religious leaders in the world, Muslim, Hindu, Shinto, Jewish, Christian. And do you know what the response consistently has been across this church to that documentary? ‘Bishop Hanson, we are so glad that Lutherans have

showed up and we showed up as Lutherans.’ I think in that comment I hear both a missiological longing and a theological grounding, a desire that we be a public church in the public square engaged in mission for the sake of the world, not for the sake of ourselves or the sake of fattening the shepherds. But that we also show up with our own self-understanding of what it means to be Lutheran Christians marked with the cross of Christ forever, grounded in God’s grace and mercy in Christ for the whole creation. Showing up as a public church begins with the public proclaiming of the crucified and risen Christ. The showing up of the followers of Jesus on Pentecost Sunday in Jerusalem, each in their own language hearing the telling of the mighty deeds of God, the proclaiming of the crucified and risen Christ. So I am wondering: what does it mean for you, what does it look like for you, for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to show up in the public square and to show up as Lutherans?”

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked council members to discuss this question in small groups. Following discussion, he requested that some of the answers be shared with the whole group. Among the responses were the following:

- to find our way to YouTube more often
- to be engaged politically
- to participate in the Lutheran Malaria Initiative
- to show up ecumenically.

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr. inquired what “to show up as Lutherans” meant. Presiding Bishop Hanson replied that he understood it to mean that people had heard an authentic Lutheran witness to the Gospel in what he had said and how he was present in the film. They heard a theology and a witness centered in the cross and the hidden God present in and through the suffering of Christ that places us in the suffering of the world. An example, Presiding Bishop Hanson continued, was the letter he received from an inmate on Death Row at San Quentin. He talked about his lifelong struggle with God. The letter said: “Bishop Hanson, when you shared the story of your committing your son to treatment, and in that moment all you could hold on to was the promise that God had made to him in his Baptism that God would not forsake him, the waters of God’s grace washed over me for the first time in my life.” That is showing up with a Lutheran understanding of the Gospel, and that is what people were resonating to. Presiding Bishop Hanson added that Martin Marty says Lutherans show up in their acts of mercy.

The Rev. Norene A. Smith commented that Lutherans show up in continuing to face the brutal facts of exclusivity.

Presiding Bishop Hanson resumed his report: “When you look at the rest of the outline, . . . I think we have what we need to move forward. We are not coming out of a posture of deprivation or even anxiety. We have the message of the Gospel and we have passionate messengers. We have a well established, grounded, confessional theology, and we have vibrant institutions. We have the evangelical freedom that comes to us through Christ, and we have lots of signs of the Spirit fermenting in this church. I think we have a vibrant ecology. . . . Look at this room. This room represents the vibrant ecology of the ELCA: outdoor ministries and colleges and universities and seminaries, churchwide staff, congregations, and synods, ecumenical partners, global companions. If we cannot be a church engaged in God’s mission for the life of the world with this vibrant, diverse ecology—gifted, alive, interdependent—then I do not know who could. We have a vibrant understanding of the Word of God as living, incarnate in Jesus, proclaimed in the Gospel, recorded in Scripture. We have an initiative that calls us to become fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture. We have *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*; we have an understanding that we are formed for God’s mission around the means of grace. We have strategies; we do not need more strategies. We have an evangelism strategy; we have five ethnic-specific ministry strategies. We have social statements; we have the Blue Ribbon Task Force; we have the branding campaign that is just catching on: ‘God’s work. Our hands.’ We have the right leaders. I am absolutely convinced that we have the right leaders in you, the Church Council members. We have the right leaders in the Conference of Bishops, 25 new bishops in this two-year period, who join a cadre of experienced bishops with a passion to be a church in mission. We have incredibly gifted churchwide staff. Even as we prepare to say ‘God speed and gratitude’ to LaRue Unglaube for her incredible work with IT, we know that God will provide new staff. And Marcus [Kunz] joining our staff, and Steve [Bouman] and Wyvetta [Bullock] and David [Swartling]. . . . It is incredible, the cadre of leaders. And we have five full-communion partners, and we are on the verge of full communion with The United Methodist Church. We are in conversations with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and we have this great network of global companions, who are teaching us what it means to show up, filled with the Spirit, proclaiming Christ, working for peace and justice in the world. As we engage in and embark on this mission, we have what we need.

“It involves all of us. We have multiple Great Commission texts, not just Matthew 28. You can pick your own; they permeate the Scriptures. We have a sense that God calls us in daily life; that’s where we show up first as public church: in our homes, in our workplaces, in our classrooms, as citizens, as stewards of the creation. I know . . . that we have the orientation for the way forward in how we understand our baptismal vocation. When you pastors ask those confirmands, ‘Do you intend to live in the covenant that God made with you in Holy Baptism?’ you go on to describe the baptismal life, the way we show up. It is ‘to live among God’s faithful people’; we show up communally. It is ‘to hear God’s Word and share the Lord’s Supper’; we show up sacramentally. It is ‘to proclaim the Good News of God in Christ through Word and deed’; we show up evangelically. It is ‘to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus’; we show up in our diaconal work. And it is ‘to strive in justice and peace in all the world’; we show up as agitators and troublemakers and a ‘stirring the water’ kind of presence.

“Well, some traveling music. Every church develops a culture. A culture provides cohesion. A culture gives us a sense of our message, our vocabulary. A culture reflects our songs, our institutions, our traditions, our networks, our values. We are seeking to become a more diverse, multicultural church. I think we still draw on the culture of our ancestor, predecessor church bodies, but we are also creating a distinctive culture for this time in this place. It is time for us to shape a missional culture. I think it is the work that we need to do in these next six years. In my first six years I think I was often the one who was called to articulate a vision for mission in this church. I am certainly willing to do that, but in my second six years I would much rather create a deepened conversation of holy imagination around together engaging God’s mission for the sake of the Gospel and the life of the world. I believe the world is ready. I believe that we have been given all we need. Let us engage in that task for the next six years.”

GREETING: EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA (Agenda VI.B.)

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson introduced the Rev. Susan C. Johnson, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), who brought a greeting from her church to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Bishop Johnson said: “I want to begin by saying ‘thank you’ for your warm welcome. It is a joy to be here with you. Some of you I have met along the road in other capacities over the years, and it is a joy to see you again. For those I am meeting for the first time in this new context, I am really happy to do that. I also want to take a very brief moment to say a special word of thanks to Bishop Hanson for his collegial support. I am really new at my job, and to have a colleague that I can call on who has a term under his belt and has learned something along the way about how to do this work has been invaluable. Especially with all of the many demands placed upon your time, Mark, I want to say a special word of thanks in front of these people for the way that you are supporting me, especially in this time of transition. Thank you.

“A few years ago our national church adopted a vision statement that we want to be a church in mission for others. It sounds really simple. It sounds really obvious, but as part of adopting this vision statement, we were confessing to God and also to ourselves that in reality we have been working for years as a church in mission for ourselves. It does not look good on a t-shirt, but it has been the reality we have been working under. This past March our National Church Council spent some time visioning together about what we would be doing the next few years as the national expression of the church to try to put some legs under the vision statement. We asked the question: ‘What is the future to which God is calling the national expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada?’ We came up with what we are calling five organizing pillars to undergird our desire to be a church in mission for others: effective partnerships, diverse faces, compassionate justice, focused framework, and spirited discipleship. And I want to spend just a little bit of time unpacking that for you.

“1. Effective Partnerships. For years the ELCIC has worked in a variety of partnerships, so what is the difference when we start talking about effective partnerships? Well, partly it is a realization that we no longer have the resources—and perhaps we never did—to be able to do everything by ourselves. It is a challenge to encourage us not to do things on our own, and it is a change in mindset where we always want to ask the question: ‘Do we need to do this on our own?’ And if the answer is ‘No,’ the next question is ‘Who is the best partner or partners to work with in this

area?’ It is good stewardship; it is responsible stewardship; but it is also a stronger witness to the rest of the world when we do things together. So I am pleased to announce to you that I have already begun having conversations with Bishop Mark and also with some of the staff here at Church House in terms of what are the ways we can go more deeply into partnership with each other and asking the question of what we can be doing together as Lutherans in North America.

“2. Diverse Faces: ‘Diverse faces’ means that we want to reach out—and I heard this reflected in what you were just talking about, Mark—we want to reach into the communities where we find ourselves and invite people to participate in the life of the Gospel and life in the church. ‘Diverse faces’ says something about ethnicity for sure, but it also says something about being a place where people of every age are welcome and have a voice; where women and men, young and old, play key roles in leadership and service; a place where all people of all socio-economic backgrounds, of all kinds of ability . . . can discover and share their gifts as together we strive to be a church in mission for others. This is going to say something about the way we do evangelism, for sure, but it is also going to push us to share leadership, and we have to be prepared to accept that it will change us, just as families change when we add new faces to the table.

“3. Compassionate Justice. I am not going to spend much time talking about that because I know that you know what that means, but it is a commitment where we say that this needs to be a significant area of the work we do, how we place our resources, how we are calling our whole church at every level to be a church in mission for others.

“4. Focused Framework. Frankly, this is not always the most exciting aspect of the mission of the church, but the reality is that addressing a number of structural and relational matters within our church will help us focus on being a church in mission for others. This is again partly to do with responding responsibly to decreasing resources, but it is also about clarifying relationships and responsibilities so that we can focus on becoming the church that God is calling us to be. Some areas we think that we need to look at include: the size of our National Church Council, the size and focus of Convention, the number and sizes of committees, and maybe even the number of synods. Actually, synod bishops are pushing that conversation. We have also had to look at the size and focus of our national office, and this has involved the very difficult decision to reduce the size of our staff and necessitated letting go a very bright and talented member of our national staff. For a church of this size with a staff of this size, the thought of losing one person, it’s a reality check about the size of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. That means that we have now gone down from 13 to 12 full-time people in the national office. It is not easy to make these kinds of decisions, but it is about being good stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us.

“5. Spirited Discipleship. Even as we attempt to face the realities and challenges of decreasing membership and resources—and as I have traveled around within Canada visiting other churches and also here in the United States, we are all looking at the same picture on the wall, and it is a line . . . going down. So even as we know that we are facing those realities and challenges, we know that God is calling us to a different trajectory. The reality is that there is a huge mission field at our very doorsteps, sometimes starting within our own families. So the final organizing pillar we have adopted is ‘Spirited Discipleship’. We feel that God is calling us deeper into discipleship. We think God wants us to be filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit and to be able to show that to those around us. We think that God wants us to feel positive about our faith and our church. We think that our spirited discipleship needs to play out in all the ways we come together as church: in our worship, in our Bible study, in the way we share our faith, in our compassionate justice, in all of the ways we are called to be in mission for others.

“For the next period of time, we in the national office are going to be going through a lot of transition as we explore new partnerships and make decisions about what ministry areas we need to continue and, more difficult, what areas of ministry we need to stop. There may be some bumps on the road. I know there are going to be some bumps on the road. But we move ahead in confidence, hopeful for the future of our church because we know that in the end it is God’s church. We may not know for sure how things are going to turn out, but we know that with God, they will be good. That is the promise. We will be blessed, and God will help us to be a blessing for others. Thank you all for your partnership in ministry. Thank you.”

On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presiding Bishop Hanson presented a gift to Bishop Johnson.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President Carlos E. Peña reminded council members that the deadline for removing items from the *en bloc* action was noon.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Ms. Brianna R. Watts, youth advisory member, reflected on dwelling in the Word: “Good morning. Today I would like to share with you a story that is rather embarrassing for me to tell. One that, in fact, I avoid telling. However, this story began the solidification of a life practice for me that is grounded in both my faith and in Scripture. It was finals week during spring quarter of my freshman year at college. My mind was already focused on summer break and the plane that I would be catching to New York for a family vacation in less than 24 hours, rather than on my last final. As I ascended the stairs to the exam room, I realized something was out of place. There should have been more people headed up with only 10 minutes until exam time. Once I reached the classroom door, my error struck me. I pulled out my class syllabus, and, sure enough, the final was scheduled in the block of time before the regular class meeting time, and I had missed my exam. For an instant, many emotions flooded my mind, but that passed quickly, and by the time that I was out the door of the building, a strong presence of calm and reason had overcome me. I realized that this was not the end-all and be-all of my life. While I did not wish to fail a course, in the long run it would be just a minor setback. Even at the time, the sense of calm struck me as odd. I have always been a very serious student and should have broken down at the thought of missing a final. But almost immediately, I recognized the source of the sudden strength. In that moment of fear and need, God was by my side and had not only carried my burdens but had empowered me to work through this challenge. I was allowed to make up the exam at the price of a severe lecture from my professor, which I deserved. But when I think back on this experience, my mind dwells on the moment when I realized that it was faith in God that saw me through this ordeal, not any strength of my own. 1 Peter 5:7 says: ‘Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.’ This trial now serves as a daily reminder to release my fears and burdens and trust in God’s love for me. When I find myself dwelling on the stress in my life, I remember this message and am able to persevere through each obstacle I face. Thank you.”

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS (Agenda II.B; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 5)

Vice President Carlos E. Peña called upon the Rev. Allan C. Bjornberg, bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, for a report.

Bishop Bjornberg extended greetings from the Conference of Bishops to the Church Council. He called attention to the fact that nine synods were in transition, with their bishops retiring or ending their service because of term limits. Elections of new bishops would be held in the La Crosse Area Synod, Metropolitan New York Synod, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Sierra Pacific Synod, South Carolina Synod, Southeastern Iowa Synod, Eastern North Dakota Synod, and Western North Dakota Synod. He expressed his gratitude to those bishops who were leaving office. Bishop Bjornberg announced that the Eastern North Dakota Synod already had elected a new bishop, the Rev. William E. Rindy. He noted that over the last two years, 40% of synods were electing new bishops, a transition that was both gift and loss to this church. He reminded council members that the spring also was the time when synods received seminary graduates for first-call placement. He asked those present to add these candidates and congregations to their prayers.

Bishop Bjornberg stated that the Conference of Bishops had been given an opportunity at its March 2008 meeting to consider the draft of the social statement on human sexuality. The draft had relieved anxiety, he said, and the bishops were committed, along with the Church Council, to lead this church in prayerful and appropriate response to the draft statement as it moved toward the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

Bishop Bjornberg informed the council that the 2009 Academy for Bishops was scheduled to take place in Jerusalem, where the bishops could express their solidarity with brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, explore in detail the complex issues of the region, and perhaps contribute to the peace process. He also reported that many bishops were

encouraging people to tithing the economic stimulus checks they would be receiving from the federal government to World Hunger and Ministries Among People in Poverty. On a related matter, he indicated that synodical bishops had organized themselves into “ready benches,” groups that were equipped and willing to respond quickly to policies and legislation related to issues such as immigration, domestic hunger, and the Middle East.

Bishop Bjornberg indicated that the bishops already were working toward a response to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly resolution regarding the accountability of bishops to this church. The Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee was leading the conversation, which the Conference of Bishops regarded as a teaching moment in the life of this church. The conversation would make more people aware of the “Relational Agreement” among bishops, which outlines how bishops respond to and honor the documents of this church, how bishops relate to one another, and how bishops strive for a consistent and healthy process that upholds the life of this church and honors one another’s ministries. He promised the Church Council that it would see a constructive response to the resolution.

Bishop Bjornberg highlighted the upcoming General Conference of The United Methodist Church, which would vote on the UMC–ELCA full-communion agreement. All indications were that it would be adopted. He reminded the Church Council that the Churchwide Assembly would consider the agreement in 2009.

Bishop Bjornberg concluded by saying: “On behalf of my colleagues in the Conference of Bishops, please accept our gratitude for—and our prayers in support of—the important work you do here. And please join us in prayerful support of all of our synods that will be gathering in assembly in the coming weeks, especially those that are choosing new bishops. The Holy Spirit always refreshes the Church. May the Spirit also refresh and equip you for the work you do here. Thank you for the work you do on behalf of all of us and for the sake of this church. God keep you.”

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE (Agenda II.E.6.)

UPDATE ON THE BOOK OF FAITH INITIATIVE (Agenda V.G.3; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit O, Part 1)

Church Council Information:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña called on the Rev. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of the Vocation and Education unit, to introduce Dr. Diane L. Jacobson, professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary and director for the Book of Faith initiative.

Pr. Olson commented that one of the places the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shows up is around the Word of God, and one of the ways its members show up is with the Scripture in hand. He reported considerable enthusiasm and energy in this church concerning the Book of Faith initiative. People were asking what they were supposed to be doing to be part of the initiative. The answer they were being given, Pr. Olson said, was an invitation into conversation about what they wanted to be doing because the initiative belonged to the grass roots of this church. He then introduced Dr. Jacobson.

Dr. Jacobson announced that during her presentation she would share three things, extend an invitation, issue a challenge, show the video introducing the initiative, and answer questions. She began with the visual, the goal of which was to get people thinking about how fluent they are in the Bible. The video reinforced this church’s message that through the Bible its members are enlivened, empowered, and sent by God. The initiative invited all members to renew their calling to open the Bible and join the conversation for the sake of the world.

Dr. Jacobson reported that when she attended the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly the previous weekend, she was asked why this church needed an initiative to encourage people to read the Bible. She responded that this church had not been engaging with Scripture as well as it should have been and that sometimes it took an initiative to encourage people to do what they ought to be doing.

Dr. Jacobson shared with the council a quotation from *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* by Darrell L. Guder: “The Holy Spirit shapes God’s people for mission through the continuous encounter with Scripture. Continuing conversion happens as the community indwells Scripture. Rigorous Bible learning must be the missional congregation’s priority.” The quotation illustrated the crucial importance for this church’s mission of studying Scripture, she noted.

Dr. Jacobson indicated that she had invited members of the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly to raise their hands if they loved the Bible, and everyone did so. When she asked how many in their family or congregation would not have raised their hands, however, everyone responded. Part of the excitement in this church is about the impact of the initiative on children and congregations and strangers, she said, but engaging them would be a challenge.

Dr. Jacobson commented that pastors often told her that they had not been shown how to teach the Bible effectively. The members of this church need to learn from each other, particularly from gifted teachers, how to do so. Part of the initiative was identifying local leaders who had the gift of teaching Scripture.

Dr. Jacobson encouraged Church Council members to help lead the initiative by inviting people to join, identifying potential leaders, and introducing them to the resource *Opening the Book of Faith*. She noted that the resource had been described as the GPS of the initiative, inviting Lutherans to think about how to read the Bible. Lutherans have insights about this process that are helpful for the Church and the world. The book also contains Bible studies and assessment tools for determining current and desired levels of engagement with Scripture. Dr. Jacobson indicated that other resources, including a Lutheran study Bible and an adult Bible study series, would be available in 2009.

Finally, Dr. Jacobson challenged the council to envision what a Book of Faith Churchwide Assembly, a Book of Faith churchwide organization, and a Book of Faith Church Council would look like. She added that council members already had been experiencing the effects of being part of the Book of Faith initiative as they did business together with Ezekiel running through their heads.

She called for questions.

Presiding Bishop Hanson asked Dr. Jacobson to review how a congregation or synod could become part of the Book of Faith initiative. She responded by directing people to the initiative's Web site, which offered options for joining and for sharing ideas with others. She added that the Covenant Cluster of seminaries had drafted a resolution about becoming a Book of Faith synod for adoption by Synod Assemblies.

There being no further questions, she displayed the rest of the video and reviewed the contents of the resource.

In response to a question from Mr. Richard L. Wahl, Dr. Jacobson identified those resources planned for 2008 and said others would be available later in the initiative.

Vice President Peña, on behalf of the Church Council, thanked Ms. Beth A. Lewis, president and chief executive officer of Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, for providing copies of *Opening the Book of Faith* to council members.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

(Agenda II.A.3.; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 3)

Mr. David D. Swartling, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, stated that precisely one week previously he had been in attendance at the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly. On stage were seven nominees for bishop. Bishop Richard J. Foss was leaving office after 16 years, and a new chapter in the synod's history was about to begin. As the nominees contemplated a question about their vision for ministry, the room was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop. In an auditorium on a Saturday morning, 750 people were listening to people talk about what it means to be an ELCA Lutheran. None of the nominees gave a bad answer, he said. They all affirmed the importance of being a piece of the interdependent Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, of sharing ministry, and of becoming a Book of Faith synod. Anyone listening to the nominees would have been proud to be a Lutheran, Secretary Swartling commented. It was a reminder that all the members of this church are in ministry together and that new leaders are stepping forward. Secretary Swartling observed that the bishop-elect, the Rev. William E. Rindy, has a vision of what it means to be a leader in this church.

Secretary Swartling reported that he enjoys going to Synod Assemblies, not to talk about the mechanics of the Office of the Secretary but to share ministry stories. He asked council members to share successful ministry stories with him when he attended their Synod Assemblies so that he could tell them to his churchwide colleagues.

Secretary Swartling remarked that he loves being a lay person in the Lutheran theological tradition, with the dichotomy between Law and Gospel and the way that the Law leads to the Gospel. Similarly, the work of the Office of the Secretary, which often is focused on policies and the governing documents, provides a foundation under the Gospel ministries of this church. It is the oil in the machinery of the ELCA. Secretary Swartling called attention to his written

report, which outlined the work and the staff of his office.

Secretary Swartling cited a number of significant activities that the Office of the Secretary had completed since the November council meeting, including a recommendation for background checks on synodical officers, guidelines for synodical bishops' elections, and a memorandum on the composition and size of the Church Council. Secretary Swartling reviewed the background information contained in the memorandum and noted that the Executive Committee brought no recommendation on the matter to the council, having decided that there were other ways to foster connections among expressions of this church and that this church needed to continue to grow into the current model. The Office of the Secretary also was working on a number of other issues, including planning for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, Mission ONE, communal discernment, and the Lutheran Malaria Initiative.

Secretary Swartling highlighted two other key matters. In 2006, an insurance alternatives task force had been appointed to look at the issue of insurance for congregations and synods, spurred by recurring problems with coverage for sexual misconduct and for Florida in the wake of recent hurricanes. The task force had decided that a captive insurance program was not viable at this time. A participatory program with a loss pool also had been evaluated, but because there were too many unknowns, the task force currently was not recommending this alternative. The decision the task force recommended was to change to Church Mutual Insurance Agency of Merrill, Wisconsin, as the endorsed program for congregations and synods. Secretary Swartling thanked the general counsel, associate general counsel, and council member Mr. Mark S. Helmke for their work on the task force.

Secretary Swartling announced that, in response to a recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding, stewardship conversations with the Conference of Bishops and Church Council members had begun. Most of the Executive Committee already had participated in the conversations and would be conversing with other council members during the July retreat. Secretary Swartling emphasized that leaders of this church must model stewardship.

The Rev. Ruth E. Hamilton, executive assistant to the secretary, announced that the Office of the Secretary was implementing an oral history project on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of this church. She also reviewed the process for crafting and reporting memorials and resolutions for Synod Assemblies.

The Rev. Paul A. Schreck, executive assistant to the secretary, reviewed the statistics about ordained leaders that were contained in the written report of the secretary and highlighted significant trends. He also provided a snapshot of the status of the 1995 seminary graduating class.

Secretary Swartling thanked Pr. Schreck and Pr. Hamilton for their work. He reported that Ms. Mary Beth Nowak, executive assistant, had reviewed a number of sites for the 2011 Churchwide Assembly. He indicated that the review process was very complex. It was difficult to compare sites because of their varied features and the economic and non-economic categories that needed to be considered. He noted that holding churchwide assemblies was increasingly expensive, with costs doubling from approximately \$1.4 million to approximately \$2.8 million from 1995-2007. Decisions about the Churchwide Assembly involved careful stewardship of this church's resources. Very few sites work for the Churchwide Assembly, he commented. Secretary Swartling recommended the Marriott World Center in Orlando, Florida, as the site for the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

A video about the site was displayed. Ms. Mary Beth Nowak reviewed its advantages, including new facilities and low prices in comparison to other potential sites. She also discussed the "green" initiatives the Office of the Secretary was implementing for Church Council meetings and the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. Responding to a request made at the November 2007 council meeting, Ms. Nowak announced that a balance of \$38,562 had been left on the pre-paid meal cards from the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. Of this total, \$11,730 had been designated for 15 churchwide ministries.

Secretary Swartling expressed gratitude to Ms. Nowak for her work. He also publicly thanked Mr. Bradley Dokken for his service on the council, which had ended because he had relocated in order to attend seminary. A print of the rondel mosaic hanging in the churchwide office and letters of appreciation had been sent to him.

Secretary Swartling concluded his report by saying that he gave thanks every day for the privilege of working with churchwide colleagues and other leaders of this church, including council members.

2011 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

(Agenda III.H.1; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit R, Part 1)

Background:

The *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* gives to the secretary responsibility to “[a]rrange for and manage meetings of the Churchwide Assembly . . .” (13.41.02.h.).

Church Council Action:

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña, Secretary David D. Swartling introduced to the Church Council his recommendation for the site of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

Vice President Peña called for and received a second to the motion, then opened the floor for discussion. There being no discussion, he called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC08.04.03 **To designate the Marriott World Center, Orlando, Florida—subject to the satisfactory completion of negotiation in the judgment of the secretary of this church—as the site for the Twelfth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, August 14–20, 2011.**

REMOVAL FROM THE *EN BLOC* ACTION

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger asked that the deadline for removal of items from the *en bloc* resolution be extended to five minutes after the conclusion of anti-racism training. By consensus, it was so ordered.

RECESS

Following routine announcements, the Church Council entered into recess at 11:12 A.M.

Saturday, April 12, 2008
Plenary Session II

BOARD DEVELOPMENT: ANTI-RACISM EDUCATION

Ms. Shenandoah Gale, coordinator for anti-racism education, led an anti-racism workshop.

**Saturday, April 12, 2008
Plenary Session III**

Vice President Carlos E. Peña reconvened the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council at 1:47 P.M.

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS, AND ELECTIONS

(Agenda III.A; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit C, Parts 1–2)

Background:

Between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council has the responsibility of electing people to fill unexpired terms on the Church Council and boards and committees of the churchwide organization, once the secretary has declared a vacancy [provision 14.15.].

Church Council Action:

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña, Secretary David D. Swartling introduced the action related to elections. Vice President Peña opened the floor for discussion. There being none, he called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC08.04.04 To receive the report of the Nominating Committee and request that a ballot be prepared:

CHURCH COUNCIL

Lay Male [Term 2011] *resignation of Mr. Bradley Dokken, Williston, N.D. (3A)*

1. Mr. Keith M. Johnson, Hazen, N.D. (3A)
2. Mr. Baron D. Blanchard, Bismarck, N.D. (3A)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MISSION INVESTMENT FUND

Lay Female [Term 2013] *resignation of Ms. Barbara Swartling, Bainbridge Island, Wash. (1B)*

1. Ms. Julie E. Swanson, Roanoke, Va. (9A)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE ELCA FOUNDATION

Lay Male [Term 2013] *vacancy of Mr. Brian F. Hofland, West Harrison, N.Y. (7C)*

1. Mr. John H. Saeger, Lancaster, Pa. (8D)

The ballot having been prepared, it was distributed. Following prayer, the vote was taken.

REPORT OF THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Agenda II.E.4.)

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr., chair, presented the report of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee.

AMENDMENT TO THE ELCA CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS: DEFINITION OF REGIONS

(Agenda III.E.1)

Background:

A review of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* had indicated that, although the constitution makes frequent reference to regions, nowhere do the governing documents define which synods comprise which regions.

Church Council Action:

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr., chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced the action. Vice President Carlos E. Peña called for discussion. There being none, he called for the vote.

VOTED:

Two-thirds required

CC08.04.05 To adopt new continuing resolution 18.01.A08. to define regions of the ELCA:

18.01.A08. The regions shall be numbered 1 through 9 and comprised of the following synods as designated in bylaw 10.01.11.:

Region 1—Alaska Synod; Northwest Washington Synod; Southwestern Washington Synod; Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod; Oregon Synod; and Montana Synod.

Region 2—Sierra Pacific Synod; Southwest California Synod; Pacifica Synod; Grand Canyon Synod; and Rocky Mountain Synod.

Region 3—Western North Dakota Synod; Eastern North Dakota Synod; South Dakota Synod; Northwestern Minnesota Synod; Northeastern Minnesota Synod; Southwestern Minnesota Synod; Minneapolis Area Synod; Saint Paul Area Synod; and Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

Region 4—Nebraska Synod; Central States Synod; Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod; Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod; Southwestern Texas Synod; Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod.

Region 5—Metropolitan Chicago Synod; Northern Illinois Synod; Central/Southern Illinois Synod; Southeastern Iowa Synod; Western Iowa Synod; Northeastern Iowa Synod; Northern Great Lakes Synod; Northwest Synod of Wisconsin; East-Central Synod of Wisconsin; Greater Milwaukee Synod; South-Central Synod of Wisconsin; and La Crosse Area Synod.

Region 6—Southeast Michigan Synod; North/West Lower Michigan Synod; Indiana-Kentucky Synod; Northwestern Ohio Synod; Northeastern Ohio Synod; and Southern Ohio Synod.

Region 7—New Jersey Synod; New England Synod; Metropolitan New York Synod; Upstate New York Synod; Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod; Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; and Slovak Zion Synod.

Region 8—Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod; Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod; Allegheny Synod; Lower Susquehanna Synod; Upper Susquehanna Synod; Delaware-Maryland Synod; Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; and West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod.

Region 9—Virginia Synod; North Carolina Synod; South Carolina Synod; Southeastern Synod; Florida-Bahamas Synod; and Caribbean Synod.

REMOVAL FROM THE *EN BLOC* ACTION

Secretary David D. Swartling announced that one item had been removed from the *en bloc* resolution: acknowledgment of Lutheran CORE as an independent Lutheran organization. The item would be considered on Sunday prior to action on the *en bloc* resolution.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

The Rev. Martin D. Wells, bishop of the Eastern Washington–Idaho Synod, reflected on dwelling in the Word: “Thanks for including these rich moments of reflection in our time together. They have been very profitable for me. I think this one fits somewhere between—in the four categories Diane [Jacobson] mentioned this morning—devotional and theological. One of the most exciting revelations in my life is how Scripture both accompanies and haunts me. I experience this as the work of the Holy Spirit, raising up specific Scriptural texts at different points in my life. I have come to speculate that this is one of the most direct ways that God communicates with us, using the inspiration of Scripture to both question our lives and to call us into deeper reflection and companionship with God. I have come to call this lifetime procession of texts ‘a scriptural biography’. It is my thought that biblical Christians can both discern the direct hand of God in such a biography and gain a sense for how God is trying to lead us in life. Let me tell you how this has worked in my life.

“During my internship as a seminary student, I served as chaplain at the Washington Corrections Center in Washington state. It was a gruesome place, and grace in any form was a foreign concept within the wire. During Lent that year we read the Luke 23:39 text where the two thieves converse from their crosses, one on each side of Jesus and his cross. One thief asked Jesus to remember him. And Jesus ups the ante, responding to the undeserving thief that on that very day he would join Jesus in Paradise. This provocation of grace heard in prison led to wonderful months of contemplation on how God’s grace and mercy is beyond justice, the limits of our penal system.

“I left the prison that year with another new text and call in my head. In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul talks about the ministry of reconciliation. I do not expect ever to be free of this text because of my memories of the prisoners. God is at work in this text in ways I still do not understand, but it serves as a call, a call to me to reach across those barriers that divide us and to become an ambassador of reconciliation.

“Ministry at Pacific Lutheran University called forth another text that has influenced my life. In 1 Corinthians 12, the body of Christ is described as a variety of gifts working together to manifest Jesus in the world. Ministry among college students convinced me that the gifts of the body might include gifts according to age. That is, what if there were gifts, like idealism, that are associated with being a certain age? Without our 20-somethings, the gift of idealism would not be part of the body, the Church.

“The body of Christ text continues to call me as I serve as the synodical bishop. The constant interplay of unity and diversity represented by various gifts working in an interdependent body is heartening and exasperating. What is without question is that God is, within this image, constantly calling us to broader and deeper respect for the variety of gifts in the one body of Christ.

“Perhaps the most important text raised up by the Holy Spirit has been a whole book of the Bible, the book of Jonah. I have known that God was calling me from this text because it has been so hard for me to understand and assimilate it in my life. As the Holy Spirit kept pestering, I have read and studied this text like no other. Jonah is the story of a reluctant prophet called by God to speak both judgment and hope to a renegade people, the Ninevites. The prophet flees rather than bear God’s word to Nineveh because Jonah does not believe such people should be offered mercy under any circumstances. When God returns Jonah to his calling by means of a great fish, Jonah does his duty, but quickly retreats into his own indignation. Jonah is an ugly picture of God’s people in smug confidence that evildoers do not deserve to know God or be shown mercy. As God’s people, they have forsaken their role to be a light to the nations and have instead settled into an entitlement mentality that excludes others. Our synod is now asking whether this same isolation might be part of our reluctance as evangelists and whether, if we do not speak of God in the world, there might be a whale in our future. I thank God for 20 years of wrestling with this text.

“The latest text to emerge from my reading is a pure gift for all of us caught in the midst of anxiety or difficult work.

In Colossians 3:3, our lives are described as hidden with Christ in God. Here I bury my head in the breast of my Savior, wrapped in his Abba, and I am safe. This text summarizes my sense that certain texts are brought before us for comfort and confidence.

“So what texts have accompanied you in life? How has God shaped your life through these texts? Is it not wonderful to see how as we intend to dwell in God’s Word, that same Word has found a home in us. Start with texts that were given to you at some point in your life. Is there a text recorded in your family Bible that was read at your Baptism? When you received your first Bible, did a beloved grandmother inscribe a text in the forepart of the Bible? What about your confirmation verse? Did you choose it? If so, why? Or was it given to you by your pastor? If so, why? Why were these texts given to you? How have these texts blessed you in life? Is there a time in your life that you associate with a particular text? What was the connection between that text and the life you were experiencing? Was this a text of comfort that accompanied you in a hard time? Was this a text that led you to some change in your life? Was this text a dwelling place for God in your life? Do you remember studying Scripture and being confused? Do you sense that you were being pulled into a text for blessing or guidance? Have you thought of a text that you would like inscribed on your memorial stone or used at your funeral? Why these texts? Is God preparing this text as your eternal dwelling place? Blessings in your musing. The promise is a record, a procession of texts that form a biography. God dwells in you through Scripture, and you can bet that there are more texts to come.”

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS, AND ELECTIONS (Agenda III.A.; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit C, Parts 1–2)

Church Council Action:

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña, Secretary David D. Swartling presented an elections report:

CHURCH COUNCIL

Lay Male [Term 2011] *resignation of Mr. Bradley Dokken, Williston, N.D. (3A)*

1. Mr. Keith M. Johnson, Hazen, N.D. (3A) - 6
2. Mr. Baron D. Blanchard, Bismarck, N.D. (3A) - 28

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MISSION INVESTMENT FUND

Lay Female [Term 2013] *resignation of Ms. Barbara Swartling, Bainbridge Island, Wash. (1B)*

1. Ms. Julie E. Swanson, Roanoke, Va. (9A) - 34

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE ELCA FOUNDATION

Lay Male [Term 2013] *vacancy of Mr. Brian F. Hofland, West Harrison, N.Y. (7C)*

1. Mr. John H. Saeger, Lancaster, Pa. (8D) - 34

VOTED:

- CC08.04.06 To declare elected Mr. Baron D. Blanchard to the Church Council for a term ending in 2011;**
To declare Ms. Julie E. Swanson elected to the board of trustees of the Mission Investment Fund for a term ending in 2013; and
To declare Mr. John H. Saeger elected to the board of trustees of the Foundation of the ELCA for a term ending in 2013.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

(Agenda II.A.4.; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Parts 4a–4d; Exhibit F, Parts 2a-2d)

Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, summarized the results

of the 2007 fiscal year. Prior to doing so, she called attention to the information concerning the activities of the Management Services and Information Technology sections, and she asked the Church Council to recognize the achievements of Ms. LaRue R. Unglaube, executive for information technology, on the occasion of her upcoming retirement.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton focused first on the current operating funds. Revenue in 2007 totaled \$83.3 million; expenses amounted to \$80.8 million, resulting in a net of revenue over expenses of \$2.5 million. Total income in 2007 increased by \$293,000 over the previous year and by \$1.88 million over projections. Expenses also rose by \$1.16 million over 2006 but were \$639,000 under budget.

Focusing on income, Treasurer Jackson-Skelton announced that there had been an increase in mission-support contributions for the second year in a row, amounting to \$465,000 (.7%) over the previous year and \$329,000 over budget. Missionary sponsorship income had declined, both in comparison to budget and the previous year. Bequests and trusts had declined from the previous year and were under budget, but the total varied from year to year, she explained. Despite disbursement of restricted funds, investment income had increased by \$370,000 over the previous year and \$1.48 million over projections. Endowment income from unrestricted funds had been up slightly. Vision for Mission was down slightly. Treasurer Jackson-Skelton indicated that the "other income" category included a number of unrestricted gifts from synods that represented tithes from sales of property and bequests. She pointed out that while the churchwide organization's income had increased over the last four years, much of that increase was due to investments, bequests, and trusts, which varied from year to year. Treasurer Jackson-Skelton displayed a number of slides that showed trends by income categories, by categories as a percentage of budget, and in mission-support contributions. She reported that total contributions to the World Hunger appeal reached a new high in 2007, \$22.1 million. Disaster response had received \$3.1 million from members of this church and an addition \$3.9 million in federal grants.

Treasurer Jackson-Skelton reviewed the churchwide organization's expenses by unit, type, and grant recipient.

Mr. Richard L. Wahl inquired about possible lessons learned from reported financial impropriety in a synod. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson replied that the question would be answered when the general counsel returned to the room.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE (Agenda II.E.2.)

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, chair, presented the report of the Budget and Finance Committee.

2008 SPENDING AUTHORIZATION: CURRENT FUND AND WORLD HUNGER PROGRAM AND APPEAL (Agenda III.C.1; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit F, Parts 3a-3b)

Background:

The Office of the Treasurer had proposed to the Budget and Finance Committee that the council approve a revision to the 2008 spending authorization approved by the Church Council at its November 2007 meeting. The following rationale and explanation was provided to the committee and the council:

Current fund income for 2008 is estimated to increase by \$21,500 to \$82,017,150 from the income proposal approved at the November 2007 Church Council meeting. The mission-support income estimate remains at \$66,600,000, which is an increase of \$ 470,883 or 0.7 percent from 2007 mission-support receipts and equals 97.7 percent of 2008 synodical mission-support plans. Endowment distributions are based on a five-year rolling average of market value. The increase of \$34,260 is a result of adding income distributions from a fund previously not distributed.

Investment income estimates have been increased by \$214,000. The \$108,310 decrease in rental income is due primarily to adjusting the estimate of space available for lease in the Lutheran Center and adjusting the sub-lease income from the space in Washington, D.C. Other income has been increased by \$50,000. Bequest and trust income has been reduced by \$100,000 in both unrestricted and temporarily restricted income. This decrease returns each category to previously budgeted levels and should result in a lower risk of under-performance.

The current fund increase of \$21,500 will be added to the Strategic Initiative Fund, providing additional flexibility

to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for addressing mission opportunities or unanticipated operational costs.

The strong performance of the World Hunger appeal in 2007 supports an increase of the 2008 budget to \$20,000,000. Although the unusually large increases in bequest income in 2007 are not anticipated to repeat, the growth in direct giving is expected to continue.

The 2008 World Hunger income proposal has been increased by \$750,000 to \$20,000,000. The increased World Hunger spending authorization will be distributed to the four units receiving allocations based on the same percentage distributions as the original allocations. In addition, \$1,605,270 of 2007 net income will be distributed to the four units. Furthermore, an additional \$1,100,000 has been allocated for development of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative. In addition, \$500,000 from excess income received in fiscal 2006 previously had been designated for the implementation of the churchwide HIV and AIDS strategy, once it was approved.

Church Council Action:

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, introduced the action and reviewed the proposed changes in the spending authorization.

The committee's recommendation for action having been put on the table, Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion. There being none, he called for the vote.

VOTED:

**CC08.04.07 To approve a revised 2008 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$82,017,150; and
To approve a revised 2008 fiscal year World Hunger spending authorization of \$20,000,000.**

SYNODICAL MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS
(Agenda III.C.2)

A. REVISIONS TO 2008 SYNOD MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS

Background:

The Church Council has responsibility for reviewing and approving or withholding approval for synods regarding mission-support plans. Since the November 2007 Church Council meeting, revisions of 2008 mission-support plans have been received from six synods.

Church Council Action:

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, introduced the proposed action.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Richard L. Wahl commended the work of the Rev. A. Craig Settlage, director for mission support.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for the vote.

VOTED:

**CC08.04.08a To affirm with sincere appreciation the increases in the percentage for the sharing of 2008 mission-support contributions for synodical and churchwide ministries by congregations of the following synods: Nebraska and Upstate New York synods; and
To affirm the 2008 dollar estimates for the sharing of mission-support contributions for synodical and churchwide ministries by congregations of the following synods: Southeastern Minnesota, New England, Northeastern Pennsylvania, and Florida-Bahamas synods.**

B. 2009 SYNOD MISSION-SUPPORT PLANS

Background:

The Church Council has responsibility for reviewing and approving or withholding approval for synods regarding mission-support plans.

Church Council Action:

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, introduced the proposed action.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion. There being none, he called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC08.04.08b To affirm with sincere appreciation the increases in the percentage for the sharing of 2009 mission-support contributions for synodical and churchwide ministries by congregations of the following synods: Alaska, Eastern Washington-Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Sierra Pacific, Grand Canyon, Eastern North Dakota, Metropolitan Chicago, Western Iowa, North/West Lower Michigan, Southern Ohio, New England, Metropolitan New York, Slovak Zion, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Upstate New York, West Virginia-Western Maryland, and Virginia synods;

To affirm the 2009 dollar estimates for the sharing of mission-support contributions for synodical and churchwide ministries by congregations of the following synods: Northwest Washington, Rocky Mountain, South Dakota, Northwestern Minnesota, Northeastern Minnesota, Southwestern Minnesota, Minneapolis Area, Saint Paul Area, Southeastern Minnesota, Nebraska, Central States, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Southwestern Texas, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, Northern Illinois, Central/Southern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa, Northern Great Lakes, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee, La Crosse Area, Southeast Michigan, Indiana-Kentucky, Northwestern Ohio, Northeastern Ohio, New Jersey, New England, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Allegheny, Upper Susquehanna, Delaware-Maryland, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Southeastern, and Florida-Bahamas synods; and

To acknowledge the percentage change in 2009 mission-support contributions resulting from estimates of congregational mission-support income for the following synods: Western North Dakota, Northeastern Iowa, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Caribbean synods.

Ms. Wallace called attention to the Budget and Finance Committee item contained in the *en bloc* resolution, recommendation of the re-election Mr. John F. Timmer to the Audit Committee. The committee also had approved its charter and forwarded it to the Executive Committee. Ms. Wallace reviewed the other matters on which the committee had worked. She concluded her report by thanking committee members, Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton, and her staff.

Mr. David A. Ullrich, associate general counsel, responded to the question Mr. Richard L. Wahl had asked previously. He stated that the facts were that serious embezzlement had taken place in a Pennsylvania synod, allegedly by the synod treasurer. The treasurer had been elected but also hired full time by the synod and had served in the position over 20 years. These were unique situations, he pointed out. All synods must have audits, he continued, but some do not look into every detail. The churchwide organization does provide guidelines and resources for congregational and synodical treasurers and will consider whether other information should be provided.

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Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton reported that her office had worked with the synod in question. The internal auditor, in particular, made himself available to inquiries from synods and congregations. In addition, resources for congregations and synods are posted on the Office of the Treasurer Web pages. Her office would continue to work on spreading the message of the necessity of internal controls and ways to use external auditors effectively. The Office of the Treasurer would continue to raise issues and provide resources.

Mr. Ullrich commended the congregational audit guidelines that were available on the Web pages. He emphasized as well the necessity of rotating treasurers.

BIBLE STUDY

Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for justice for women, led a Bible study on "Power and Privilege in the Gospel of Mark," using Mark 7:24-30 and 8:34.

RECESS

The Church Council recessed at 3:44 P.M.

**Saturday, April 12, 2008
Plenary Session IV**

Vice President Carlos E. Peña reconvened the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council at 4:03 P.M.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE FOR ADMINISTRATION
(Agenda II.C; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit E, Part 1)

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña, the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration, presented her report.

Pr. Bullock began by expressing gratitude for the opportunity to serve as the executive for administration. She noted that she had served this church for 20 years in a variety of ways. She reported that since the learning curve was steep, she had been spending a considerable amount of time orienting herself to the work. She had been listening to and learning from leaders and reviewing the strategic plans and documents of units and the churchwide organization. She invited council members to read the unit reports in order to receive a sense of the depth and breadth of the work carried out by the churchwide organization.

Pr. Bullock indicated that she also had been part of several professional assessments of units and programs that were underway. One such assessment was of the World Hunger program, which was strong and growing. The goal of the assessment was to determine what kind of support the program needs to continue its growth. The information technology section also was being assessed to make certain that it had the necessary infrastructure and leadership to carry out its responsibilities. The third assessment was of the three financial service units (the Board of Pensions, the Mission Investment Fund, and the Foundation of the ELCA) to see whether and how they might work to provide comprehensive financial services that would enhance this church's mission. The project, she said, was called "Mission ONE (Opportunities Now Emerge)."

Pr. Bullock commented that what she appreciated most so far in her new position was this church's capacity and opportunity for mission, its gifted leaders and partners, and the variety of its ministries here and around the world. This capacity was made possible by the rich diversity and complexity of this church and its churchwide organization. Yet mission also was a challenge. Mission is more than maintenance, she stated, and it calls this church to new ways of organizing itself. She expressed her excitement about moving forward with strategic thinking and holy imagination in partnership with the leaders of this church, including the Church Council.

REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE
(Agenda II.E.5)

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña, the Rev. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson, chair, presented the report of the Planning and Evaluation Committee.

COMMUNAL DISCERNMENT
(Agenda III.F.1.)

Background:

Communal Discernment

Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F)

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been a church body for twenty years; and

WHEREAS, the overall culture we live in has grown more polarized and contentious; and

WHEREAS, we continue to struggle to discern truth together as a large, complex church body serving the Gospel in very different contexts; and

WHEREAS, we believe there are other ways of discerning and working together to follow Jesus and that our process might be adjusted in ways that would help our life together; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod ask the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church

in America to call together a task force to explore and analyze other models and possible adjustments of our model of communal discernment as a church body; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Minnesota Synod ask that a report be given about what is learned in the study of other large Christian bodies' work of engaging difficult church and social issues as well as recommendations about how we might work together in a way that fosters trust and deepens our spiritual discernment of challenging dilemmas and issues in our future together following Christ Jesus.

Previous Church Council Action

At its August 2007 meeting, the Church Council voted [CC07.08.57] to refer this resolution for study:

- To receive the resolution of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod related to communal discernment;
- To refer the resolution to the Church Council Planning and Evaluation Committee in consultation with the Administrative Team and the Conference of Bishops with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council; and
- To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Administrative Team and Planning and Evaluation Committee Action

Responding to this referral, the Administrative Team and members of the Planning and Evaluation Committee began initial study of the conceptual framework implied by the resolution of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Council. As was noted during discussion at the August 2007 meeting of the Church Council, discernment is a technical, theological term with a variety of levels of related meanings. In order to respond appropriately to the resolution, Bishop Jon V. Anderson was invited to share his reflections on the underlying concerns that prompted the Synod Council resolution. Bishop Anderson's response provided a detailed outline largely centered on the importance of all participants who comprise large decision-making bodies working together to discover the truth of a matter, thereby making decisions by consensus. If the Church Council establishes a task force, one issue will be to define appropriately what is meant by "discernment." In the meantime, based upon the response from Bishop Anderson, preliminary research focused on various models of consensus decision-making.

Consensus decision-making is a process that not only seeks the agreement of a very large majority of participants, but seeks also to resolve or mitigate the objections of the minority in order to achieve decisions with the greatest level of support possible. Consensus usually is defined both as general agreement and the process of getting to such agreement. Consensus decision-making is thus concerned primarily with that process. As a process, consensus decision-making aims to be:

- *Inclusive:* As many stakeholders as possible should be involved in the consensus decision-making process;
- *Participatory:* The consensus process should solicit actively the input and participation of all decision-makers;
- *Cooperative:* Participants in an effective consensus process should strive to reach the best possible decision *for the group and all of its members*, rather than opt to pursue a majority opinion, potentially to the detriment of a minority.
- *Egalitarian:* All members of a consensus decision-making body should be afforded, as much as possible, equal input into the process. All members have the opportunity to table, amend, and "block" proposals.
- *Solution-oriented:* An effective consensus decision-making body strives to emphasize common agreement over differences and reach effective decisions using compromise and other techniques to avoid or resolve mutually exclusive positions within the group.

Consensus is not equivalent to unanimity. A healthy consensus decision-making process usually encourages the expression of dissenting opinions early, maximizing the chance of accommodating the views of all minorities. Consensus is reached when a pre-determined threshold of participant support has been reached; "rough consensus" has no specific rule for such a majority, but instead the question of consensus is left to the judgment of the chair. In either case, dissenters are given the opportunity to declare reservations, stand aside to let the motion pass, or block a proposal (generally considered to be an extreme measure, used only when a participant believes a proposal endangers the organization or its participants, or violates the mission of the organization).

The model used by the Quakers is effective because it puts in place a simple, time-tested structure that moves a

group toward consensus. This model has been well-received when employed in other settings because it gives everyone a chance to speak, while limiting potential disruptions.

A model used with mixed results by the Reformed Church in America relies upon the moderator periodically inviting participants to hold up a red, yellow, or green card to reflect the level of agreement with the proposal. The level of consensus is determined by the moderator based upon this periodic visual feedback.

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod uses parliamentary procedures, but alters *Robert's Rules of Order*. For example, according to the 2007 Special Standing Rules for the Convention, no motion to amend, table, or end debate can be made during the presentation of committee recommendations or initial debate on the main motion. Such motions can be introduced only during a special segment of discussion. Amendments to proposed substitutes are to be published in “Today’s Business” (the LCMS version of the “Daily Docket”) for publication prior to consideration, so all delegates have the language before them prior to deliberation. Motions to end debate are limited to the immediate question, which means there are no motions to “call the question on all matters before the house.” And, although anyone can move to end debate, the chair is required to call for a vote to end debate after every 20 minutes of open debate. The chair also can call for a vote to end debate whenever he judges that the assembly has heard sufficient speaking from both sides of the issue.

All NATO decisions are made by consensus after discussion and consultation among member countries. A decision reached by consensus is an agreement reached by common consent, a decision that is accepted by each member country. This means that when a “NATO decision” is announced, it is the expression of the collective will of all the sovereign states that are members. This principle also is applied at every committee level and demonstrates clearly that NATO decisions are collective decisions made by its member countries.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has changed its meeting procedures from a parliamentary style to consensus decision-making. This transition was made in part for theological reasons, as the body sought to bear witness to unity in a world marked by division. By promoting collaboration rather than adversarial debate, consensus procedures help the WCC assembly, commissions, and committees to seek the mind of Christ together. This consensus model also encourages prayerful listening to one another and growth in understanding between ecclesial traditions. At the same time it requires discipline on the part of participants and moderators. There are rules, but the aim is to arrive at a common mind rather than simply determine the will of the majority. When consensus is declared, all who have participated can affirm confidently: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us . . .” (Acts 15:28).

Because the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is fundamentally a legislative body, some consensus decision-making models may be impossible to implement. Revisions to the Rules of Organization and Procedure that would increase the level of consensus within the body might be considered, however. These might include procedural changes, such as a requirement to table a substitute motion until a subsequent plenary session so that it can be photocopied and distributed to voting members. Other possible changes might be to restrict how motions to end debate are introduced or to exempt debates over procedures from time restrictions so that such measures are not perceived as ways to manipulate or limit discussion.

The Executive Committee at its February 25, 2008, meeting discussed a recommendation from the Planning and Evaluation Committee.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Jeffrey “Jeff” B. Sorenson, chair of the Planning and Evaluation Committee, introduced the proposed action on communal discernment and reviewed its background. Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked how the task force would be appointed. Pr. Sorenson replied that the Administrative Team would appoint the task force, according to the guidelines in the resolution.

Ms. Rebecca Jo Brakke applauded the commitment to work further on the issue, noting that the League of Women Voters uses consensus for its advocacy work. The process was interesting but represented a challenge.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC08.04.09

To give thanks to the Southwestern Minnesota Synod for its resolution asking the Church Council to appoint a task force to examine models of communal discernment and report “recommendations about how we might work together in a way that fosters trust and deepens our spiritual discernment of challenging dilemmas and issues in our future”;

To underscore the importance of communal discernment to the interrelationships and life of this church in each of its expressions and to anticipate that this examination will serve not only to provide a vehicle to speak to each other about difficult issues in difficult times, but also to call this church to look deeply and prayerfully at how it seeks to be led by the Holy Spirit in all its communal discernment processes;

To recognize that this request asks the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to examine specific criteria for discernment, both current and future, and therefore a breadth of representation on the task force and a flexible time line are necessary;

To anticipate that, together with the Book of Faith initiative, this church is committing itself to a journey with the Spirit, a journey of spiritual renewal through Holy Scripture and discernment;

To appoint a communal discernment task force to explore whether there may be better ways for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in all its expressions to engage emotional and divisive issues, seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and make difficult decisions as a church body in ways that will increase mutual trust, build respect for each other as the body of Christ, and deepen spiritual discernment;

To encourage the task force to engage in a thorough study of alternative possibilities for communal discernment, to recommend to the Church Council alternative models of communal discernment it deems helpful, and to offer leadership to this church as it seeks to be led by the Holy Spirit in its communal discernment processes;

To request that the task force consult regularly with the Administrative Team and the Conference of Bishops, work collaboratively with all expressions of this church, and report its findings and possible recommendations through the Planning and Evaluation Committee to the Church Council;

To include as members of the task force people selected for their interest and expertise from among:

- the Church Council;
- the Conference of Bishops;
- churchwide officers and staff;
- teaching theologians;
- rostered and lay leaders from congregational settings; and
- institutions and agencies;

To include as advisors to the task force people selected for their interest and expertise from among ecumenical partners and intentional faith communities who have explored, or already employ, alternative models of communal discernment;

To anticipate that the task force, as it determines what will be helpful for its work, may invite resource people from a wide range of faith traditions who practice varied

models of communal discernment;

To allocate \$20,000-\$25,000 for the work of the task force; and

To request that the task force be named and convened by July 1, 2008, and that the task force provide to the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council, following consultation with the Administrative Team the following: 1) a preliminary outline of the scope of its work and a time line for completing it and 2) any recommended changes in the process of deliberation that would affect the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

Pr. Sorenson reviewed the committee's other work and indicated issues in which the committee proposed to engage. He acknowledged that the committee did not yet have a charter because it could not agree on one. He indicated that one problem was the difference between the committee's constitutional responsibilities and its recent practice. The committee would need to spend more time defining its role, he concluded.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

The Rev. J. Pablo Obregon reflected on dwelling in the Word: "Buenos tardes. A text from Psalms: 'Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. In your great compassion, blot out my offenses. Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.' I have been debating what to share with you today, and how it is that the Word has been a lamp unto my feet. I talked to my wife, and with her permission I am sharing something very personal. I have definitely experienced both Law and Gospel in my life, guilt and grace. I also have been humbled, but I also continue to grow in my faith. At the age of 6 years old, somehow I ended up in an abusive situation that led me to live a life in darkness, shame, fear, privacy. That carried me through all my years of growing up and going to school, even becoming ordained. Very few people knew exactly what was going on in my life, other than God himself. I was able to confess some actions of mine to my wife, my family, my friends. We have worked on forgiveness; we continue to work on something that every marriage should have: good communication, trust. For the last several years God continues to show that he keeps creating in me a clean heart. In spite of the hurt and pain, I am now a better individual, a child of God. I also know that because of the diligent work and all the sessions I have been able to attend with family, friends, the church, my community, my world, my life is strong. Dwelling in the Word has taken a central part in my life, has given me a new life. I give God thanks for the opportunity that the church has to talk openly about issues of human sexuality. It is important. It also is important for us to talk about sexism in our lives, privileges, and being victims of misuse of power. I know that I am walking the rest of my life with some ugly scars. I call them scars of grace. They are reminders of God's grace, love, and forgiveness. They are also reminders that I am a sinful person, and I need God for forgiveness. So I am reminded that I am marked with the cross of Christ forever.

"And a couple of readings from the Scriptures [*The Message*]: 'So what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God did not hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition, and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything he would not gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with God when messing with one of God's chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The one who died for us, who was raised to life for us, is in the presence of God at this very moment, was taken up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way, no trouble, no hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst scenes listed in the Scriptures. They kill us in cold blood because they hate you. We are sitting ducks. They pick us off one by one. None of these phases us because Jesus loves us. I am absolutely convinced that nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing, living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or thinkable, absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way Jesus our Master has embraced us.'

"And once again I pray, and if you need to pray, this prayer from Psalms: 'Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. In your great compassion, blot out my offenses. Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.' Amen."

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

(Agenda II.E.6)

The Rev. Steven P. Loy, chair, presented the report of the Program and Services Committee.

FULL-COMMUNION AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

(Agenda III.G.2; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit Q, Part 1)

Background:

The bilateral dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran Church and The United Methodist Church (UMC) began with a first round study on baptism (1977–79). That study concluded that Lutherans and United Methodists shared “in one Spirit and one baptism.” The second round of the dialogue (1985–87) focused on episcopacy and concluded that, while there are distinctions between how the two churches utilize the office of bishop, they both insist “that no particular structure of oversight is of the essence of the Church.” The final report was published by Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, in 1991 as *Episcopacy: A Lutheran–United Methodist Common Statement to the Church*, which, in addition to background papers prepared for the dialogue, also included the 1979 common statement on baptism.

The conclusion of the round two participants was that “the remaining topics can and should be addressed in a third and final round of dialogues between our two churches.” After a hiatus of seven years, a formal invitation was received in June 1998 from the ecumenical officer of The United Methodist Church asking that the dialogue be resumed. Staff members met in November 1998 to begin planning the third round of the dialogue. In November 1999 the co-chairs, the Rev. Allan C. Bjornberg, bishop of the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Rev. Melvin G. Talbert, ecumenical officer and bishop of The United Methodist Church, and dialogue members were appointed. The United Methodist Church was represented by the following: Ms. Judith Crain of Green Bay, Wisconsin; the Rev. Dr. Amy Laura Hall of Duke Divinity School; Dr. Jean Miller-Schmidt of Iliff School of Theology; and the Rev. Lars-Erik Nordby of Norway. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was represented by the following: Dr. Kathryn L. Johnson of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary; Dr. Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University; the Rev. Dr. H. Frederick Reisz Jr. of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary; and the Rev. Dr. Timothy J. Wengert of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Staff members for the dialogue were the Rev. Betty Gamble, Associate General Secretary, General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (UMC), and the Rev. Paul A. Schreck, associate for bilateral dialogues (ELCA).

The co-chairs subsequently met December 8-9, 2000, in Chicago to organize a schedule of topics for the dialogue and concluded this meeting by adopting the following statement:

As we begin our conversation, we expect to further explore and discover our partnership in the Gospel, and we hope to discern a clearer vision of our common discipleship. In committing ourselves to this next round of dialogue, we express our hope for full communion between our two churches.

The dialogue convened its first plenary meeting in Denver, Colorado, September 6-9, 2001, to discuss a series of papers on the role of Scripture as authority as well as confessional and doctrinal authority within the two churches. The dialogue members were encouraged by significant work previously accomplished by Lutheran and United Methodist churches through bilateral and multilateral relationships throughout the world. United Methodists in several European countries already have entered into agreements with Lutheran churches. The ELCA-UMC dialogue found of particular assistance *Fellowship of Grace*, which describes the 1994 full-communion relationship between the UMC and the Church of Norway, as well as *The Church: Community of Grace*, the 1984 final report of the Lutheran World Federation and World Methodist Council dialogue, which details significant convergence in our churches’ doctrines of grace and baptism.

The second plenary session convened February 14–17, 2002, in Orlando, Florida. Because of continuing illness, Dr. Jean Miller-Schmidt was replaced by the UMC Council of Bishops with the Rev. Dr. Paul Chilcote of Asbury Seminary, a John Wesley scholar. Discussion centered on a review of the 1979 common statement on baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The two church bodies have these rites in common, the only ones considered sacraments. Baptism is understood to be the entry into church life; the Lord’s Supper is the regular gathering around the holy meal for faith communities. Significant agreement was found among the churches’ history and doctrinal teaching.

The third plenary session convened September 12–15, 2002, in Oslo, Norway, immediately prior to a meeting of

the Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council. The dialogue members benefitted from consultations with representatives of the Church of Norway and The United Methodist Church in Norway. The Rev. Andreas Aarflot, former bishop of the Church of Norway and an authority on Hans Nilsen Hauge, and Dr. Roar Fotland, dean of the United Methodist Seminary in Norway, addressed the dialogue team. The meeting included careful study and discussion of the landmark agreement between the Church of Norway and The United Methodist Church in Norway, *Fellowship of Grace*, with key church leaders providing helpful insights into theological issues to be addressed by the ELCA-UMC dialogue. In addition, the dialogue members discussed papers on justification and sanctification and were encouraged by the level of convergence that was experienced around these topics.

The fourth plenary session convened October 30–November 2, 2003, at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Due to other commitments, the Rev. Dr. Amy Laura Hall was replaced by the UMC Council of Bishops with the Rev. Dr. Sarah Heaner Lancaster of the Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Dialogue members discussed papers on the mission of the Church and orders of ministry, as well as a draft version of *This Holy Mystery*, a document articulating the eucharistic theology of The United Methodist Church to be considered at its 2004 General Conference. Participants were encouraged by the understanding of Holy Communion it described but proposed an amendment to clarify reference to a common misunderstanding among United Methodists that Lutherans believe in consubstantiation. This proposed amendment subsequently was considered by the UMC General Conference and adopted for the final version of *This Holy Mystery*.

The fifth plenary session convened February 19–22, 2004, at the Melancthon Institute in Houston, Texas. Discussion began on a proposal for Interim Eucharistic Sharing and the preliminary text of a final report of round three. In addition, a presentation on Lutheran liturgy was made by the Rev. Dr. Gordon W. Lathrop of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and a presentation on United Methodist liturgy was made by the Rev. Dr. Gayle C. Felton of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship.

The sixth plenary session convened August 26–29, 2004, at the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) office in Baltimore, Maryland. Dialogue participants completed work on the proposal for Interim Eucharistic Sharing and voted unanimously to submit the proposal for consideration by each church. The process for consideration was to include approval by the Council of Bishops, indicating that such sharing was in compliance with existing policies and procedures of The United Methodist Church, and adoption by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to authorize such sharing by ELCA congregations. The dialogue also continued to discuss issues related to the Lord's Supper and orders of ministry.

The seventh plenary session convened February 24–27, 2005, in Miami, Florida. The participants discussed principles for congregational guidance during the interim period, with a final text to be completed subsequent to adoption of the Interim Eucharistic Sharing agreement. Work also continued on a final report moving toward preparing recommendations for full communion. Topics of continued discussion were sanctification and perfection, and mission. A draft version of this report was completed at the August 2005 plenary meeting, to be distributed throughout both churches for review and comment. Comments were considered at the plenary meeting August 2006, with a finished text for study and review by each church completed in early 2007, finishing the work of the third-round participants.

The following proposal was presented to the ELCA in 2005:

A Proposal for Interim Eucharistic Sharing between
the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and
The United Methodist Church

In Round Three of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—United Methodist Church bilateral dialogue, we have examined the basis for a relationship of full communion between our two church bodies. Our study thus far has discovered no impediment to such a relationship. We have found, however, that the extent of our existing convergence in faith has not always been recognized in our faith communities. As we continue the work of this dialogue, we believe the time has come for our churches to deepen our knowledge of one another, honor and extend our currently shared mission, and share in a new relationship of worship and ministry through an agreement of Interim Eucharistic Sharing.

Our work has built upon substantial existing relationships:

- We rejoice in our common witness through the World Council of Churches and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.;
- We rejoice in the example of the close relationship that exists between The United Methodist Church in Norway (a part of The United Methodist Church) and the Church of Norway (a member of the Lutheran World Federation), described in *Fellowship of Grace* (1994 www.kirken.no/engelsk/fship_grace.html), which has served as an important resource for this dialogue;
- We rejoice that European Lutheran, Reformed, and United Methodist churches have deepened their relationships (1997 <http://lkg.alb.de/lkg/start.php>);
- We rejoice in the joint statement of the World Methodist Council and the Lutheran World Federation, *The Church: Community of Grace* (1984 www.elca.org/ea/Resources/lumersce.html);
- We rejoice in the two previous rounds of dialogue in the United States between Lutherans and United Methodists on baptism (1979) and the episcopacy (1988); and
- We rejoice in discovering that our two distinctive worship traditions have enriched each other and are sustained by those hymns we share together; that the ELCA statement on sacramental practice, *The Use of the Means of Grace* (1997 www.elca.org/dcm/worship/worship/sacraments/umg.html), has made explicit that (as in The United Methodist Church) baptized Christians who receive Holy Communion in their own congregations are welcome to receive the sacrament in ELCA congregations; and that The United Methodist Church has articulated its understanding of the sacraments in two documents, *By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism* (1996 www.gbod.org/worship/articles/water_spirit/) and *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion* (2004 www.gbod.org/worship/thm-bygc.pdf).

Drawing upon these resources and previous agreements, the work of the dialogue thus far has discovered significant areas of shared faith:

1. Both churches confess with Christians of all ages the Triune God as the one true God:
 - we confess the Bible as the Word of God and the source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life;
 - we agree that, in accordance with the Scriptures, human beings are justified by God's grace in Christ received freely through faith alone;
 - we agree that good works are the natural and spontaneous fruit of faith;
 - we agree that in baptism God enables the Christian to rely upon this gift, promise, and assurance throughout all of life;
 - we confess that the Lord's Supper is one of the fundamental means of grace. Like Holy Baptism, the Lord's Supper is an efficacious sign of God's grace, including and giving real participation in Christ;
 - we confess that the entire Eucharistic celebration expresses the real presence of Christ;
 - we confess that Christ is really present, shared, and received in the forms of bread and wine in the Eucharist, and that the blessings of this supper are received by faith alone;
 - we confess that in the Lord's Supper believers receive the benefits of Christ's perfect sacrifice on the cross and his victorious resurrection; and
 - we confess that the Holy Spirit uses the Supper to express and realize the communion (*koinonia*) of the people of God with Christ and with each other.
2. Furthermore, both churches emphasize in their liturgies the dimension of worship and thanksgiving in communion (*eucharistia*) and regard the entire worship service, centered in the proclamation of God's Word and the celebration of the Sacraments with prayer and praise, to be the central act in our common Christian life.
3. While in the dialogue we continue to address such topics as the work of the Holy Spirit in

sanctification, perfection in love, and understandings of ministry, we believe that significant convergence exists—and there is sufficient urgency in our need for closer relations of common witness and mission—that a step toward closer relationship is both possible and timely.

On the basis of these discoveries we believe that our churches now should commit to Interim Eucharistic Sharing. This agreement, though short of full communion, makes more visible the unity we already share in Christ, and makes more credible our common witness in the world. For the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (which defines Interim Eucharistic Sharing and Full Communion in “Ecumenism: The Vision of the ELCA” [1991 www.elca.org/ecumenical/Vision.html]) this requires approval by its Churchwide Assembly. At the call of its Council of Bishops, The United Methodist Church, for whom such Eucharistic sharing already is possible, will commit to a time of intentional deepening of relations with ELCA congregations.

We continue to hope and work toward a relationship of full communion between our two church bodies. With this interim commitment, congregations and judicatories of our two churches would now be encouraged to study together *This Holy Mystery* and *The Use of the Means of Grace*, to celebrate joint services of the Lord’s Supper, and to explore new opportunities for shared ministry. Guidelines for planning joint liturgies and resources for study and conversation can be found online (www.elca.org/ecumenical).

Each of our communions remains a broken and incomplete witness to God’s mercy. Longing for that glorious day when all are one, we trust that worship and work together in relationships of mutual challenge and celebration will strengthen our proclamation of the Gospel for the enabling of faith. We prayerfully commit ourselves to this continuing journey together.

In March 2005, the ELCA Conference of Bishops took the following action (CB05.03.05):

To endorse the proposal to establish Interim Eucharistic Sharing between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church.

In April 2005, the Church Council voted [CC05.04.23]:

To recommend adoption by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the following action:

To welcome and rejoice in the substantial progress of the Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue, looking toward the future possibility of a relationship of full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church;

To now recognize The United Methodist Church as a church in which the Gospel is preached and taught;

To affirm, on the basis of studies conducted by the Lutheran-United Methodist dialogue, that the basic teaching of each respective church is consonant with the Gospel;

To acknowledge, on the same basis, that the central teaching of The United Methodist Church is sufficiently compatible with the teaching of this church;

To encourage common concern throughout the respective churches by such means as:

1. mutual prayer and mutual support by members of congregations;
2. study together of the Holy Scripture as well as the histories and theological traditions of both churches;
3. joint programs of theological discussion, evangelical outreach, and social ministry endeavors; and

To declare, on the basis of these findings, that a relationship of Interim Sharing of the Eucharist is hereby established between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church in the U.S.A., with such an interim sharing to be exercised according to established guidelines.

This resolution subsequently was adopted on August 11, 2005, by the Churchwide Assembly (CA05.04.11) by a strong majority (Yes-877; No-60), and a relationship of Interim Eucharistic Sharing with The United Methodist Church was established.

A draft document describing a relationship of full communion between the two churches, "Confessing Our Faith Together," was submitted for review by the Conference of Bishops at its September 29–October 3, 2005, meeting with the intention that it would be circulated in a study format for discussion throughout the two churches. The draft also was submitted to the eight ELCA seminaries for review. The deadline for individual, congregational, and seminary responses and recommendations for revisions was January 15, 2007. Since The United Methodist Church is scheduled to consider the proposal for full communion at its General Conference meeting in 2008, the members of the Conference of Bishops discussed at length whether the ELCA should consider the matter at its 2007 or 2009 Churchwide Assembly. Based on this conversation, it was agreed that the proposal should come for a vote in 2009.

The Rev. Dr. Timothy G. Wengert, professor of Reformation history and Lutheran confessions at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and a member of the bilateral dialogue, was invited to address the Conference of Bishops meeting in October 2006, with the specific request that he address any potentially neuralgic points.

Responses to the study draft were reviewed by members of the bilateral dialogue at its final meeting in December 2007 and, based upon those responses, the dialogue decided to make no changes. The United Methodist Church will consider this proposal for full communion on April 29, 2008. A formal transmittal to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly by the Church Council is anticipated in November 2008.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Steven P. Loy, chair of the Program and Services Committee, introduced the proposed action on the relationship between the ELCA and The United Methodist Church, noting that it was an affirmation only. The Church Council would have a later opportunity to transmit the agreement on full communion to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson explained that the protocol for full-communication agreements was that both church bodies take one action, either to approve or reject. The current action simply was affirmation prior to the action of The United Methodist Church at its upcoming General Conference.

Mr. Richard L. Wahl commented that in previous discussions about the agreement, council members had been directed to foundational documents produced by The United Methodist Church, which indicate that the two church bodies have much in common. Yet when the proposal is brought to parishioners, he continued, based on anecdotal evidence, they do not see evidence of these shared beliefs in congregations. He wondered how to respond to parishioners with concerns like these.

The Rev. Donald J. McCoid, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations, replied that the full-communication agreement says only that there is nothing that is church-dividing between the two bodies. There are differences in belief, emphasis, and practice. Each can learn from one another. Even within this church body, they are such disagreements. Pr. McCoid indicated that full-communication agreements contain provisions for each church body to affirm and admonish the other, a process that is part of the relationship once the agreement is signed. What is essential is that after many years of studying and considering full communion with each other, the two church bodies have concluded that while differences remain, they are not church-dividing.

The Rev. Paul A Schreck, executive assistant to the secretary, observed that the two churches never condemned each other, as had been the case with other church bodies. The differences primarily related to culture and piety.

Presiding Bishop Hanson pointed out that the World Alliance of Methodists had signed on to the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, an indication of Methodist agreement with a core teaching of the faith for Lutherans.

Pr. McCoid advocated more study of and engagement with "Confessing Our Faith Together" so that concerns could be shared and responses developed. He anticipated strong affirmation of the agreement at The United Methodist Church General Conference.

The Rev. Jonathan W. Linman asked what church bodies, other than the Church of Norway, were in full communion with The United Methodist Church. Pr. McCoid responded that the ELCA would be the first in this country; however, The United Methodist Church was moving toward full communion with the historic black churches and with the Episcopal Church.

Presiding Bishop Hanson urged council members to give attention to the full-communication document before 2009. He reminded the Church Council that adopting agreements makes manifest the unity of Christ's Church but also increases

each church body's capacity for mission. He recommended that council members always ask how this church was living into its full-communion agreements.

Pr. McCoid agreed, saying that reception of agreements should not be passive but active.

Mr. Wahl inquired whether there had been much comment on "Confessing Our Faith Together." Pr. McCoid answered that the document had been placed before all the parts of this church for study and comment. The response, although not overwhelming, had been positive.

Pr. Schreck pointed out that "Confessing Our Faith Together" was the final report of the committee.

Pr. McCoid noted that this would be the ELCA's first full-communion agreement with a larger church body, which should provide many new opportunities for engagement in mission and ministry.

Pr. Linman commented that "Confessing Our Faith Together" also provided an opportunity for people to learn more about Lutheran identity and self-understanding. He commended especially the conclusion, which lifted up the prophetic dimension of administrative oversight.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña asked Ms. Judith Anne Bunker to lead the council in prayer. He then called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC08.04.10 To give thanks to God for the deepening relationship with The United Methodist Church that has resulted from Interim Eucharistic Sharing;

To thank the members of the Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue for the final report of the dialogue and the proposal for full communion, "Confessing Our Faith Together";

To encourage continued study of this proposal for full communion throughout this church; and

To anticipate action of The United Methodist General Conference on this full-communion agreement, as it meets April 23–May 2, 2008.

To request a formal proposal for a full-communion agreement with The United Methodist Church for consideration by the Church Council at its November 2008 meeting for action by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP: PASTORAL CARE

(Agenda III.G.1)

Background:

Of the worship materials that constitute the family of resources unfolding around this church's primary worship resource, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, at least two publications merit a level of liturgical review that requires action by the Church Council. Section 1.17 of the process for liturgical review is detailed in "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Review of Liturgical Material." The document was part of the Program and Services Committee's review.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pastoral Care is the first of two titles related to occasional services. While work is just beginning on the second volume, this first volume already has received two levels of review:

- Pre-publication review involved responding to and incorporating insights from a development panel and comments from individuals and groups who chose to review the provisional contents that were posted on the ELCA Web site.
- A subsequent review by designated reviewers, including synodical bishops, pastors, lay rostered leaders, and teaching theologians, informed the strategies for final decision-making.

Church Council Action:

The Rev. Stephen P. Loy, chair of the Program and Services Committee, introduced the proposed action on *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pastoral Care*.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion.

The Rev. Norene A. Smith asked whether there were any new services or liturgies. The Rev. Michael R. Burk, executive for worship and liturgical resources, responded that the first volume focused on resources for pastoral care. The next volume would include assembly rites.

Mr. Richard L. Wahl called the first volume “an extraordinary resource for visitation” with those home-bound or hospitalized. He stated that he was deeply grateful for the resource and for those who had developed it.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for a vote.

VOTED:

CC08.04.11 **To commend *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pastoral Care* for use by pastors and lay persons involved in this church’s ministry of care;**
To express gratitude for the conscientious efforts of the reviewers and the insights and observations by the many people who helped to shape and refine the content of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pastoral Care*; and
To encourage the completion of the second volume of materials related to occasional services in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Pr. Loy reviewed the other work of the Program and Services Committee, noting that its charter had been sent to the Executive Committee and that the Rev. John S. Munday had agreed to serve on the task force for the social statement on criminal justice. He added that the committee recommended that each Church Council member attend as an observer at least two hearings on the draft social statement on human sexuality. He remarked that the more responses council members hear, the more informed and prepared they would be for their own discussions of the statement. The places for and times of hearings are posted on the “Faithful Journey” Web pages, he indicated. In addition, the task force was asking for a few people to attend hearings and take notes for task force members.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Mark S. Helmke announced his upcoming marriage.

RECESS

After a number of routine announcements, the council recessed at 4:56 P.M.

EVENING PRAYER

The Rev. J. Pablo Obregon led a service of Evening Prayer in the Lutheran Center chapel.

**Sunday, April 13, 2008
Plenary Session V**

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Prior to the beginning of the fifth plenary session of the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council, participants gathered for a service of Holy Communion. The Rev. John A. Nunes, president of Lutheran World Relief, preached; Ms. Lynette M. Reitz served as assisting minister; and Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson presided. The Rev. Jennifer P. Ollikainen from the Worship and Liturgical Resources section was the musician, and the Rev. Marie C. Jerge, bishop of the Upstate New York Synod, was the cantor.

Following the service, Vice President Carlos E. Peña reconvened the meeting at 9:18 A.M. He thanked those who had participated in the service.

UPDATE FROM AUGSBURG FORTRESS, PUBLISHERS

Ms. Beth A. Lewis, president and chief executive officer, used the metaphor of rowing to talk about the state of Augsburg Fortress, Publishers. In a video presentation titled, "The Pull toward the Future," she described how the publishing ministry was looking back to its Lutheran heritage while using technology to move into the future. Customers were the coaches on the shore, and the needs of both congregations and the academy needed to be balanced in order to move in the right direction. Ms. Lewis reviewed a number of successful new publications, including resources for confirmation and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. She acknowledged the challenges posed by shrinking attendance at worship and Sunday School, but focused on the publishing house's efforts to meet those challenges. She reported that the profits of the last two years were being invested into a new information technology infrastructure. Furthermore, \$1.7 million over normal expenditures for product development were being invested in new faith-formation and worship resources, both Web and print. She anticipated a number of resources supporting the Book of Faith initiative, including *Opening the Book of Faith*, a Web-based introduction to the Bible course, a Lutheran study Bible, and adult Bible studies. Augsburg Fortress, she stated, was called on to produce high-quality resources for faith formation and worship for this church and the academy at a fair price and to offer excellent service. In turn, the publishing ministry asked that congregations purchase resources from Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, so that profits could continue to be invested in the future. Ms. Lewis thanked council members for their support and asked them to continue "coaching from the shore" as the members of this church pulled together toward the future.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

(Agenda II.A.2; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit A, Part 2)

Mr. Carlos E. Peña, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, handed over the chair to Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson in order to present his report.

Vice President Peña thanked the leaders of this church for their support upon the death of his mother-in-law.

The first item that Vice President Peña addressed was the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) that he had attended. He highlighted two matters that had not been mentioned in his written report. He informed the council that he serves on the Finance Committee and the other ELCA member, Ms. Kathryn Lohre, serves on the Public Issues Committee. The committees meet for two full days, and could use even more time. He promised to provide an update on the work of the committees in his next report. The other key issue he wanted to raise, in light of the previous day's discussion, was the fact that the WCC operates by consensus. The process had been used for the first time at the WCC's Ninth Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil. A commission had been appointed to study the matter after the Orthodox raised concerns about the views of minority groups being heard and taken into account in decision-making. The process had been used not only at the assembly but in two subsequent Central Committee meetings. One element in determining the success of the consensus process, Vice President Peña stated, is having moderators trained in the method. Another is giving responsibility to committees to do much of the work beforehand.

When the matters come before the body with consensus, it is difficult for any substantive change to occur. Assembly members use orange cards to signify agreement with the speaker and blue cards to signal a cool response. If assembly members are ready to move forward, they raise both cards. Vice President Peña stated that he would provide the council with updates on consensus decision-making in his fall report. He noted that the WCC was searching for a new general secretary.

Vice President Peña commented that the advent of Synod Assembly season provided an opportune time for feedback about council members' experiences in attending Synod Assemblies and Synod Council meetings. He asked the council to discuss in groups of two what is working well in terms of building connections and what should be done better. Following the small-group discussion, he asked that some of the feedback be shared with the entire council.

The Rev. John C. Richter indicated that prior to the election of a new bishop, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod received assistance from the churchwide organization, which conducted focus groups and helped people articulate a vision for the synod. Mr. Kenneth W. Inskeep, executive for research and evaluation, had written a very helpful report that was shared with everyone. It was a very real, very helpful connection between the churchwide organization and a synod, he said. The Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich, executive for constituent and synodical relations, responded that her section made this service available to all synods and initiated it at the invitation of a synod.

The Rev. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson reported that a few years previous, he and Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton as the churchwide representative had made the assembly presentation jointly, which was a powerful symbol of cooperation. In contrast, recently a mission-support consultation had taken place in the synod about which he had not known and in which he had not participated. It felt odd and awkward, he noted.

Mr. Mark W. Myers remarked that he had built a good relationship with the Synod Council in his own synod, but the council of his paired synod had stated that there was not enough time on the agenda for him. It was difficult to build a relationship with the paired synod.

The Rev. Jonathan W. Linman observed that during his fall sabbatical he had been present at all the meetings of the Metropolitan New York Synod Council, even when he did not give a report. Toward the end of the time, it became clear that the council felt his presence was a normal part of the meeting.

Ms. Sandra Schlesinger commented that it had been a visible sign of partnership for her to be present for the mission-support consultation that took place in her synod. She added that the PowerPoint presentation to both Synod Councils had been well received.

The Rev. A. Craig Settlege, director for mission support, welcomed the participation of council members in mission-support consultations and promised to provide them with dates of future consultations.

Ms. Phyllis L. Wallace noted that she had attended the Caribbean Synod Assembly the previous year and currently was going to various synodical and congregational gatherings to talk about mission support, interdependence, and connections.

Mr. Mark E. Johnson stated that when he contacted the bishop of his paired synod, he was told that his information was not needed. Bishops need to be reminded about the importance of connecting with Church Council members. Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson promised that Synodical Relations would follow up on the matter.

The Rev. Rachel L. Connelly suggested that when new council members are elected, both synods should receive notification and a reminder that council members should be welcomed at Synod Council meetings and Synod Assemblies. Presiding Bishop Hanson confirmed that her suggestion would be followed.

Vice President Peña thanked council members for their comments and asked that they communicate any other concerns or suggestions to him. He emphasized that it was important for Church Council members to be present at Synod Assemblies, even if they were not on the program, so that they could interact with people and listen to them.

Lastly, Vice President Peña invited council members to participate in the Vision for Mission appeal as part of their commitment to model stewardship. They would receive a formal invitation to contribute in the next few weeks. He noted that although 2007 donations to Vision for Mission had fallen short of the appeal's goal, Church Council members had given \$18,000 over the last two years, a total worth celebrating.

Presiding Bishop Hanson opened the floor for questions or comments.

The Rev. Steven P. Loy commented that it was unclear whether the gift processors knew that he was a council member when he gave to "Vision for Mission." Vice President Peña replied that the new process would solve that

problem. Treasurer Jackson-Skelton added that her office would keep council members informed about their donations.

Mr. Myers reminded Vice President Peña that he had promised to provide comments for those attending assemblies. Vice President Peña responded that Mr. Myers had misunderstood a remark that he had made, but the suggestion was worth considering.

Mr. Richard L. Wahl expressed concern about council members' relationship with their paired synods. In response to direction from the chair, only one-fourth of the council signaled a positive relationship with paired synods.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Agenda II.E.3)

Vice President Carlos E. Peña resumed the chair, then presented the report of the Executive Committee.

LUTHERAN MALARIA INITIATIVE

(Agenda III.D.1; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit Q, Part 2)

Background:

Origins of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative

In July 2007, staff of Lutheran World Relief (LWR) brought to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) a proposal to develop a common Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI). This initiative would provide an opportunity for the Lutheran community to join the growing worldwide movement to control and ultimately eradicate this debilitating disease of poverty.

Malaria currently claims over one million lives each year, mainly infants, small children, and pregnant women, most of whom live in Africa. Each year more than 350 million people worldwide contract malaria, which pulls families—especially those who cannot afford treatment—and communities into a downward spiral of poverty. The global community has the means, including spraying, insecticide-treated nets, and combination drug therapies, to control this mosquito-borne disease. The question is whether the global community has the will to do so.

Malaria is addressed every day in many health facilities operated by ELCA companion churches and in the community development work of this church's international partners, including the Lutheran World Federation. Although the ELCA provides financial support for many of these efforts, using both mission-support and World Hunger funds, malaria has not been an explicit focus of the ELCA's mission or its international program work. Neither has it been a priority for Lutheran World Relief or the LCMS.

However, a unique opportunity for engagement in this area came to Lutheran World Relief over a year ago, 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 United Nations Foundation, which had received funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to combat malaria. These funds could assist LWR to develop its capacity to mobilize Lutherans to combat malaria. The campaign would have both a significant educational component and a major fundraising component.

Lutheran World Relief is a ministry of the ELCA and the LCMS in relief and international development; a significant focus of its work is engagement with community-based organizations. The ELCA's support for LWR, provided through the Global Mission unit of the churchwide organization, is complemented by this church's direct engagement with companion churches in health and development ministries and with the Lutheran World Federation. Funding for this comprehensive system of response to human need comes primarily from the ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

Thus, when approached by UNF, Lutheran World Relief 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 LCMS. Since last July, 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 go forward with it. (Other churchwide units will participate in the development and implementation of the initiative should further work be approved by the Church Council.) At various stages, but with increasing intentionality, these conversations included The Lutheran

Church–Missouri Synod.

All three potential LMI partners agreed that, given their history and mission commitments, any common inter-Lutheran campaign on malaria would need to reflect the understanding that malaria is a disease of poverty. They agreed that Lutheran engagement in malaria projects would be deficient if it were based on simplistic approaches to malaria eradication (e.g., handing out nets). LMI partners also agreed that a malaria response, to be effective in the field, would need to be carried out within the context of comprehensive and sustainable community development. Education about malaria in this country similarly would need to avoid simplistic or purely medical approaches; it would need to show clearly and convincingly the connections between poverty and malaria.

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 fundraising 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.

The ELCA, therefore, 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 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, 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.

The International Perspective

When ELCA staff members received the invitation of Lutheran World Relief to consider adding malaria as a priority ministry, they determined that the decision could not be made without consultation with companion churches in order to discern whether malaria work would be a priority for them and whether they would welcome partnership with the ELCA in it. Therefore, in fall 2007 and winter 2008, Global Mission staff consulted with companion churches and agencies.

Key ELCA companions—in particular the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (a regional expression of the Lutheran World Federation)—strongly encouraged the expansion of the ELCA’s mission to include malaria within the context of a continuing and expanding emphasis on HIV and AIDS. For if HIV and AIDS are diseases of poverty, malaria is as well; they are entwined in the lives of people in many areas of Africa and other parts of the world. That is the reason the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria focuses on both of these diseases, along with tuberculosis. It is also the reason these diseases are the focus of the UN Millennium Goals—goals affirmed by the ELCA—which place in one global movement both the reduction of extreme hunger and poverty and the control of these diseases.

During the same period, Lutheran World Relief, which historically has been active in East and West Africa, conducted a malaria assessment in the countries in which it currently operates. LWR is gaining on-the-ground experience through its implementation of a cooperative malaria project with a Lutheran hospital and a diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, a project that was funded by a major grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Should a Lutheran Malaria Initiative go forward, LWR plans to work with organizations and churches through centers in East and West Africa, while the ELCA would support the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa to provide such a center in southern Africa, linked with its HIV and AIDS efforts. These centers would work closely together, sharing information, ideas, best practices, models, and expertise across the three regions of Africa.

The Domestic Perspective

A similar assessment process concerning the impact of a malaria initiative on ongoing interpretation, communication, education, and fundraising efforts, both in the World Hunger program and the wider work of the ELCA, was conducted by other churchwide units. The Lutheran system’s capacity for participating in such a campaign also was discussed. As

reported to the Church Council at its November 2007 meeting, LMI partners moved through an exploratory phase with the United Nations Foundation (UNF), during which the ability of LWR, the ELCA, and the LCMS to mobilize the U.S. Lutheran community for this effort was assessed.

Throughout the fall and winter, conversations between the three potential LMI partners and the UNF intensified. At the end of February 2008, a Phase I proposal was submitted to the foundation for a \$2.6 million three-year grant (Exhibit Q, Part 2). This grant would cover the period of time for planning and development prior to formal approval of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly (2009) and the LCMS National Convention (2010). The proposal anticipates a minimum fundraising goal of \$75 million, to be raised by the three LMI partners after approval by their respective governance bodies. The UN Foundation has given every indication that, given successful completion of Phase I, additional funding for Phase II—the actual implementation of the campaign—will be forthcoming.

The development of this grant was facilitated by an initial feasibility study conducted in the summer of 2007 by Community Counseling Services (CCS) on behalf of LWR. CCS determined that a minimum campaign goal of \$75 million over five years is realistic. The ELCA has set a goal of \$30 million, including \$20 million for malaria and \$10 million for HIV and AIDS. (The budget for the proposal is located in Exhibit Q, Part 2a.)

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

Building a case for support of LMI among the members of this church means articulating it as a priority among the ministries of the ELCA. From the beginning, the case must integrate this church's LMI efforts with the World Hunger Appeal and other strategic priorities, including the HIV and AIDS strategy.

The ELCA, unlike LWR and the LCMS, would include HIV and AIDS and malaria in its awareness-building and fundraising efforts. A goal of raising \$20 million for malaria and \$10 million to support the ELCA's HIV and AIDS strategy in the campaign's five-year time period (2009–2013) is projected. In addition, in 2008, the ELCA will conduct a feasibility study for a comprehensive churchwide campaign in conjunction with its 25th anniversary in 2012. If approved, such a campaign would incorporate LMI and the HIV and AIDS strategy into a larger effort. A positive recommendation to move forward with a comprehensive campaign would need approval by the Churchwide Assembly in 2009.

Previous Church Council Action

At its November 2007 meeting, the Church Council received an update on a possible Lutheran Malaria Initiative and took the following action:

To authorize staff of Development Services, Global Mission, and Church in Society, under the coordination of the Office of the Presiding Bishop:

- to develop, in partnership with Lutheran World Relief, The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, and the United Nations Foundation, a proposal for a possible Lutheran Malaria Initiative, which would support the work of companion churches in the Lutheran World Federation and other international partners in ministry as well as the Global Fund to Combat AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and

¹ From the Global Fund's Web Site: "The Global Fund's purpose is to attract, manage and disburse resources to fight AIDS, TB and malaria. [The fund] does not implement programs directly, relying instead on the knowledge of local experts. As a financing mechanism, the Global Fund works closely with other multilateral and bilateral organizations involved in health and development issues to ensure that newly funded programs are coordinated with existing ones. In many cases, these partners participate in local Country Coordinating Mechanisms, providing important technical assistance during the development of proposals and implementation of programs."

- to develop plans for integrating and coordinating such an effort with the ELCA's longstanding commitment to walk with those affected by HIV and AIDS and companion churches that are responding to this crisis, within the context of the integrated churchwide HIV and AIDS strategy that was called for by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly;

To request Development Services, Global Mission, and Church in Society to bring through the Office of the Presiding Bishop a report and possible recommendations on this initiative to the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council;

To authorize the Executive Committee, between meetings of the Church Council, to monitor and take appropriate action relating to the development of a possible malaria appeal and program, including the possible receipt of funding from the UN Foundation;

To request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop seek input from the Cabinet of Executives and that any information relating to the development of a possible malaria appeal and program be posted to the Church Council's online listserv for input to the Executive Committee prior to any decision; and

To authorize staff of Development Services and Global Mission to include in the World Hunger program's "Stand with Africa" campaign pilot efforts in anti-malaria fundraising, education, and international programming in 2008-2009 as proposals for action by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on a possible churchwide appeal are developed during that period.

Meeting in February 2008, the Church Council's Executive Committee was briefed on the initiative's progress. Information on a possible Lutheran Malaria Initiative also was shared at the March 2008 meeting of the Conference of Bishops, as well as at unit program and advisory committee meetings.

The United Nations Foundation Grant

The proposal that comes before this meeting of the Church Council is to use the United Nations Foundation grant to lay the foundation for a proposed malaria and HIV and AIDS campaign that could be launched by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. Preparation for such an initiative, which would include several pilot programs, would occur under the auspices of the World Hunger Appeal. Efforts during 2008 and 2009 would provide significant information to help shape the wider campaign, into which these initial activities would be folded if the campaign is approved by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

Exhibit Q, Part 2 contains an executive summary and the full text of the grant proposal submitted to the UN Foundation, the goal of which is to raise resources and create structures to combat diseases of poverty. The two specific goals of Phase 1 are: (1) to "increase the fundraising capacity of LMI partners to launch a fundraising campaign to raise approximately \$75 million over five years to combat malaria, and to a lesser extent, HIV and AIDS"; and (2) to "implement a coordinated effort by the LMI partners to educate and raise awareness among U.S. Lutherans about malaria and other global health issues, resulting in constituent engagement with the LMI through leadership, outreach, and advocacy activities." It is anticipated that, in the last year of Phase I engagement, additional resources from external partners would be sought.

The three-year UN Foundation grant would fund the following:

- Shared campaign staff and consultants, housed in LWR's Baltimore offices, who would serve both LWR and the two church bodies. These include a full-time campaign executive director with extensive experience in complex campaign planning and implementation, who would serve for the full three years of the grant; a full-time public relations and marketing director; a half-time education director, who would serve for a year; and a full-time fundraising director, who would serve during the last 18 months of this first phase of the grant.
- Fundraising counsel.
- Donor database analysis.
- A limited number of staff, housed in the offices of the partners, who would focus on ELCA, LWR, or LCMS activities. ELCA staff would include a major gifts officer, who would serve full time for the last two years of the grant.

- Several pilots, limited in time and geography, in representative areas. During the pilot phase messages, activities, and materials would be developed and tested, to be used in the nationwide launch of the LMI campaign that would follow Churchwide Assembly approval. Within the context of these pilots, volunteer networks will be developed. Contract staff in Web and graphic design, video production, and meeting facilitation would support these pilot efforts.

During Phase I, ongoing ELCA, LCMS, and LWR events would be used to build awareness about malaria and LMI. Direct mail engagement with LWR, ELCA, and LCMS donors would begin. In addition, the UNF would invite participation by LMI partners in a program advisory committee, which would provide high-level information, coordination, and planning advice to help them strengthen relationships with the Global Fund.

It is important to note that the entire UNF grant will be used for the domestic campaign development, including pilots. None of this grant will be spent on international work, given the assumption that the funds raised through the proposed campaign would be directed toward that purpose. However, both the ELCA and Lutheran World Relief recognize that immediate and intentional international action is needed, both in staffing and financing programmatic work with global companions. Even as Phase I lays the foundation for an actual campaign, parallel work internationally and in other domestic arenas that are not being funded by the grant (e.g., advocacy and broader education and communication efforts) needs to begin now.

If the Church Council affirms the planning work toward a Lutheran Malaria Initiative, which will include an HIV and AIDS component, \$1.1 million of the 2007 World Hunger overage (income over expenses) would be used this and next year to provide staff and grants to begin malaria work with companion churches and the Lutheran World Federation. The overage also would fund a position to provide strategic guidance and direction to ELCA engagement with LWR, LCMS, the UN Foundation, and others engaged in this country in eradicating malaria.

Church Council Action:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña called upon Ms. Cynthia J. Halverson, executive director of the Development Services unit and president of the Foundation of the ELCA; the Rev. John A. Nunes, president of Lutheran World Relief; and the Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director of the Global Mission unit, to introduce the action on the Lutheran Malaria Initiative.

Pr. Malpica placed the initiative in its global context, demonstrating the interconnectedness between poverty, hunger, and diseases like HIV and AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. He also highlighted the global partners, such as the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LCSA), with which this church would be working on the initiative. He informed the council that the LCSA already had begun a ten-country assessment to determine needs and capacity for participation. Together, this church and its partners would combat diseases of poverty as they continued to work on breaking the cycle of hunger.

Pr. Nunes focused on the relationships among the ELCA, LCMS, and LWR that were being strengthened by collaboration on the initiative. He also reviewed the partnerships with the United Nations Foundation and the Global Fund that were emerging as well as those with other groups involved in the malaria effort, such as the Boy Scouts of America, the Union of Reformed Judaism, and The United Methodist Church. Finally, he talked about the ongoing work on malaria of LWR and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, which would be greatly enhanced by the initiative. Pr. Nunes emphasized that the initiative was a way to engage U.S. Lutherans directly with mission.

Ms. Halverson summarized the proposal and its timeline. She indicated that the joint goals were to mobilize 8 million Americans and raise a minimum of \$75 million over five years. The ELCA was committed to raising \$20 million for malaria and \$10 million for HIV and AIDS. Other goals were to increase awareness and advocacy among Lutherans and to create new roles and partnerships for faith-based organizations in the field of global health. The money raised would be distributed through existing and expanded partnerships and shared with the Global Fund to fight HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

Ms. Halverson noted that, in fulfillment of one of the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding, a feasibility study would be undertaken this year to assess this church's readiness and capacity for a comprehensive campaign. The feasibility study would test members' priorities, introduce the initiative, and receive feedback.

Ms. Halverson asked that small groups discuss the following questions:

1. In the last five years, what had been your experience in learning about the disease of malaria? Have you had any personal experience where the disease has touched the life of someone you know?
2. What questions do you have about the proposed campaign? About the ELCA's participation in it?
3. Do you have any concerns about the ELCA's participation in LMI?
4. What is the greatest opportunity you see in the ELCA's participation in LMI?
5. What role might the Church Council play in this effort? What role might you play as an ELCA member?

Vice President Peña formally placed the proposed action before the council, then opened the floor for questions and comments.

The Rev. Steven P. Loy wondered what effect the initiative would have on the World Hunger appeal. Ms. Halverson stated that the inclusion of the initiative under the World Hunger umbrella would help tie the appeals together. The invitation to congregations and members to support the initiative also would urge continued support for World Hunger. With careful communication and hard work, overall giving should increase.

Pr. Loy recommended that an area's World Hunger contributions be evaluated both before and after its pilot program to determine possible effects. Ms. Halverson commended his suggestion and promised that continued support for World Hunger would be communicated clearly to synodical leaders.

Ms. Judith Anne Bunker wondered when the funds raised would reach people in need. Ms. Halverson replied that as money was raised, it would be distributed.

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr. expressed concern about what he perceived as an artificial linkage between the initiative and World Hunger. He also commented that he hoped any money raised in the pilot programs would be distributed rather than used for administration so that stories about how the money was being used could be used to raise additional funds. Mr. Lloyd continued by stating that he would have preferred that the initiative start with the need and a sense of the money needed to address that need, rather than begin with the money available from funding agencies. Ms. Halverson answered that while it was not possible to work backward from the need, assessment of need and capacity by global partners already had begun. This church has been pleasantly surprised about global companions' enthusiasm for the work on malaria, especially when it is paired with HIV and AIDS, she said. Pr. Malpica added that the assessment underway in southern Africa would tell this church where the money needed to be spent immediately.

The Rev. Leonard H. Bolick, bishop of the North Carolina Synod, wondered how the initiative would mesh with a possible churchwide appeal. Ms. Halverson replied that the feasibility study that would be conducted during 2008 would test support for a number of categories in addition to diseases of poverty, including theological education, new congregations, and undesignated gifts. The study would interview 50–100 leaders and 150-200 members. The Church Council would receive the report of that study along with recommendations at its April 2009 meeting and transmit it to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

The Rev. Jonathan W. Linman wondered whether there were parallel programs in other Lutheran World Federation churches. Pr. Malpica replied that churchwide staff had been in conversation with the Department for World Service of the Lutheran World Federation and its director had visited Lutheran World Relief to talk about the initiative. He noted that the assessment in southern Africa was being conducted with the Lutheran World Federation, so conversation and collaboration were ongoing.

Ms. Rebecca Jo Brekke sought clarity on whether three separate appeals were envisioned: World Hunger, "Stand with Africa," and the Lutheran Malaria Initiative. Ms. Halverson responded that the World Hunger appeal would continue, while the Lutheran Malaria Initiative perhaps could be seen as a new way to "stand with Africa."

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson expressed his deep gratitude for the work that was being done with the LCMS and LWR, evidence of deepening relationships of trust and collaboration. He shared with the council his concern that the initiative needed a new name to reflect its broad scope of diseases of poverty.

The Rev. John C. Richter requested that Ms. Halverson comment on the capacity and infrastructure of this church to undertake the initiative. Ms. Halverson answered that the initial grant would be used to undergird the partners' capacity by hiring some shared staff, which would be based in Baltimore. The grant also would support a major gifts position in Development Services, a part-time communications staff member, and a part-time coordinator in Global

Mission. The feasibility study would assess staffing levels in Development Services in anticipation of a churchwide campaign.

Mr. Mark S. Helmke inquired about the rationale behind the proposed allocation between malaria (\$20 million) and HIV and AIDS (\$10 million). Ms. Halverson stated that the overall \$75 million goal had been tested early in the development of the initiative and found to be feasible. LWR had challenged each partner to commit to raising a portion of that overall goal. Initially, this church had considered a target of \$25 million for malaria, then decided on \$30 million for malaria and HIV and AIDS, which had not had a monetary target attached to it previously. Ms. Halverson expressed confidence that the goal could be reached easily in five years by reaching not just previous donors but people who had not been engaged before now.

The Rev. Rachel L. Connelly concurred with Presiding Bishop Hanson that the name of the initiative needed to reflect its broader scope. She also wondered how the reported \$200 million gift from Mr. Ted Turner affected the initiative. Pr. Nunes clarified that the figure reflected a commitment from The United Methodist Church to raise \$125 million and the Lutheran commitment to raise \$75 million. Mr. Turner provides some of the seed money received through the United Nations Foundation. Pr. Nunes promised that rebranding of the initiative would happen quickly.

Pr. Malpica emphasized that this church already is involved in responding to HIV and AIDS; the \$10-million commitment would be in addition to the approximately \$2 million per year that this church devotes to HIV and AIDS work.

Mr. Wahl raised three matters. He expressed concern about the division of funds. He wondered how the problem of Lutheran World Relief and the two church bodies competing for the same donors would be addressed. He took issue with the goal of "eradication and elimination," fearing that it was exaggeration. Pr. Nunes replied that while malaria as a protozoan cannot be eradicated, it can be eliminated as a disease in a particular area. "Containment" might be better terminology, he acknowledged.

Ms. Halverson responded that the initial \$10 million grant from the United Nations Foundation had been divided between The United Methodist Church and the Lutherans, who had received \$2.6 million. In the second round of grants, the Lutheran should receive the larger share. The hope is that \$7.5 million (10 percent of the fundraising goal) would be received from the grants.

Pr. Nunes commented that the potential for competing for donors was not a new challenge but one Lutheran World Relief dealt with all the time. One solution was to be very careful in identifying who both previous and new donors are and whose they are. Ms. Halverson added that the three groups would collaborate in identifying donors and strategies. At the same time each partner had its own constituencies.

Presiding Bishop Hanson recalled the huge growth in the donor base in response to the tsunami and Gulf Coast hurricanes, which was the result, in part, of trust in Lutheran agencies. He expressed confidence in the generosity of members of this church.

Vice President Peña noted that the initiative would be on the council's agenda again at the April 2009 meeting.

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger remarked that while he shared some of the concerns that had been expressed, he remembered the story former Secretary Lowell G. Almen had told the year previous about the commitment of the predecessor church bodies to relief work in the waning days of World War II. Pr. Hunsinger indicated that he had checked the records of the congregation in which he served and had come to the conclusion that some of the vibrancy and excitement of congregations in that period rose from the fact that they were looking outward, not inward. He stated that he was excited by members' capacity to lift the vision beyond themselves to things that are achievable in Christ's name with their hands.

Mr. Mark W. Myers wondered whether this church's work in the area of HIV and AIDS would be enhanced by the initiative. Pr. Malpica responded affirmatively, saying that the initiative would provide additional resources to do that work.

Presiding Bishop Hanson noted that the Church Council would receive the churchwide strategy on HIV and AIDS at its November 2008 meeting.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called on the Rev. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson to lead the council in prayer prior to the vote on the diseases of poverty initiative. Following the prayer, Vice President Peña called for the vote.

VOTED:

- CC08.04.12** **To affirm the work of the Church in Society, Communication Services, Development Services, and Global Mission units and the Office of the Presiding Bishop in developing a proposed Lutheran Malaria Initiative;**
- To acknowledge that the proposed initiative also will include an HIV and AIDS emphasis and will be integrated with the churchwide strategy on HIV and AIDS and any churchwide appeal;**
- To authorize receipt of funds and their utilization for the purposes of preparation for a potential Lutheran Malaria Initiative educational and fundraising campaign in accordance with the United Nations Foundation grant proposal;**
- To authorize continued Lutheran Malaria Initiative work until the 2009 Churchwide Assembly under the auspices of the World Hunger Appeal and Program;**
- To stipulate that, as specifically designated monies, United Nations Foundation grant funds for the Lutheran Malaria Initiative are not subject to the allocation between World Hunger domestic and international projects; and**
- To request that an update on the initiative be brought to the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council and that a report and recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly be brought to the April 2009 meeting of the Church Council.**

ANTI-RACISM RESOLUTION

(Agenda IV.D.2)

Background:

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson had requested that an anti-racism resolution be placed on the agenda of the Executive Committee, which had transmitted it to the Church Council.

Church Council Action:

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson explained that he had brought the item to the Executive Committee in part because of matters of race looming large in the culture and in part because the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. had called on member churches to have a conversation about race. The resolution also recognized that this church already exhibited a deep commitment to conversation and about race and anti-racism.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña put the proposed action on the floor and called for discussion.

Church Council members informed the chair that revised pages had not been distributed. The chair postponed consideration of the item.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton began her reflection with prayer: "Dear God, thank you for your Word, for how it finds its way into our days, directs our steps, and gives hope for tomorrow. Thank you for this and every opportunity to witness to your Word, to the promise and hope that is ours in Christ Jesus. Amen.

"Dwelling in God's Word. I looked up 'dwelling' just in case I had a mistaken impression of what this meant. It said 'to linger over, to emphasize, to ponder in thought, speech, or writing.' It sounds great, but why is it that nothing in my life fits that description? I need to confess that sometimes my time engaging the Word is cobbled together: books on tape (now CDs), online devotions at my desk before the day's meetings begin (often interrupted), Sunday afternoon reading and preparing for our Bible study group (sometime rushed and often interrupted). Never enough time. To talk about dwelling in God's Word is intimidating if I think about it as time spent in solitude, reading and reflecting on the

biblical texts. I do long for more time like that. It's just that it is hard to find most days. So what I give thanks for is all the ways that God's Word finds me and engages me throughout the day. The message in the Bible of God's love and grace comes alive in the telling and in the sharing. So a couple of stories.

"A year or so ago, my grandmother was dying. Most of the family went out to see her over the weekend, and I waited, not sure. I had committed to being on the leadership team for an upcoming spiritual retreat and to spend five Sunday afternoons preparing. I was a discussion leader for the retreat and that Sunday found out that I was to be partnered up with Kurt from Shepherd of the Lakes, our sister congregation. Kurt and I spent a little time together, planning for how we would lead our group and what we would do during our group time for prayer and healing on the last day. Kurt really wanted to begin our time with a reading from Ecclesiastes 3, the verse that begins 'For every thing there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die. A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.' As it turns out, Kurt had lost his only son earlier that year, a beautiful five-month-old baby named Benjamin, who had died of SIDS. Clearly, Kurt had found strength in this text and wanted to share it with our group, who by Sunday would have had an emotional and exhausting couple of days. I did go back to Minnesota a couple of days later, and as we read psalms and sang hymns that day with my grandma, I turned to Ecclesiastes 3. Those words were comforting for her, who wanted so desperately to let go but was a little fearful. I thank God for that text that connected us across the miles: my 99-year-old grandmother to me, to Kurt, and eventually to six others the next weekend as we listened to God's Word and prayed for one another. God's Word changes us. I remember that day also that as I read psalm after psalm to my grandmother, hearing the words with new meaning, my voice faltered and another family member stepped up, took the Bible, and continued reading. And we were changed, changed in our relationship to one another by how we were bound together in the sharing of God's Word, and changed by those moments of clarity—clarity that at the end nothing else mattered but that promise to which we cling, the promise in God's Word.

"One more story about sharing the story. Our household is a little crazy. Some of you can relate to that. There are seven years between my second and third child, so it is challenging to find movies and books and activities that they all can relate to. We end up running in different directions too often. So I have started recently calling a 'time out' on evenings when everyone is home at a decent time and to sit down and read from a devotional book that my parents used with my brothers and me when we were growing up called 'Little Visits with God.' It is nice to think about how I was taught about God's Word using this book and can pass this on to my kids. The book is a little dated, so I update the stories spontaneously to make sure that they resonate with the kids. For example, the other night I changed the story about the boy hitting the baseball into the garage window to a boy hitting a golf ball into the neighbor's windshield. This really perked up Ella, my four-year-old. 'Benjamin, you did that, too' she said to my 13-year-old son. The older kids read the related Bible verse, and we answer the questions together. Studying the Bible with my three kids is an immeasurable joy. God's Word is a living Word that takes shape and is active through God's people. Without the encouragement of colleagues and friends and family to be reading the Word and to be growing in faith, I know that I would be pretty lost. Many of you have been God's Word to me, witnessing in significant ways. Dwelling in God's Word, living in Christ's presence, a blessing."

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

(Agenda II.E.3)

ANTI-RACISM RESOLUTION (CONTINUED)

(Agenda IV.D.2)

Church Council Action:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña ascertained that the revised agenda page had been disseminated, then re-opened discussion on the anti-racism resolution.

The Rev. Keith A. Hunsinger questioned the call for designation of Sunday, May 18, 2008, as a "Sacred Day of Dialogue and Discussion." Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson agreed, saying that he resisted calls to make Sundays the foci of anything other than their liturgical designation. His resistance was the reason that the call was simply acknowledged in the "whereas" clauses rather than commended in the "resolved" clauses.

There being no further discussion, Vice President Peña called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC08.04.13

WHEREAS, 2008 is the fifteenth anniversary of the ELCA social statement, “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture”;

WHEREAS, the United States of America is embroiled in amplified conversations about racism;

WHEREAS, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson in a news release on November 1, 2007, expressed “grave concern” for the “spiritual crisis concerning race relations in the United States” and called on members of this church to take specific actions to address the “sin of racism”;

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is committed to addressing racism through study, discussion, and prayer, seeking to become an increasingly anti-racist body;

WHEREAS, the churchwide organization, through two of the commitments for implementation in the Plan for Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, commits itself to:

- **Confront the scandalous realities of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, age, gender, familial, sexual, physical, personal, and class barriers that often manifest themselves in exclusion, poverty, hunger, and violence; and**
- **Pursue ardently the ELCA's commitment to becoming more diverse, multicultural, and multi-generational in an ever-changing and increasingly pluralistic context;**

WHEREAS, this church has been called by ecumenical partners to dialogue about racism, including the call of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. to a “Sacred Day of Dialogue and Discussion” on May 18, 2008; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

- **humbly seek God’s forgiveness for our complicity in perpetuating individual, cultural, and institutional racism and God’s grace to deepen our awareness of and increase our commitment to address racism;**
 - **express gratitude to this church for the intentional and consistent call of its social statement, “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture,” as a tool to address racism;**
 - **reaffirm its commitment to becoming increasingly anti-racist;**
 - **invite members of the ELCA to join in this commitment and to sustained dialogue during 2008;**
 - **and beyond that will lead this church to become anti-racist and multicultural;**
- and be it further**

RESOLVED, that the Church Council encourage the Church in Society and Multicultural Ministries program units, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to develop discussion materials to assist the congregations and members of this church to use the social statement to guide conversations about race.

Mr. Richard L. Wahl inquired why the resolution had not come to the council through a committee. He was informed that it had come through the Executive Committee.

REPORT OF THE BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
(Agenda II.E.1)

Mr. Gary L. Wipperman, chair, presented the report of the Board Development Committee.

UPDATE ON THE JULY 2008 CHURCH COUNCIL RETREAT
(Agenda V.B.2; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit D, Part 2)

Background:

It has been the practice for elected members of the Church Council to gather in most non-Churchwide Assembly years for a non-legislative summer retreat to explore an issue or topic that relates to their leadership role as the board of directors of this church. The 2008 retreat will be held July 25–27, 2008, at the Eaglewood Conference Center in Itasca, Ill., and will focus on the “scandalous realities” of racism and sexism.

Materials for preparation for the retreat had been provided for members of the Church Council, including “Privilege, Power, and Difference” by Mr. Allan Johnson and selected readings by other authors.

Church Council Discussion:

Mr. Gary L. Wipperman, chair of the Board Development Committee, reviewed the agenda for the July 2008 council retreat, noting that there would be time for in-depth study, personal reflection, and socializing. He called attention to the materials that had been distributed to aid council members in their preparation for the retreat.

UPDATE ON RACIAL JUSTICE PROCESS OBSERVATION
(Agenda V.B.1)

Background:

The Church Council received a report on anti-racism training for the council at its April 2007 meeting. One of the recommendations included in the report related to racial justice monitoring. Following discussion, the Church Council voted [CC07.04.03]:

To assign to the Board Development Committee responsibility for continuing anti-racism training in relation to the Church Council;

To acknowledge that the Board Development Committee may appoint a subcommittee for assistance in addressing issues of anti-racism training; and

To affirm the possibility of engagement of a racial justice monitor or monitors at future meetings of the Church Council to provide observations on the process of deliberations of the council.

Subsequent to this action, the Church Council has included anti-racism training sessions at its November 2007 and April 2008 meetings. In addition, the summer 2008 Church Council retreat will focus on the “scandalous realities” of racism and sexism.

The Board Development Committee requested a proposal for a racial justice monitoring pilot to be undertaken by the Church Council at its regular meetings from April 2008–April 2009. The committee appointed Ms. Judith Tutt-Starr, Ms. Lynette M. Reitz, and Ms. Shenandoah Gale, coordinator for anti-racism education and training (staff), as a design team. The committee approved the final proposal at its February 2008 meeting.

Pilot Method

- Process observers observe three two-hour (or equivalent) plenary sessions.
- Identified categories for observation questions include
 - a. Process
 - b. Who’s in the room: Who speaks or addresses the plenary and how often? Whose voices are brought into the room?
 - c. Climate: disconnect between advisors and council; comfort in sharing, speaking in plenary.
- Just before the end of a session, observers compile information into one report.

- Observers report to the plenary what they saw and heard.
- A written report of observations is given to the chair of the Board Development Committee.
- At the end of the third observation session, members and advisors complete and submit a pilot evaluation form.
- Upon consideration of this report, the Board Development Committee may make corresponding recommendations to the Executive Committee for consideration.
- Compiled pilot evaluation results are given to the Board Development Committee Chair and incorporated into the pilot design for the Fall 2008 implementation.

Delay in Implementation

The Board Development Committee, in consultation with Ms. Shenandoah Gale, coordinator for anti-racism education and training, has authorized a delay in the process observation pilot until the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council. The delay will provide additional time to identify and secure two experienced external observers.

Church Council Discussion:

Mr. Gary L. Wiperman, chair of the Board Development Committee, summarized progress on the use of racial justice observers and explained the reasons for the delay.

UPDATE ON REDEVELOPMENT OF ELCA.ORG (Agenda V.G.4)

Church Council Information:

At the request of Vice President Carlos E. Peña, Ms. Kristin E. Koskinen, Web manager in the Communication Services section and Ms. Karen Simone of Creative Element, consultants for the Web-site redesign, provided an update on the redevelopment of this church's Web site, ELCA.org.

Ms. Simone discussed the process of the redesign and stated that the new Web site would launch at the end of April. The Web site, designed to be easy to navigate, focused on stories. Ms. Simone reviewed the new site, pointing out its special features.

Ms. Koskinen demonstrated how to access the content of the Web site, highlighting its search engine.

Mr. Mark E. Johnson inquired about the location of the Church Council on the site because initially he had been unable to find it. Discussion ensued about the appropriate location of the Church Council.

Ms. Myrna J. Sheie, executive for governance and institutional relations, indicated that council members should direct concerns and questions, once the site is fully operational, to Mr. Ben McDonald Coltvet or Ms. Koskinen in Communication Services.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS REMOVED FROM THE *EN BLOC* ACTION (Agenda IV)

1. INDEPENDENT LUTHERAN ORGANIZATION APPLICATION (Agenda IV.E.6; Exhibit G, Part 2)

Background:

At its April 2006 meeting, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America voted [CC06.04.27] to approve a revised "Policy on Relationships of Churchwide Units with Independent Lutheran Organizations." The revision was made necessary by changes in structure, governance, and the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Review of the "Policy on Relationships of Churchwide Units with Independent Lutheran Organizations" was included in the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee's review of the request.

In accord with the revised policy, the Rev. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of the Vocation and Education unit, is recommending the establishment of a relationship with Lutheran CORE [Coalition for Reform].

Church Council Action:

At the invitation of Vice President Carlos E. Peña, Secretary David D. Swartling introduced the action and spoke to it. He reminded that council that it had updated the policy and process for acknowledging independent Lutheran organization in 2006.

The Rev. Jonathan W. Linman asked that the rationale for the relationship be articulated. The Rev. Stanley N. Olson, executive director of the Vocation and Education unit, stated that the rationale is that the application meets the criteria for acknowledgment as delineated in the policy. He read from the application and his recommendation to support his point.

Secretary Swartling recalled that the council had acknowledged two organizations at its last meeting. He emphasized that acknowledgment provided a way and a place to build a relationship between an organization and this church. He noted that Lutherans Concerned–North America was an acknowledged independent Lutheran organization.

Pr. Linman pointed out that in his experience some of the publications of one of CORE's constituent organizations frequently contained inaccurate statements about this church, attempted to provoke fear in its members, and diminished this church, contrary to the commitments made in the application. He acknowledged that the relationship might be an opportunity to hold the groups accountable for their actions.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked Pr. Olson to comment on the relationship of the umbrella organization to its members. Pr. Olson read from the Lutheran CORE brochure, which stated that Word Alone was one of the constituent members of Lutheran CORE.

The Rev. Marie C. Jerge, bishop of the Upstate New York Synod, reported that the CORE Web site indicated that its finances were channeled through the Word Alone network.

The Rev. Jeffrey "Jeff" B. Sorenson expressed grave concerns about Word Alone's actions concerning the ELCA and the attitudes and behaviors toward this church that it encouraged. He wondered whether CORE would be responsible for the behavior of Word Alone.

Secretary Swartling responded that the relationship with each acknowledged organization was reviewed annually.

Pr. Sorenson commented that while it was important to connect with the members of Lutheran CORE, it also was important not to endorse inappropriate behavior.

Pr. Olson stated that he, too, would like to know to what extent the coalition is accountable for the behavior of its members.

The Rev. Steven P. Loy agreed that, in the past, the publications of members of CORE had vilified church officers and disseminated misinformation. He continued to have serious concerns about the message and the tactics of CORE members.

Pr. Linman asked to hear more about the ways the relationship would be advantageous to the ELCA. Pr. Olson replied that it was an extension of his unit's ministry in two arenas. One was that Vocation and Education is interested in educational efforts and theological conversation that are beyond the congregation's scope. To establish a relationship is by no means endorsement of views but acknowledgment of a conversation partner. In addition, since CORE is concerned about the authority of Scripture, it was an advantage for Vocation and Education to be in conversation with it as the Book of Faith initiative unfolded.

Ms. Rebecca Jo Brakke inquired whether individual congregations were members of CORE. Pr. Olson answered that CORE consisted of individuals, congregations, and organizations. Ms. Brakke wondered whether congregations were invited to contribute to CORE at the expense of their giving to synods and the churchwide organization. Pr. Olson responded that it was impossible to determine if that were the case but stated that the application indicated that the organization's fundraising efforts would not impact those of this church.

The Rev. Murray D. Finck, bishop of the Pacifica Synod, remarked that the substitution of support was a reality in his synod.

The Rev. John S. Munday stated that having a relationship with both Lutheran CORE and Lutherans Concerned–North America would be a statement that differing parts of this church can work together.

Bishop Jerge noted that two congregations in her synod had left the ELCA to become part of Lutheran Churches of the Common Confession, another member of Lutheran CORE.

Pr. Linman observed that it seemed possible that this church could hold Lutheran CORE accountable, but not Word

Alone or Lutheran Churches of the Common Confession. While he applauded the inclusion of many voices in discernment, discussion, and debate, he doubted that the relationship would enable a full conversation with the members of Lutheran CORE. He wondered whether CORE existed beyond being an umbrella organization because the other organizations seemed more active than CORE.

The Rev. David E. Jensen asked whether CORE had responsibility for oversight of the member organizations. Pr. Olson replied that he could not answer the question but that there was nothing in the documents to indicate that CORE is a controlling, oversight body. Pr. Jensen inquired whether the acknowledgment could contain a requirement for oversight. Secretary Swartling responded that Pr. Jensen's proposed requirement would be inconsistent with the adopted policy.

At the request of Vice President Peña, Pr. Sorenson led the council in prayer. Vice President Peña called for the vote. The voice vote having been inclusive, the vote was taken by a show of hands.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.14

To acknowledge, in accord with bylaw 14.21.16. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and the "Policy on Relationships of Churchwide Units with Independent Lutheran Organizations," Lutheran CORE [Coalition for Reform], which will relate to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through the Vocation and Education unit of the churchwide organization.

The Rev. John C. Richter wondered if it were possible to receive an update on the relationship at the next council meeting. Presiding Bishop Hanson recommended that a summary of the concerns expressed in the discussion be sent to Lutheran CORE. Pr. Olson stated that he would convey the concerns but emphasized that Lutheran CORE could not be treated differently from other organizations.

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr. indicated that a report on the Office of the Secretary's review of the independent Lutheran organization policy and process would be brought to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee in November 2008.

***EN BLOC* APPROVAL OF CERTAIN ACTIONS**

(Agenda IV)

Background:

The following *en bloc* resolution includes agenda items that were considered on the last day of the Church Council meeting. Inclusion of these items in the *en bloc* action reflects a judgment that these items are relatively non-controversial in nature and may not require plenary discussion and a separate vote. On the first day of the council meeting, the chair provides an opportunity for members to indicate whether they wish to discuss separately any of the items listed in the *en bloc* resolution; any such item is removed from the *en bloc* resolution and discussed at the appropriate point in the agenda. The items remaining in the *en bloc* resolution normally are considered as the last item of council business.

Church Council Action:

Vice President Carlos E. Peña introduced the *en bloc* resolution and called for a vote on it.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.15

To take action *en bloc* on the items listed below, the full texts of which are found in the body of the agenda or in the exhibit as noted:

VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.16	Responses to Synodical Resolutions Directed to the Church Council, p.	
VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.17	Responses to Churchwide Assembly Referrals Directed to the Church Council, p.	
VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.18	Audit Committee Membership, p.	
VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.19	Amendment to CC87.06.03, p.	
VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.20	Amendments to Seminary Governing Documents, p.	
VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.21	Global Mission Personnel, p.	
VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.22	Resolution Concerning Housing Allowances, p.	
VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.23	Resolution Concerning Lutheran Medical Center, p.	
VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.24	Amendments to Corporate Social Responsibility Issue Papers and Boycott Policy and Procedure, p.	
VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.25	Revised Message on Immigration, p.	
VOTED:		<i>EN BLOC</i>
CC08.04.26	Nominations, Appointments, and Elections, p.	

1. RESPONSES TO SYNODICAL RESOLUTIONS DIRECTED TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL
(Agenda IV.A.1; Agenda/MINUTES, Exhibit B, Part 1b)

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC08.04.16 To adopt *en bloc* the following responses to synodical resolutions submitted to the Church Council:

A. MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOR HIV AND AIDS STRATEGY

Metropolitan New York Synod (7C)

WHEREAS, HIV and AIDS have been at pandemic levels for over two decades; and

WHEREAS, the year 2005 marked the grim milestone of 1,000,000 people in the United States alone living with HIV (and 40,000,000 worldwide); and

WHEREAS, ignorance about the subject continues to have a negative impact on the delivery of pastoral and educational services to those infected and affected by HIV, despite a variety of educational resources; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the Communication Services unit of the churchwide organization to engage in collaborative activities to raise awareness about the issues surrounding HIV disease through the use of a media campaign directed at members of this church as well as the broader population.

Executive Committee Action

The Executive Committee of the Church Council voted [EC07.10.28g]:

To receive the resolution of the Metropolitan New York Synod requesting a media campaign for HIV and AIDS awareness;

To refer the resolution as information to the units of this church involved in the ongoing preparation of a strategy on HIV and AIDS to be brought to the Church Council in April 2008; and

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

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.16a

To authorize a delay in the response of the Church in Society and Global Mission units to the resolution of the Metropolitan New York Synod requesting a media campaign for HIV and AIDS awareness;

To recommend that the response be included in the churchwide strategy on AIDS and HIV, which will be brought to the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council; and

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

2. COST OF BOARD OF PENSIONS MEDICAL COVERAGE

Southwestern Texas Synod (4E)

WHEREAS, the rising costs of medical coverage for clergy and lay staff members of our synod's congregations are adversely affecting salaries because salaries are tied to the amount of medical premiums paid by congregations; and

WHEREAS, many of the congregations of the Southwestern Texas Synod are considering other routes to providing medical coverage for their pastors and staff; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Texas Synod Council communicate to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that the Board of Pensions review the way it funds the cost of medical benefits; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Texas Synod Council request that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America direct the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to research the viability of more options for congregations in the form of "cafeteria" plans, allowing for higher deductibles and optional coverage, and respond to the Southwestern Texas Synod Council regarding new options.

Executive Committee Action

The Executive Committee of the Church Council voted [EC07.03.08]:

To receive the resolution of the Southwestern Texas Synod Council related to the costs of medical benefits for rostered people and staff;

To refer the resolution to the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in consultation with the Conference of Bishops; and

To request that the Board of Pensions bring a progress report to the November 2007 meeting of the Program and Services Committee and a report and possible recommendations no later than the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from the Board of Pensions

In the November 2007 progress report, the Board of Pensions shared information that the Board's ongoing work with keeping health costs as low as possible would be informed by the Southwestern Texas Synod Council resolution. Additionally, it was stated that as a unit of this church the Board of Pensions would, as per direction of the Executive Committee of the Church Council, be engaging synodical bishops in conversation about the matter raised by the Southwestern Texas Synod Council.

The Board of Pensions currently is in the process of completing annual visits with bishops and synod staffs as well as seminary and churchwide leaders. This year, in particular, because of a comprehensive benefits study being conducted with the assistance of Hewitt Associates, the consultations are looking at the ELCA philosophy of benefits and its five supporting principles: plan participation, level of benefits, bundled program, contribution policy, and sharing of health costs. The feedback from the consultations will assist the Board of Pensions in understanding how it is meeting its mission to "provide retirement, health, and related benefits and services to enhance the well-being of those who serve through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other faith-based organizations." It also will be very informative in finalizing a response to the Southwestern Texas Synod Council resolution. As a result of the study and the information received, a report with recommendations will be prepared for the next meeting of the Church Council in November 2008.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC08.04.16b **To receive the interim response of the Board of Pensions to the resolution of the Southwestern Texas Synod regarding the cost of health and related benefits;
To request that a full report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council; and
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

2. RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY REFERRALS TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL (Agenda IV.A.2; Agenda/MINUTES Exhibit B, Part 2b)

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC08.04.17 **To adopt *en bloc* the following responses to Churchwide Assembly actions referrals directed to the Church Council:**

A.1. IMMIGRATION AND SANCTUARY **Northwest Washington Synod (1B)** **[Memorial B7][CA07.06.33i]**

RESOLVED, that the bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod lead and comfort our Hispanic community during this time of *kairos* (until the time of justice comes upon us) as part of our flock; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the good offices of our congregations, Synod Council, and the office of the bishop denounce and demand that the raids, deportations, and massive firings of undocumented immigrant workers cease immediately; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the bishop meet with the heads of our ecumenical partners to jointly denounce the massive raids and deportations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the bishop encourage Lutheran agencies, congregations, and committees to designate grants that will create or support faith-based institutions that are currently serving the undocumented immigrants within the United States, who are currently being defrauded by unscrupulous and untrustworthy organizations that profit at their expense; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the bishop meet with grass-roots leaders involved in immigration issues to listen to their concerns and pray for members who are confronting deportation proceedings; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the bishop and synod office make available the "New Sanctuary Movement Statement of Support and Involvement" to congregations and that the Synod Council consider adopting this statement at the 2008 Synod Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request that the presiding bishop provide for an urgent national meeting with church workers, lawyers, and theologians to establish strategies for accompanying undocumented immigrants, including the establishment and support of sanctuaries in congregations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop arrange an urgent meeting with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to discuss the expansion of its mission from solely providing services to refugees to assisting directly refugee families within the United States that need legal representation as they confront deportation proceedings and other immigration proceedings; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to request that the presiding bishop and the Conference of Bishops encourage all synods of this church to establish committees on immigration that include leaders from the Hispanic community who are involved in immigration issues and to encourage the members of this church to continue to pray that God gives us the

power and will to walk with the immigrant community in this time of trial and injustice.

A.2. IMMIGRATION AND SANCTUARY
Southwest California Synod (2B)
[Memorial B7][CA07.06.33i]

WHEREAS, the membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has consisted historically of immigrant people from many nationalities and ethnicities; and

WHEREAS, the Latino community has been deeply affected by the current deportation policies of the U.S. government, which have caused significant pain and suffering to Lutheran families; and

WHEREAS, other ethnic communities also have suffered because of these policies; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has an obligation under the Gospel of Jesus Christ to proclaim good news to the poor, the hurting, the marginalized, and the voiceless, and further to denounce unjust, discriminatory practices, which destroy the livelihood and dignity of our brothers and sisters; and

WHEREAS, pastors and laypersons are cognizant of the divine imperative found in Leviticus 19:33-34: "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native born. Love him as yourself for you were aliens in Egypt"; and

WHEREAS, the church has a role to be a prophetic voice for those who are afraid to speak publicly against injustice; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2007 Assembly of the Southwest California Synod encourage the synod bishop and council to provide the rostered leaders of this synod with basic education on immigration law and procedure; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod encourage conversation among the members, congregations, and conferences on the plight of the immigrant community in this synod, including the testimonies of individuals and families in the congregations of this synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod Assembly memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

- a. to encourage the Office of the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to meet with the heads of this church's ecumenical partners to lift up the human cost to individuals, families, congregations, and communities when the laws of current immigration policies are implemented;
- b. to request that the Church in Society unit call a meeting with grass-roots leaders on immigration issues, and specifically to include representatives of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to discuss its mission and strategies for providing services to refugees and immigrant families within the United States;
- c. to urge the synods to establish committees on immigration that include leaders from communities who are involved in and affected by immigration issues; and
- d. to urge that the Church in Society unit provide grants that will encourage the creation or support of trustworthy faith-based institutions, including those in the new Sanctuary movement, that currently serve the undocumented immigrant population in the United States.

A.3. IMMIGRATION AND SANCTUARY
Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B)
[Memorial B7][CA07.06.33i]

WHEREAS, Jesus teaches us in Matthew 25 to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, clothe the naked, care for the sick, visit the imprisoned, and welcome the stranger; and

WHEREAS, Leviticus 19:33-34 instructs us: "When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God . . ."; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans have served Christ for over 60 years through refugee resettlement ministry and have been invited to provide services to new immigrants by the United States government, which also has a proud history of welcoming persecuted people; and

WHEREAS, legislation passed in the Real ID and Patriot Act II programs, which are intended to prevent terrorists and those sympathetic to terrorist organizations from entering the United States, has created unintended barriers for thousands of genuine refugees, who pose no threat to our communities or national security and otherwise would be welcome to resettle in the United States; and

WHEREAS, based on the same law, immigration judges must deny asylum (refugee status) for asylum seekers with legitimate

claims, resulting in genuine refugees being unjustly held in detention and ultimately returned to the country of their persecution; and
WHEREAS, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service already has identified current material support language that needs to be revised and actively has engaged in advocating to the United States government for appropriate changes in legislation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2007 Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod

1. Go on record expressing gratitude for legislators, including Representative Pitts (PA-16, R), who have written and sponsored legislation to correct the unintended consequences of material support;
2. Urge the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod office to request the United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate, and the president of the United States to support such legislation that corrects the unintentional consequences of Real ID and Patriot Act II; and
3. Encourage the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod congregations and individual members to contact their legislatures in support of such legislation;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2007 Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, also to request a change in United States law so that genuine refugees are not barred on grounds of material support.

Churchwide Assembly Action

The 2007 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA07.06.33i]:

To thank the Southwest California Synod, Northwest Washington Synod, and Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod for calling this church's attention to the urgent concern for immigrants who are being unjustly treated;

To reaffirm the revision and updating of the 1998 Message on Immigration that was requested by the ELCA Church Council in response to the synodical resolutions received in 2006 for its consideration and approval in November of 2007 and to anticipate that the revisions will address new concerns that are emerging related to immigrant rights and just policies toward immigrants in this country;

To reaffirm the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) in partnership with the synods of this church in the development of immigration task forces;

To continue this church's support for and close partnership with LIRS, including the delivery of technical assistance, networking, grants to dedicated and independent legal service projects, and advocacy for comprehensive immigration reform; and

To request that the Church in Society unit work with LIRS and other relevant churchwide units to convene opportunities for partners and interested leaders to meet to establish opportunities and strategies for further supporting and accompanying undocumented immigrants.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.17a To authorize a delay in the response of the Church in Society unit to the action of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly in response to memorials from the Southwest California Synod, Northwest Washington Synod, and Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod;

To anticipate that the revised Message on Immigration, which will be considered by the Church Council at its November 2008 meeting, will serve as the response to these memorials; and

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

B. CONTINUING SUBSIDIES OF WORTHY MINISTRIES

Indiana-Kentucky Synod (6C)

[Memorial A1] [CA07.06.33a]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) traditionally has supported new, transformational, and innovative ministries for at least three years; and

WHEREAS, this synod at times has identified ministries that realize the primary purposes stated in ¶S6.02. but have little prospect of becoming self-supporting while at the same time they may be deserving of ongoing support from the wider church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has convened a Blue Ribbon Task Force to strengthen funding of ministry and sharing of mission support; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod in assembly memorialize the ELCA to study this issue, including the practices of this synod, as outlined in the synod outreach binder, and of other denominations and bring to the Churchwide Assembly as soon as practical a recommended approach for setting criteria and subsidizing such ministries that need ongoing support from the wider church.

Churchwide Assembly Action

The 2007 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA07.06.33a]:

To express gratitude to the Indiana-Kentucky Synod for its request for a “recommended approach for setting criteria and subsidizing such ministries that need ongoing support from the wider church”;

To acknowledge with thanks the commitment of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EO) unit to:

1. Continue to work with congregations, synods, and other partners to explore contextual solutions to questions related to sustainability, utilizing the principles described in the response above;
2. Consult with ecumenical partners about how they sustain ministries that are not self-supporting;
3. Discuss the realities of funding and sustainability to gain input from those who work with the ethnic strategies and with ministries among people in poverty;
4. Involve stewardship staff in the development or renewal of ministries in order to strengthen resources for supporting and equipping stewardship efforts in economically marginalized contexts;
5. Receive and review the outcomes of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding in order to gain insights about strengthening mission support and ministry funding and incorporate them into Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission processes;
6. Train mission directors and stewardship staff about sustainability as part of the cultural proficiency work of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit; and

To request that the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, continue to study these issues and bring a report and possible recommendations to the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission

Because of staff transitions in the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit, including the lack of a mission director in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, the unit requests additional time to gather information from the synod about the reasons for the memorial and to respond to it thoroughly.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.17b To authorize a delay in the response of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit to the memorial from the Indiana-Kentucky Synod concerning continuing subsidies for worthy ministries;

To request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council; and

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

C. HIV AND AIDS FUNDING

[Motion A] [CA07.06.35]

RESOLVED, 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.

Churchwide Assembly Action

The 2007 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA07.06.35]:

To refer this motion to the Church Council and encourage its continued support of the development and funding of this church's strategy on HIV and AIDS.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.17c

To authorize a delay in the response of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer to the request for funding for the churchwide strategy on HIV and AIDS; and To recommend that the response be included in the churchwide strategy on AIDS and HIV, which will be brought to the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council.

3. AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

(Agenda IV.C.1)

The membership of the Audit Committee is defined by ELCA bylaw 14.41.E02. The Audit Committee is composed of six members. A minimum of two members should be members of the Church Council's Budget and Finance Committee. Members are appointed by the Budget and Finance Committee and forwarded to the Church Council for approval. Budget and Finance Committee members are appointed for two-year terms with the possibility of reappointment throughout their Church Council term. Non-Church Council members are appointed for two-year terms, renewable for two additional terms. Terms are staggered to provide for continuity in committee membership from year to year.

Members of the Audit Committee and current term end dates are as follows: Pr. John Richter (April 2009), Ms. Ann F. Niedringhaus (August 2009), Mr. John F. Timmer (August 2008), Mr. Timothy L. Stephan (August 2009), Ms. Deborah Chenoweth (April 2010), Mr. Philip Bertram (April 2010).

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.18

To elect John F. Timmer to a second two-year term on the ELCA Audit Committee beginning August 2008.

4. AMENDMENT TO CHURCH COUNCIL ACTION CC87.06.03.

(Agenda IV.E.1)

Chapter 7 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* addresses the sources of calls for ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers. In most cases where service is to a churchwide entity, the source of call is the Church Council. In action CC87.06.03, the Church Council provided a process for issuing certain of the calls for which it is the source. This action has not been amended subsequently. The practice has been that the secretary report annually on the calls issued under this authorization. In order to incorporate amendments in Chapter 7 and to confirm the reporting process, the following action is recommended.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.19

To authorize the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to issue letters of call on behalf of the Church Council for ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers, in accordance with the Sources of Calls tables in Chapter 7 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*;

To note that this action supersedes Church Council action CC87.06.03; and

To request that the secretary annually report letters of call issued under this

authorization.

5. AMENDMENTS TO SEMINARY GOVERNING DOCUMENTS
(Agenda IV.E.2)

Bylaw 8.31.01. provides both for the independent incorporation of ELCA seminaries and for a churchwide role in the approval of their governing documents: "Each seminary shall be a seminary of this church, shall be incorporated, and shall be governed by its board of directors consistent with policies established by the Church Council. Amendments to the governing documents of each seminary and each seminary cluster shall be submitted, upon recommendation of the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization, to the Church Council for approval." This process of approval is accomplished by the following steps:

1. The appropriate seminary president notifies the director for theological education that the seminary board has taken action to amend its governing documents.
2. The director for theological education consults with the president on the content and intent of the amendment(s).
3. The director for theological education consults with the executive director of Vocation and Education and ELCA legal counsel.
4. The executive director of Vocation and Education and the director for theological education recommend appropriate amendments to the Church Council at its next meeting.
5. The Office of the Secretary notifies the seminary president and the executive director of Vocation and Education of the action taken by the Church Council on the recommendation.
6. The amendment(s) become(s) effective upon approval of the Church Council.

Due to the length of the amended constitution, copies of the complete text with amendments indicated were provided only to members of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. One complete copy also was available for review by Church Council members at the materials distribution table.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.20 To approve the amended constitution and bylaws of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina.

6. GLOBAL MISSION PERSONNEL
(Agenda IV.E.3; Exhibit M, Part 1)

Previously the former Division for Global Mission board recommended to the Church Council for call or service personnel serving under Terms and Conditions of Support for Long-Term Mission Personnel, rostered individuals serving under provisions of a Letter of Agreement, or Global Mission two-year or Global Mission Associate appointments. In the past action was taken to receive their resignations or retirements upon completion of service.

The action below contains the names of the ELCA mission personnel appointed by a board call committee who have resigned from service between January 1, 2007, and December 31, 2007.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.21 To receive the following resignations with gratitude for the commitment and service given in the global mission program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, effective on or about the dates indicated:

Long Term

Bangsund, James (Tanzania), April 14, 2007; Bangsund, Judith (Tanzania), April 14, 2007; Bekedam, Mahlon (Japan), October 19, 2007; Bekedam, Nancy (Japan), October 19, 2007; Churchill, Cristel (PNG), August 31, 2007; Fonner, Michael (Malaysia) November 20, 2007; Gabe, Karen (China), July 31, 2007; Grafton, David (Egypt), November 30, 2007; Grafton, Karla (Egypt) December 14, 2007; Gretebeck,

Lowell (Japan), September 30, 2007; Gretebeck, Junko (Japan), September 30, 2007; McCallum, Ronald (Senegal), July 6, 2007; McCallum, Karen (Senegal), July 6, 2007; Nelson, Timothy (Cameroon), August 21, 2007; Nelson, Holly (Cameroon), September 4, 2007; Person, David (Japan), September 30, 2007; Person, Nahoko (Japan), September 30, 2007; Reynolds, Timothy (Cameroon), December 6, 2007; Reynolds, Ann (Cameroon), December 6, 2007; Siler, Russell (Jerusalem) October 31, 2007; Siler, Anne (Jerusalem) October 31, 2007; Sorum, Ann (Slovakia), January 17, 2007; Stewart, Timothy (Denmark), February 15, 2007; Stewart, Mary Ann (Denmark), February 15, 2007; Weed-Fonner, Leslie (Malaysia), November 20, 2007; and Global Mission Associate Huwiler, Elizabeth (Poland), July 31, 2007.

7. HOUSING ALLOWANCES

(Agenda IV.E.4)

The following resolution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America delegates designation of rental/housing allowances for qualifying clergy employees.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.22

WHEREAS, Internal Revenue Code Section 107, as well as the associated Regulations and Revenue Rulings, provides that the portion of a minister's remuneration designated as a rental or housing allowance by the employing church or other qualifying organization is excludable from the minister's gross income under Section 107 of the Code; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a qualifying organization; and

WHEREAS, by action of the Church Council [CC06.04.25], the responsibility to take all proper steps to collect information regarding rental or housing allowance designations and then set those housing allowance amounts for qualifying clergy employees of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is delegated to Human Resources, in consultation with the Office of the Treasurer; and

WHEREAS, it is prudent to provide for a back-up rental or housing allowance designated amount should a form not be completed; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that Human Resources annually shall provide forms for designating or declining a rental or housing allowance, to be completed and returned by each clergyperson. Human Resources shall notify in writing each clergyperson of his or her housing allowance designation. Human Resources shall include in its annual report a statement that the designations have been properly completed; and be it further

RESOLVED, that if a form is not submitted by a clergyperson, 20 percent of gross salary shall be designated as a rental or housing allowance; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the amounts so designated as rental or housing allowance are excludable from the gross income of the recipient only to the extent that said amounts are used to rent or provide a home. The clergyperson has the responsibility for compliance with IRS rules and regulations and is responsible for keeping an accurate record of housing expenditures in order to be able to substantiate any amounts excluded from gross income.

8. LUTHERAN MEDICAL CENTER

(Agenda IV.E.5; Exhibit G, Part 1)

Lutheran Medical Center is an affiliated social ministry organization incorporated under the New York Not-For-Profit Corporation Law. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is the sole voting member of the corporation. Lutheran Medical Center's (LMC) board proposed amendments to the center's bylaws and constitution.

The action and the exhibit had been reviewed by the General Counsel of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.23

To approve the following resolution on behalf of the ELCA, the sole voting member of Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn, New York:

WHEREAS, Lutheran Medical Center (LMC), a New York not for profit corporation, is an affiliated social ministry organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is the sole voting member of the LMC corporation and the ELCA has the authority to amend the LMC constitution; and

WHEREAS, LMC, by action of its Board of Trustees, has requested that its constitution be amended as indicated in Exhibit G, Part 1, attached hereto, in order to designate the President/CEO as an ex officio member of the board; and

WHEREAS, under its certificate of incorporation, Lutheran Medical Center must obtain authorization of the ELCA for any constitutional amendments; and

WHEREAS, LMC has therefore requested that the ELCA formally adopt amendments to the LMC constitution as indicated in Exhibit G, Part 1; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Church Council, on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, hereby authorizes and adopts the amendments to the constitution of Lutheran Medical Center specified in Exhibit G, Part 1, hereto; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Church Council, on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, hereby approves the amendments to the bylaws of Lutheran Medical Center as adopted:

**LUTHERAN MEDICAL CENTER CONSTITUTION
ARTICLE V
TRUSTEES AND THEIR ELECTION**

Section 1.

- (a) A Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than twelve nor more than thirty persons, approximately one-third (1/3) of whom shall be elected at each Annual Meeting. They shall hold office for three years and until their successors have been elected. The Trustees serving at the time this amendment is adopted shall be divided at the designation of the Nominating Committee into three groups approximately equal in size. The first group shall serve an initial term of one year; the remaining groups shall serve initial terms expiring at successive one-year intervals after the first year. Thereafter, at its Annual Meeting, or Special Meeting, the sole voting member of the Corporation shall elect individuals to fill the then-existing vacancies on the Board. Each elected Trustee shall hold office for a term of three years and until a successor is duly elected, unless the Trustee sooner resigns or is removed pursuant to Article V., Section 2 of this Constitution.
- (b) At least 25% of the membership of the Board of Trustees shall be members of a congregation of a Lutheran Church, including the bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who shall be an ex officio voting member of the Board, with the understanding that the Nominations Committee and the Board shall make all reasonable efforts to maintain the Lutheran percentage as close to 50% as feasible, recognizing the need to also reflect the diversity of the community on the Board and to recruit Trustees with the skills and resources to support LMC. Three members of the Board shall be nominated by the board of Sunset Park Health Council, Inc. The President and Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation shall be an ex officio voting

member of the Board.

- (c) To be eligible for Board membership, a trustee candidate shall (a) exemplify basic qualities of honesty, integrity, justice, and sound moral character; (b) be committed to uphold the purposes, philosophy and general policy of the Corporation as stated in the Constitution and By Laws and have the willingness and ability to devote necessary time to Board activities and be able to apply realistically experience and expertise to make decisions objectively, and (c) recognize the confidential character of information discussed at Board meetings and strive to avoid the appearance of any conflict of interest.

**LUTHERAN MEDICAL CENTER
BY-LAWS
ARTICLE III
ADMINISTRATION**

Section 1.

The Board of Trustees shall select and employ a competent, experienced President and Chief Executive Officer who shall be its direct executive representative in the management of the Medical Center. The Board shall also establish a formal process for periodic evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer. This Executive shall be given the necessary authority and held responsible for planning, development and administration of the Medical Center in all its activities and departments subject only to such policies as may be adopted and such orders as may be issued by the Board of Trustees or by any of its Committees to which it has delegated power for such action. The Chief Executive Officer shall be an ex officio voting member of the Board and act as the duly authorized representative of the Board of Trustees in all matters in which the Board has not formally designated some other person for that specific purpose.

10. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
(Agenda IV.G.1; Exhibit K, Parts 3a–c)

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has a long history of working for justice through corporate social responsibility. The responsibility for the Corporate Social Responsibility Program (CSR) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is given to the Church Council by the ELCA constitution:

14.21.14. The Church Council, acting through the designated churchwide unit, shall have responsibility for the corporate social responsibility of this church and shall have the authority to file shareholder resolutions and cast proxy ballots thereon on stocks held by the churchwide units that are not separately incorporated. In addition, the Church Council may make recommendations to the churchwide units that are separately incorporated concerning the filing of shareholder resolutions and the casting of ballots on stocks held by those units.

- 16.12.D06. The Church in Society unit shall assist this church to discern, understand, and respond to the needs of human beings, communities, society, and the whole creation through direct human services and through addressing systems, structures, and policies of society, seeking to promote justice, peace, and the care of the earth. To fulfill these responsibilities, this program unit shall: . . .
- i. give expression to this church's concern for corporate social responsibility, both in its internal affairs and its interaction in the broader society. To do so, this program unit will:

- 1) exercise, at the direction of the Church Council, the rights of this church as a corporate shareholder on issues of social concern on stocks held by the churchwide units that are not separately incorporated. In addition, the Church Council may make recommendations to the churchwide units that are separately incorporated concerning the filing of shareholder resolutions and the casting of proxy ballots on stocks held by those units;
- 2) facilitate the formation of an Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility that will include representatives from the Board of Pensions, the Church Council, and other units of this church and that will give counsel and advice to all appropriate units of this church on corporate social responsibility; and
- 3) work with national ecumenical groups on issues of corporate responsibility.

At its November 2003 meeting, the Church Council voted [CC03.11.68]:

To approve the revised governance process for Corporate Social Responsibility in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with the request that:

1. The ELCA Church Council, upon recommendation of the board for the Division for Church in Society:
 - a. review and recommend prioritized focus issues for the attention of this church in Corporate Social Responsibility; and
 - b. recommend a policy framework for each focus issue that will identify and delimit the scope within which resolutions may be filed;
2. The executive director of the Division for Church in Society, within the policy framework, approve individual Corporate Social Responsibility resolutions for filing; and
3. Regular reports be made to the board of the Division for Church in Society, the Conference of Bishops, the ELCA Church Council, and the trustees of the Board of Pensions regarding resolutions that have been filed; and

To approve the following five issue papers and to anticipate additional issue papers as they are developed . . . :

In accordance with the roles and responsibilities, the following amended items are provided for Church Council approval:

1. Boycott Policy: ELCA Boycott Policy and Procedure, Exhibit K, Part 3
2. Issue paper 5: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All, Exhibit K, Part 3a
3. Issue paper 6: For Peace in God's World: Human Rights, Exhibit K, Part 3b
4. Issue paper 7: For Peace in God's World: Violence in Our World, Exhibit K, Part 3c

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.24a To approve the amendments to the following Corporate Social Responsibility issue papers, but to request that the wording of the original issue papers be archived for historical and research purposes:

- **Issue paper 5: Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All;**
- **Issue paper 6: For Peace in God's World: Human Rights;**
- **Issue paper 7: For Peace in God's World: Violence in Our World.**

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.24b To approve the amendments to the "ELCA Boycott Policy and Procedure" as follows:

ELCA Boycott Policy and Procedures

Introduction

This document sets forth the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) policy and procedures for consideration, adoption, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and termination of boycotts.² This policy and procedures reflect the mission of this church, expressed in the ELCA Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions; they also are consistent with the ELCA's churchwide advocacy procedures.

This document begins with reference to the theological foundations of this church's commitment to justice. It addresses the nature and history of boycotts. It concludes by identifying: (1) the key issues and criteria to be addressed in assessing the merits of ELCA support for any boycott and (2) the appropriate procedures for churchwide decisions in relation to such support.

Theological Foundation: Our Commitment to Justice

The mission of this church is grounded in the Scriptures, the ecumenical creeds, and the Lutheran confessions. We confess God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all, and Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. We believe in salvation by grace alone, through faith. We respond to God's grace by practicing justice and working for peace and reconciliation in the care of all creation. Through the social policy³ of this church, we attempt to understand the meaning of our faith for life together in the present age. Any decision by the ELCA to participate in a boycott on any level must be consistent with this church's confession of faith and must be based upon principles articulated in its social policy.

The commitment to pursue justice and to be faithful stewards in all of life was reflected in the social statements of predecessor churches.⁴

The ELCA constitution makes clear this church's commitment to speak with its members and the wider society on justice issues, and to work for justice in the church and society, committing the ELCA to participate in God's mission in the following ways:

- 4.02.c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and the powerless and committing itself to their needs.

- 4.03.g. Lift its voice in concord and work in concert with forces for good, to serve humanity, cooperating with church and other groups participating in activities that promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged.

² As defined later in this document, boycotts may be undertaken in response to the actions of private or public sector entities.

³ ELCA social policy is understood as the collected policy actions by the churchwide organization, e.g. social statements, messages, Churchwide Assembly resolutions, and Church Council resolutions.

⁴ For example, in 1976, The American Lutheran Church declared, in *Manifesto for Our Nation's Third Century*, "We require that all social institutions—economic, governmental, educational, scientific, technological—be shaped to serve human needs." "And so . . . the . . . church pledges itself . . . to involvement in the social systems and structures, so that these become more responsive to God's will for the world." In 1980, the Lutheran Church in America adopted *Economic Justice: Stewardship In Human Community*, "It is in obedient gratitude for all gifts of God that we . . . commit ourselves in faithful love to struggle for economic justice as an integral part of the witness and work of God's people in the world."

- 4.03.1. Study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice and peace in the world. (ELCA Constitution 2007)

The ELCA constitution affirms advocacy as a way the ELCA works to promote justice in both “public” (governmental) and “private” (corporate) sectors of society. It assigns to the program unit for Church in Society (CS) a lead role in this mission of advocacy:

- 16.12.D06. The program unit for Church in Society shall:
- h. direct and implement this church’s public-policy advocacy to national and international governmental bodies in consultation with other church-wide units, and coordinate its public-policy advocacy to state governmental bodies.
 - i. give expression to this church’s concern for corporate social responsibility; both in its internal affairs and its interaction in the broader society.

The ELCA employs various means in its ministry of advocacy. In the public sector, it works through its members with elected and appointed officials to influence policy and legislation in ways that are compatible with the beliefs and values articulated in its confession of faith and in its social statements. In the private sector, the ELCA has developed corporate social criteria to be considered for the investment or expenditure of ELCA funds. The ELCA dialogues with corporation’s leadership to change corporation policies, and may file shareholder resolutions and cast proxy ballots on stocks held by the churchwide units that are not separately incorporated. In addition, the Church Council may make recommendations to the churchwide units that are separately incorporated concerning the filing of shareholder resolutions and the casting of ballots on stocks held by those units (ELCA constitution 14.21.14.). The ELCA and its members may also engage in selective purchasing and investing. Boycotts would be the final step in the continuum of private sector advocacy by the ELCA, taken after other steps are exhausted and careful deliberation has been concluded.

Boycotts: A Definition

In general terms, a “boycott” may be defined as:

A collective effort to abstain from the purchase or use of products or services provided by a targeted firm, government, or other agency. The purpose of a boycott is to persuade the targeted entity to cease certain practices judged to be unjust, and/or to perform certain practices deemed to be just.

Lutherans have historically been involved in social movements which used boycotts as a means of witness and reform in a wide range of areas, including the consumption of liquor and tobacco, business establishments open on Sunday, objectionable entertainment, goods produced with child or slave labor, gambling, and racial discrimination.⁵ Martin Luther himself called for a boycott of the Fuggers, a merchant banking company.⁶

Although predecessor bodies adopted boycott criteria and considered participation, they did not

⁵ Klein, Christa R., *Politics and Policy: The Genesis and Theology of Social Statements in the Lutheran Church in America* Christa R. Klein with Christian D. von Dehsen. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, c1989; for discussion of Lutheran involvement in the temperance movement of the 19th and 20th centuries. (See the preface and Chapter 1, particularly pages 21- 25 of the manuscript.) Also see United Presbyterian Church in the USA, General Assembly Mission Council. *Boycotts: Policy Analysis and Criteria*, and the United Methodist Church, *Economic Boycotts Participated in by the United Methodist Church*, Economic Boycott Task Force of the General Board of Church and Society.

⁶ Martin Luther, *On Trade and Usury*. Vol. 45: Luther’s Works.

endorse a boycott churchwide. Currently the ELCA engages in selective buying in terms of vendor selection.

Ethical, Procedural, and Pastoral Considerations: Questions To Be Addressed

In order to ensure thorough study and consideration prior to an ELCA commitment to any boycott, certain ethical questions must be addressed:

1. Does the boycott clearly address a significant issue of justice? That is, would the cause the boycott promotes be one that promotes human dignity, protects innocent life, and preserves conditions necessary for decent human existence?
2. Is the need for redress urgent? If the practices at issue are continued, are the human costs likely to be great?
3. Have appropriate prior measures such as negotiations and shareholder resolutions been pursued and proven ineffective? Have these alternatives been given a fair chance to succeed? Is there convincing evidence that the injustices in question cannot be corrected with less disruptive measures?
4. Is failing to address the injustices of the situation likely to result in consequences more undesirable than any injustices that might result from the boycott? Can the boycott be carried out in such a way as to recognize the human dignity of those against whom it is waged?
5. Is a boycott timely? Is it likely to generate broad support in the society?
6. Who organizes the boycott and whom do they represent? Do they have a legitimate right to represent the people they claim to help? Is there assurance that the boycott will be carried on with integrity?

A second set of questions is more procedural and institutional in its orientation:

7. Does this church have a clear position in its social statements on the issue to be addressed by the boycott?
8. Is there a significant chance of success if an adequate strategy and implementation plan are employed?
9. Have local and regional church leaders in the area that will be most affected by the boycott been consulted?
10. Within this church, is there a willingness and capability to undertake the educational, interpretive, and organizational efforts required to acquaint ELCA members with the issues and rationale, and to organize effective participation?
11. Has a work plan been prepared to show how the boycott will be implemented, monitored, and evaluated?
12. How will the boycott be conducted as part of the strategy for continuing negotiation with the corporation? How does the boycott issue relate to an over-all assessment of the corporation?
13. Have measurable goals been articulated so that the ELCA will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of its boycott strategy and to know when the boycott has succeeded or failed? Have the conditions under which the boycott will be suspended or terminated been clearly stated?

Finally, important pastoral questions must be addressed:

14. Can the boycott be carried out in such a way as to reduce as much as possible the suffering of innocent third parties? Has adequate consideration been given to how such people can be supported pastorally and economically and to the manner in which the church's support of the boycott can be interpreted to them?
15. How will the boycott contribute to the prophetic mission of this church and how is it compatible with its advocacy ministry? Are there approaches which represent a more effective use of the

resources available? Will the boycott unduly risk the closing of other appropriate avenues for addressing the issue? Will it distract attention from other more important issues? Will it be conducive to right relationships within and beyond this church?

16. Can and will the boycott be carried out in such a way that there are possibilities for reconciliation once the boycott is terminated?

The purpose of posing and addressing these questions in an open fashion, rather than stating flat requirements, which must all be met, is to assure that the difficult issues inherent in a boycott will be confronted, without imposing an unduly rigid requirement. The hope is that, under the particular circumstances, ELCA consideration of any boycott will integrate prophetic and symbolic roles with concerns for instrumental effectiveness and church credibility. There may be circumstances which would lead the church in its prophetic ministry to endorse a boycott even when some of these questions have ambiguous answers.

Procedures for Consideration and Decision

As appropriate, the executive director of the program unit for CS or the Cabinet of Executives may raise the question of ELCA support for a given boycott. The ELCA Church Council or its executive committee may also refer synod resolutions proposing boycotts to the executive director of the program unit for CS for consideration. The executive director of CS then develops an inter-unit review group to consider the pros and cons, including consideration of each of the questions set forth above. Advice from the Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility (ACCSR) as well as the program committee for CS will be sought.

The director for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for CS is responsible for conducting or coordinating the necessary research and providing an inter-unit review group and the ACCSR with the information required to consider the above questions and for advising the group regarding implementation.

If the inter-unit review group is convinced that the answers to the above questions merit ELCA endorsement of a boycott, it may recommend such support to the executive director of CS. The executive director may consult the ELCA Cabinet of Executives for preparation of recommendations to the ELCA Church Council.

In the absence of any ELCA position on a specific boycott, designated ELCA representatives to national ecumenical organizations may vote at their individual discretion on the boycott positions of those organizations, without their individual actions implying any corporate position of the ELCA.

Boycott Information

The program unit for CS is responsible for maintaining and providing information regarding various boycotts to units and expressions of the church and to members of the ELCA. Such information could include the social policy of the church on the issue and plans for the conduct of the boycott.

What Does ELCA Boycott Participation Mean?

ELCA endorsement of a boycott can involve a range of possible activities, which could be incorporated in a boycott implementation plan. This plan would address:

- the extent and nature of involvement sought by churchwide offices, synods, congregations, families, and individuals;
- the nature of participation in broader coalition efforts;
- development and dissemination of educational materials;
- the effect on purchasing practices;

- plans for approaching institutional purchasers outside the church; and
- appropriate communications by organizations and members of the church to the corporation in question.

ELCA endorsement of a boycott commits the churchwide offices to participate in the boycott. It also constitutes a recommendation to synods, congregations, and affiliated institutions that they participate in the boycott as institutions.

Whenever the ELCA supports a boycott, it is essential that appropriate measures be taken to ensure that the conduct of the boycott will be sufficiently accountable to the ELCA and to provide for withdrawal of the endorsement when it becomes advisable. If a coalition board is managing the boycott, accountability might be arranged by designating an official representative of the ELCA to serve on that board and report to the program unit for CS, which will report to the Church Council.

Church Council adopted an ELCA Boycott Policy and Procedures, November 1989 (CC89.11.183)

Revision Recommended by Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility, January 14, 2005

Revision Approved by Executive Committee, March 9, 2005 (EC05.03.09)

Revision Recommended by Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility, January 11, 2008

Revision Approved by the Church Council, April 13, 2008 (CC08.04.28b)

11. REVISED MESSAGE ON IMMIGRATION

(Agenda IV.G.2)

The Church Council at its November 1998 meeting approved a Message on Immigration. Since that time, both the 2007 Churchwide Assembly and the Executive Committee of the Church Council have received and referred to the Church in Society unit requests from synods related to the Message on Immigration.

In response to resolutions, the Executive Committee at its January, March, and June 2006 meetings voted [EC06.01.04b, EC06.03.16, and EC06.06.20e] to receive the resolutions and recommended for each, "To refer the resolution to the Church in Society unit with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2006 meeting of the Church Council. . . ."

In addition, the 2007 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA07.06.33i.] in response to memorials from three synods:

To thank the Southwest California Synod, Northwest Washington Synod, and Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod for calling this church's attention to the urgent concern for immigrants who are being unjustly treated;

To reaffirm the revision and updating of the 1998 Message on Immigration that was requested by the ELCA Church Council in response to the synodical resolutions received in 2006 for its consideration and approval in November 2007 and to anticipate that the revisions will address new concerns that are emerging related to immigrant rights and just policies toward immigrants in this country;

To reaffirm the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) in partnership with the synods of this church in the development of immigration task forces;

To continue this church's support for and close partnership with LIRS, including the delivery of technical assistance, networking, grants to dedicated and independent legal service projects, and advocacy for comprehensive immigration reform; and

To request that the Church in Society unit work with LIRS and other relevant churchwide units to convene opportunities for partners and interested leaders to meet to establish opportunities and strategies for further supporting and accompanying undocumented immigrants.

At its November 2007 meeting, the Program and Services Committee of the Church Council reviewed and provided input on the initial draft of the revised Message on Immigration. At that time, it was anticipated that the final draft of the statement would be considered by the Church Council in April 2008. Work on the draft, however, has been delayed both by the demands of the social statement on human sexuality and an open position on the studies staff of the Church in Society unit. The Church in Society unit has requested a delay in the time frame for completion of the revised Message on Immigration until the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

**CC08.04.25 To authorize a delay in the new Message on Immigration until the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council; and
To anticipate that the Program and Services Committee of the Church Council will receive and provide input to the draft document prior to its November 2008 meeting in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns.”**

12. OTHER NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS, AND ELECTIONS

(Agenda IV.H.)

A. BOARDS OF ELCA SEMINARIES

(Agenda IV.H.1)

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.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

**CC08.04.26a To elect the Rev. Philip L. Hougen to a three-year term, expiring 2011, as an at-large member of the board of directors of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago;
To re-elect Mr. Gerald Schultz and Ms. Ling Li to three-year terms, expiring 2011, as at-large members of the board of directors of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Ill.;**

To elect Ms. Pam Moret to a four-year term, expiring 2011, as an at-large member of the board of directors of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn; and

To elect the Rev. Nancy Milleville and Ms. Amanda Smoot to three-year terms, expiring 2011, as at-large members of the board of directors of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pa.

B. SOCIAL MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

(Agenda IV.H.2)

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 ELCA 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 unit.

The ELCA serves as a corporate member of Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn, New York; 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. The Church in Society program unit forwarded to the Church Council the following nominations for positions on the boards of these organizations.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.26b To elect Mr. Robert Tuttle to a three-year term, beginning July 2008, as a Class B member of the board of directors of Lutheran Services in America, Baltimore, Md.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Vice President Carlos E. Peña provided information about the health of the daughter of council member Ms. Ann C. Niedringhaus.

Mr. John R. Emery announced that his older daughter Kate had been accepted into Luther Seminary. He asked council members to hold her in prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Secretary David D. Swartling informed the council that \$2,040 had been received in the morning offering for the Lutheran World Federation's Mount of Olives housing project.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: LEGAL UPDATE

The Church Council entered into executive session for the purposes of receiving a legal update from Mr. Phillip H. Harris, general counsel. No minutes were kept of that session.

RECESS

The Church Council entered into recess at 12:37 P.M.

**Sunday, April 13, 2008
Plenary Session VI**

Vice President Carlos E. Peña reconvened the spring meeting of the Church Council at 1:07 P.M.

**CONVERSATION ON THE DRAFT SOCIAL STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY
(Agenda III.D.2)**

The Church Council occasionally has voted to discuss topics as a “committee of the whole.” At the April 2008 meeting the Church Council and its advisors used this format to discuss the draft social statement on human sexuality. The session was facilitated by Mr. Kenneth W. Inskip, executive for research and evaluation.

Church Council Action:

At the invitation of Vice President Carlos E. Peña, Secretary David D. Swartling introduced the proposed action. Vice President Carlos E. Peña opened the floor for discussion. There being none, he called for the vote.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC08.04.27 To go into a “committee of the whole” for the purpose of an overview and general discussion by Church Council members and advisors of the draft social statement on human sexuality for the following: Introduction and overview (25 minutes); questions for clarification (10 minutes); “fishbowl” with advisors (30 minutes); conversation (60 minutes).

No minutes of the committee of the whole discussion were kept.

REVIEW BY ADVISORS

Vice President Carlos E. Peña asked advisors to provide comments about the council meeting.

Ms. Suzanne Wise thanked members of the council for providing an opportunity for advisors’ voices to be heard.

Ms. Kristen Kvam suggested that, as had been prior practice, a time for advisors to meet with each other be scheduled.

MEETING EVALUATION AND DEBRIEFING

Vice President Carlos E. Peña asked voting members to provide comments about the council meeting.

Ms. Karin Lynn Graddy commended the “greenness” of the meeting.

Ms. Judith Anne Bunker approved the eco-friendly food and serving ware.

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson asked for suggestions about the pacing of the meeting. He commented that the first day had seen the council receiving a considerable amount of information, while Sunday’s agenda had called for members’ opinions and action.

Mr. William R. Lloyd Jr. responded that there had not been very many controversial items on the previous day’s schedule in contrast to Sunday’s agenda.

Presiding Bishop Hanson warned council members that the meetings of the next biennium would be different because of preparation for the Churchwide Assembly.

Ms. Judith Tutt-Starr expressed appreciation for the extensive information on the diseases of poverty initiative.

The Rev. Jonathan W. Linman commented that working electronically had been much easier than he had anticipated.

Secretary Swartling replied that thanks were due to Ms. Paula Berger for her technological support.

The Rev. J. Pablo Obregon expressed gratitude to Ms. Brianna R. Watts for her service as an advisor to the council on the occasion of her last meeting.

Presiding Bishop Hanson offered thanks to the churchwide staff who made the meeting possible.

Vice President Carlos E. Peña thanked his fellow officers and council members for their thoughtful discussions.

Presiding Bishop Hanson, in turn, thanked Vice President Peña for his work as chair.

CLOSING PRAYER

The Rev. Michael L. Burk, executive for worship and liturgical resources, offered a closing prayer/

ADJOURNMENT

The fifty-ninth meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adjourned at 2:59 p.m.