



Office of the Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

November 21, 2008

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

FROM: David D. Swartling, secretary

SUBJECT: Report of Responses by the Church Council to Synodical Actions
(November 14–17, 2008)

**I. RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY
REFERRALS 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 denounce jointly 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 of 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 directly assisting 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.

Church Council Action [April 2008]:

At its April 2008 meeting, the Church Council voted:

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.

Related Actions:

The Church Council agenda includes information and a recommended action related to resolutions about immigration from the Rocky Mountain, Northeastern Ohio, New Jersey, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., synods.

Church Council Action [November 2008]:

To authorize a delay in the development of a revised message on immigration by the Church in Society program unit, in cooperation with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS);

To request that the new message on immigration be brought to the ELCA Church Council for consideration in April 2010, with a preliminary draft brought to the Program and Services Committee of the Church Council in November 2009; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the Southwest California Synod, Northwest Washington Synod, and Southwestern Pennsylvania 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 (EOCM) 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.

Church Council Action [April 2008]:

At its April 2008 meeting, the Church Council voted [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.

Response from the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit:

The Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit (EOCM) has a process in place called the "review table" for considering funding requests. The review table consists of one bishop from each region, members of the EOCM renewal team, development team, and other staff. Funding requests made by congregations to synod outreach committees and synod staff are reviewed at the local level and then sent to the review table for affirmation. Priority is given to items that are in alignment with the synod's strategy and goals as well as EOCM's strategy and goals.

EOCM continues to work to discern the definition of "worthy" as it relates to the funding of struggling congregations. Currently, congregations that apply for and/or continue to receive EOCM partnership support are required to meet the following criteria:

1. Submission of annual congregation report forms.
2. Synod investment in the ministry, either through direct financial support or in-kind contributions, such as the use of a parsonage owned by the synod.
3. Congregational mission support at 10 percent or higher or demonstration that it is increasing toward a goal of 10 percent.
4. Demonstration of financial need. Congregations with large endowments, savings, and "other assets" usually will not be eligible, unless they are involved in a building program or have exhausted legal efforts to remove strictures from trusts and endowments. Congregations may have a reasonable amount of assets available for cash flow and emergencies. Effectiveness of renewal is directly proportional to the willingness of the congregation to invest in it.
5. Congregations with worship attendance under 50 and trending downward ordinarily will not be eligible for partnership support.
6. An indication from the bishop or EOCM field staff of the level of strategic importance for the synod: low, medium, or high.
7. A clear, succinct statement of the desired outcome of partnership support along with a defined, measurable plan. For congregations already receiving partnership support, an assessment in measurable terms must be included for renewal of funding.
8. Evidence that the plan for the congregation came out

- of a discernment process and strategy in collaboration with others (i.e., part of synod outreach strategy, ethnic strategy, evangelism team, or conference/cluster congregational leadership).
9. Evidence that the congregation already has taken steps to implement its mission strategy.
 10. A brief demographic analysis that indicates the viability of the mission field.
 11. Submission before the deadline.

EOCM's renewed structure for deployed staffing provides for dedicated attention designated to its core work of building of three critical tables: a mechanism for mission support, a mission table for new and renewed ministry, and a mission strategy table. Through this new effort the unit has reinforced its commitment to strengthening and enhancing resources that support mission and ministry in all synods.

Church Council Action:

To receive the background information provided by the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM) program unit in response to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly memorial related to "continuing worthy ministries"; and

To request that the background information be provided to the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, the originating synod of the memorial, as the response of the Church Council to the Churchwide Assembly action.

II. RESPONSES TO SYNODICAL RESOLUTIONS

A. CONDEMNATION OF TORTURE Minneapolis Area Synod (3G)

WHEREAS, Christians are called to love all persons—our families, our neighbors, and our enemies; and

WHEREAS, we are called to identify with and stand with those who have no power, who live at the mercy of others, or who are tortured; and

WHEREAS, torture and inhumane treatment are prohibited by the Geneva Convention under any circumstances; and

WHEREAS, in the 1995 social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "For Peace in God's World," we committed to "oppose genocide and other grievous violations of human rights such as torture, religious and racial oppression, forced conscription (impressments), forced labor, and war crimes (including organized rape); provide for the most basic necessities of the poor; and defend the human rights of groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children"; and

WHEREAS, we are obligated to stand with those who are tortured, to deny the merit of and exception to the Geneva Convention to allow torture for those labeled "unlawful

combatants," and to refuse to honor such language as degrades any person's humanity; and

WHEREAS, to stand by silently makes us complicit in policies condoning inhumane treatment that degrades human dignity of both detainees and their interrogators; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2007 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to condemn the use of torture and inhumane treatment of captives; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2007 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to authorize the Church in Society unit to request of appropriate U.S. government bodies that an independent committee with subpoena power be established to examine the use of rendition and the erosion of human rights of captives, especially those held by U.S. government authorities and agents.

Executive Committee Action:

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

To receive the resolution of the Minneapolis Area Synod related to the condemnation of torture;

To refer the resolution to the Church in Society unit with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council;

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

Response from the Church in Society unit:

The issue of inhumane treatment of detainees, including the definition of "torture," is a pressing moral question and one of the most important public issues resulting from the prosecution of the "global war on terror" and, specifically, the current combat in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Based on the ELCA's social statement "For Peace in God's World" (1995), this church understands torture and inhumane treatment of any person, particularly those held in detention, to violate the most basic biblical values and democratic principles. We understand the importance of giving the broadest possible meaning to the terms "torture" and "inhumane treatment," and to include those known as "unlawful combatants" in the present war on terror under protection from these activities.

This is especially relevant in the present context where the Geneva Convention, the codified and recognized international standard for conduct in wartime, outlines an exclusion of protection for those known as "unlawful combatants," provided that a competent

tribunal has determined whether a person is entitled to prisoner of war or civilian status, and also where the present U.S. administration classifies many detainees within this grouping.

To date, the ELCA has been active on the definition of torture, the inhumane treatment of detainees, and related issues through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Church in Society program unit, and other expressions of this church. The ELCA also works through its various expressions to promote awareness on this issue and to advocate before the administration, Congress, and the United Nations for an end to U.S.-sponsored acts of inhumane treatment and torture. This church is an endorsing institutional member of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) and Presiding Bishop Hanson has signed various faith-leader statements to this effect. The advocacy staff of the Church in Society unit regularly works on human rights, humane treatment, and open practices regarding the detention of prisoners. In particular, the issue of torture is now a named priority on the ELCA advocacy Web site.

Church Council Action:

To commend the Minneapolis Area Synod for its action related to the condemnation of torture and for drawing the connection between Christian faith and this important current public issue and to observe that the synod's commitment to biblical principles and human rights is an example to all Lutherans of the importance and relevance of this church's public voice; and

To note that the ELCA already condemns the use of torture and inhumane treatment of captives and also advocates for human rights, accessibility, and accountability for government agencies;

To acknowledge that the ELCA, through its participation in NRCAT, is on record in support of "an independent committee with subpoena power to examine the use of rendition and erosion of human rights" and will work in coalition for it; and

To report that Presiding Bishop Hanson has signed a recent NRCAT letter calling on the Central Intelligence Agency to notify the International Committee of the Red Cross of all U.S.-held detainees and to allow the committee access to both the detainees and detention facilities.

**B. TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS FOR LIBERIANS
Minneapolis Area Synod (3G)**

WHEREAS, perhaps as many as 7,000 to 10,000 people displaced from the Republic of Liberia have settled in the Minneapolis area, becoming valued members of our community and our congregations; and

WHEREAS, extreme violence and danger forced many of the

displaced to leave in haste, without acquiring formal refugee status; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has been granting temporary protected status to Liberians for more than 10 years; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Homeland Security has announced its intention not to renew temporary protected status for Liberians after October 2007; and

WHEREAS, such a lapse in temporary protected status will result in approximately ten percent of Minnesota's Liberian population again being displaced from their homes in Minnesota, and an estimated 200,000 nationwide; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress can reverse the decision of Homeland Security on temporary protected status for Liberian people; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly call for an extension of temporary protected status for displaced Liberian nationals; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod, through the office of its bishop, contact all Minnesota representatives and senators in the United States Congress to convey this call for action; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call for extension of temporary protected status on behalf of Liberian refugees throughout the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2007 Churchwide Assembly to direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop to convey to each member of the United States Congress this call for action.

Executive Committee Action:

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

To receive the resolution of the Minneapolis Area Synod related to the temporary protected status for Liberians;

To refer the resolution to the Church in Society unit with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the April 2008 meeting of the Church Council;

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

Response from the Church in Society unit:

Liberian nationals in the United States have been granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) by the United States government since the outbreak of civil war in Liberia in 1990. With the deposition of Charles Taylor, the election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and reports of improving economic conditions, the

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that TPS would not be extended for Liberians when it expired October 1, 2007.

Expiration of TPS would mean forced deportation of an estimated 3,600 Liberians to their home country. In effect, it would result in separation of these Liberian families and the displacement of Liberians, many of whom have lived, worked, and contributed to communities in the United States for nearly 20 years.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) is the lead Lutheran advocacy presence on immigration and refugee issues with members of Congress and the administration. With the October 1, 2007, deadline approaching, LIRS helped to win a new decision from President Bush to authorize Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for the Liberians for 18 months from the October 2007 deadline. This decision has extended lawful presence for the Liberians while LIRS and coalition partners continue to work to grant them permanent status.

Church Council Action:

To commend the Minneapolis Area Synod for bringing its experience in community-building and hospitality and this important issue to the attention of this church, and to thank them for witnessing to the importance and relevance of this church's public voice; and

To note in response to the third "resolved" that advocacy efforts by appropriate Lutheran bodies, in coalition with other partners, were responsible for removing the initial threat of forced deportation caused by the non-renewal of Temporary Protected Status and to note the ongoing advocacy efforts to protect Liberians in the United States under Deferred Enforced Departure status in order to establish a longer-lasting and more dependable legal basis for their presence in this country; and

To indicate in response to the fourth "resolved" that the Church in Society program unit will work closely with LIRS to monitor the status of the DED agreement and involve ELCA leaders in appropriate responses to members of Congress and relevant administration officials about pending decisions by DHS and related federal agencies relating to the DED agreement or other resulting status for the Liberians.

C1. CLERGY FOR DISASTER AREAS

Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod (4F)

WHEREAS, in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the financial, emotional, and spiritual burdens on congregations afflicted by disaster have increased enormously; and

WHEREAS, a number of congregations in the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod have been unable to call

pastoral staff to lead them because of the uncertainty of their circumstances in the wake of the hurricanes; and

WHEREAS, the finances of some disaster-stricken congregations have been so devastated that they are unable to compensate adequately their pastors so that they can continue to live in the communities where they have been called to serve; and

WHEREAS, the pastoral staffs of other congregations have been taxed severely as a result of their responsibility not merely to lead their own congregations but to assist in the support and rebuilding of other congregations destroyed—or placed at risk—by the hurricanes and their aftermath; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for an intentional commitment on the part of this church to provide additional ordained leadership in times of crisis in order to assist those churches in need of pastoral staff and to provide relief to those pastors who have struggled without respite since these disasters; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that:

1. the presiding bishop promptly undertake to identify and create a list of retired rostered clergy and chaplains who are willing to serve in disaster-stricken areas as intentional interim pastoral staff for those congregations that need pastors or to provide respite and relief to existing pastoral staff in disaster-stricken communities and congregations that need additional help; and
2. the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America provide resources sufficient to fund the amounts necessary to pay interim and permanent pastoral staff salaries (if local congregations lack the means to do so) in order to permit rostered clergy and chaplains to return to the service of this church in disaster-stricken areas; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Assembly direct the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Council to forward this resolution for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Executive Committee Action:

At its October 2007 meeting, the Executive Committee voted [EC07.10.28c]:

To receive the resolution of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Synod related to clergy for disaster areas;

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the Church in Society unit and ELCA Disaster Response with the request that the report on the consultation on disaster response anticipated at the November 2007 meeting of the ELCA Church Council address the issues raised by the synod; and

To request that the secretary of this church

inform the synod of this action.

C2. DISASTER RESPONSE

Texas–Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod (4F)

WHEREAS, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita taught many valuable lessons to be learned about disaster response; and

WHEREAS, the faith communities of the Gulf Coast areas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the world responded with great generosity and love; and

WHEREAS, the presence of local pastors and congregations became beacons of hope and visible signs of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the local congregations and their church facilities should be spiritual centers in the relief response and long-term recovery efforts as well as a public witness to the core values of Lutheran communities; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Disaster Response does not allocate money for the financial support of pastors and staff, rebuilding of church buildings, or congregational ministries devastated by a disaster; and

WHEREAS, the gap of coverage for churches and their staff impacted by a disaster is one of the lessons from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as well as after other disasters which have hit this country; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Texas–Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, meeting in assembly, requests that the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America develop a clear, immediate, and effective response plan to assist local pastors and congregations in disaster areas; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Texas–Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Assembly direct the Texas–Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Executive Committee Action:

At its October 2007 meeting, the Executive Committee voted [EC07.10.28d]:

To receive the resolution of the Texas–Louisiana Gulf Synod related to disaster response;

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the Church in Society unit and ELCA Disaster Response with the request that the report on the consultation on disaster response anticipated at the November 2007 meeting of the ELCA Church Council address the issues raised by the synod; and

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

C3. CHANGE THE POLICY OF LUTHERAN DISASTER

RESPONSE

Texas–Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod (4F)

WHEREAS, the current policy and practice of Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) does not allow money contributed to LDR to be used for the rebuilding of churches devastated by disaster; and

WHEREAS, that policy forces local congregations to hustle and scramble in search of alternate financial assistance for their rebuilding; and

WHEREAS, many contributors to LDR naturally assume that their donations also will be used for the rebuilding of Lutheran churches; and

WHEREAS, current policy and practice often lead pastors and congregations to be preoccupied with finding the financial resources to rebuild their structures, diverting time, effort, and money away from the other ministries of the congregations; and

WHEREAS, the current policy and practice has caused bewilderment, outrage, and resentment among members of devastated churches and has caused a public relations blunder for LDR in recently ravaged areas; and

WHEREAS, it is the local congregation that provides hope, compassion, and physical help to its community and therefore needs immediate support following a disaster; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the practice and policy of the Lutheran Disaster Response immediately be changed in order to free up both current and future donations to Lutheran Disaster Response for use in the rebuilding of church facilities affected by disaster; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Texas–Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Assembly direct the Texas–Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Executive Committee Action:

At its October 2007 meeting, the Executive Committee of the Church Council voted [EC07.10.28e]:

To receive the resolution of the Texas–Louisiana Gulf Synod requesting a change in the policy of Lutheran Disaster Response;

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the Church in Society unit and ELCA Disaster Response with the request that the report on the consultation on disaster response anticipated at the November 2007 meeting of the ELCA Church Council address the issues raised by the synod; and

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

Church Council Response [2007]:

At its November 2007 meeting, the Church Council voted [CC07.11.83e]:

To thank the Texas–Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod for its resolutions related to clergy for disaster areas, the policy of Lutheran Disaster Response, and disaster response;

To acknowledge the report of the ELCA Disaster Response Consultation and the action of the Church Council as the response of the Church Council to the resolutions of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod;

To request that the report and the action of the Church Council be transmitted as information to the synod; and

To anticipate additional response by the Church Council at its November 2008 meeting.

Church Council Action:

To acknowledge the verbal report of the director for Domestic Disaster Response as recorded in the minutes of the November 2008 meeting of the Church Council as the final response of the council to the resolutions of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod related to Clergy for Disaster Areas, Disaster Response, and Change the Policy of Lutheran Disaster Response; and

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

**D. REVISE ECONOMIC LIFE SOCIAL STATEMENT
Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D)**

WHEREAS, this church and its institutions continue to discern their roles in communities, especially those communities experiencing socio-economic decline; and

WHEREAS, there is an increasing allure to secure funding from resources that may challenge this church's advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world (e.g., lotteries and gambling grants); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) uses its social statements, messages, social policy resolutions, and studies of social issues as a means to carry out its participation in society;¹ and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social statement on economic life

provides neither policy and procedure² nor current³ guidance for how its various expressions and institutions raise money for maintenance and mission; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod in assembly request the Church and Society unit to broaden its social statement on economic life

1. to include resources for a community of moral deliberation in order to discern stewardship practices that are biblical and faithful;
2. to adapt and contextualize the 1984 American Lutheran Church "Statement on Gambling and the Public Good"; and
3. to add a social policy resolution that clarifies fundraising and stewardship practices for all expressions of this church and its institutions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly direct the Southeastern Iowa Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Executive Committee Action:

At its August 2007 meeting, the Executive Committee of the Church Council voted [EC07.08.23a]:

To receive the resolution of the Southeastern Iowa Synod related to the social statement on economic life;

To refer the resolution to the Church in Society program unit with the 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.

Response from the Church in Society unit:

The Southeastern Iowa Synod has asked the Church Council to revise the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's social statement, "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All: A Social Statement on Economic Life" to include resources that facilitate discernment of

2

The ELCA currently addresses gambling in the early phase of "studies" rather than the advanced phase of "policies and procedures" (*Ibid.*).

3

The ELCA "continues to look to the social statements of the [ALC and LCA] for guidance, while it develops its own social statements and further deliberates on social concerns" (*Ibid.*, 3).

See also "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All," the ELCA's social statement on economic life.

1

"Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns," p. 1.

“stewardship practices that are biblical and faithful;” “adapt and contextualize” The American Lutheran Church’s statement on gambling; and clarify fundraising and stewardship practices.

The ELCA adopted the economic life social statement in 1999. The purpose of this statement is to address economic injustice in the broader society and world. It speaks to state-sponsored gambling as a “regressive means of raising state revenues” that adversely affects people in poverty (p. 12). It does not address the relationship between gambling and congregational or church-related institutional stewardship practices and fundraising.

In 1984, The American Lutheran Church adopted a statement on “Gambling and the Public Good” that articulates the “temptation” of states and a “wide variety of charitable or community organizations and causes” to utilize gambling as a revenue resource (p. 2). While this statement enumerates the questions and concerns raised by gambling, including its effect on people’s understanding of stewardship and motivation, it does not support absolute prohibitions on gambling. It raises concern that “receipts from gambling become another regressive tax when used as a source of revenue” (p. 2) and admonishes congregations and charitable organizations to strive to keep their fundraising practices free from appeals to unhealthy motivations, such as greed or materialism. This statement does not address a congregation’s or church-related institution’s use of money won by members in state-sponsored lotteries or gambling, including the effect such use might have on the church’s ability to advocate.

In 1964, The American Lutheran Church offered a statement on “Commercialism in the Church” as a guide to pastors and congregations, boards, agencies, institutions, and auxiliaries for their policies and actions. That same year, the Lutheran Church in America adopted a social statement on commercialism. Both statements explain the dangers of commercialism in the church related to: the Christian understanding of stewardship; the consciences of both members and non-members; blurring in the public mind of the church’s difference from private business; and the church’s tax status with the state. Both statements have in view the need to address commercialism in a way that helps people “replace poor [stewardship] practices with better ones” (LCA, n.p.). Commercialism is understood as “the selling of goods or services in the name of the church” to secure funds for the church or a church-related organization (LCA, n.p.), so it does not include gambling.

The Stewardship Team of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit regularly utilizes the Lutheran Church in America’s statement on

commercialism and the team’s own “Ten Stewardship Principles” and “Twenty Practices for Growing Stewards in Your Congregation” to educate on Christian stewardship; and it uses its “What are the differences?” to help congregations discern the differences between fundraising and financial stewardship. Churchwide and synod stewardship staff welcome the opportunity to work with synods on education and moral discernment around stewardship and fundraising.

Church Council Action:

To thank the Southeastern Iowa Synod for its concern for Christian stewardship and fundraising practices;

To acknowledge that alternative sources of funding are alluring to congregations and church-related institutions, especially where there is socio-economic decline;

To conclude that the concern raised by the Southeastern Iowa Synod primarily falls into the realm of congregational and church-related institutions’ fundraising and stewardship practices and to invite continued education and moral discernment about stewardship and fundraising by churchwide staff and synods;

To acknowledge that current ELCA social policy does not speak to the use by congregations and church-related organizations, agencies, and institutions of funds won in state-sponsored gambling, including the use of funds to do advocacy ministry, but to recognize that predecessor church body statements do address gambling and commercialism and continue to provide guidance for the ELCA in the absence of policy adopted by the ELCA;

To decline to revise the ELCA’s social statement on economic life but to recommend that the Evangelical Outreach and Congregation Mission unit, through its stewardship team, be asked to update the Lutheran Church in America’s statement on commercialism, including the use of funds by congregations and church-related institutions won in state-sponsored gambling, inviting input from the Church in Society unit where appropriate; and

To request the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit to post on its Web pages “Gambling and the Public Good” (TALC, 1984), “Commercialism in the Church” (TALC, 1964), and “Commercialism” (LCA, 1964), until such time as updated documents are developed.

**E. MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOR HIV AND AIDS STRATEGY
Metropolitan New York Synod (7C)**

WHEREAS, HIV and AIDS has 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:

At its October 2007 meeting, 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.

Church Council Action [April 2008]:

The Church Council voted [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.

Church Council Action [November 2008]:

To acknowledge the draft of the strategy on HIV and AIDS as the response of the Church Council to the resolution of the Metropolitan New York Synod;

To anticipate approval of the final draft of the

HIV and AIDS strategy at the April 2009 meeting of the Church Council; and

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

**F. REINSTATEMENT OF ROSTERED CLERGY
Northern Great Lakes Synod (5G)**

WHEREAS, there is a need for qualified clergy in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

WHEREAS, the Vocation and Education program unit has a policy for reinstatement to the roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that is rather lengthy and cumbersome; and

WHEREAS, some pastors leave the roster in circumstances that do not reflect poorly on their character, ministry, and ability; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northern Great Lakes Synod ask the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Vocation and Education program unit to streamline the process of reinstatement to the roster; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northern Great Lakes Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Executive Committee Action:

At its June 2008 meeting, the Executive Committee of the Church Council voted [EC08.06.11c]:

To receive the resolution of the Northern Great Lakes related to reinstatement of rostered clergy;

To refer the resolution to the Vocation and Education unit in consultation with the Office of the Secretary with the request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the March 2009 meeting of the Church Council;

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

Response from Vocation and Education unit:

Vocation and Education unit staff members, in consultation with staff from the Office of the Secretary and with members of the Conference of Bishops' Liaison with Vocation and Education Committee, have reviewed this resolution and the policy on reinstatement.

Reinstatement to a roster always is a matter to be considered with great care. Even when a person resigned from one of the rosters for reasons that had no impact on his or her fitness to serve, it is appropriate that time be taken for mutual discernment to reflect on that decision and on experiences and learnings during the time on and off the roster. When a resignation or removal came because of misconduct or to avoid discipline, the necessity

for taking time to discern carefully the appropriate next steps is all the greater.

The reviewers conclude that the present reinstatement process meets the needs of this church for this careful consideration, that it respects all people concerned, and that it is not unnecessarily complex. However, the reviewers also conclude that it is possible and desirable to clarify the descriptions of the process in the "Manual on the Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters" and particularly in the "Candidacy Manual" and to eliminate minimal potential redundancy in the steps required of applicants for reinstatement. By early 2009, Vocation and Education unit staff members expect to complete the process of editing the language in the candidacy manual. Office of the Secretary staff will do the same with the manual on management of the rosters.

Concurrent with discussions related to the Northern Great Lakes Synod resolution, the staff and liaison committee also considered unrelated questions about reinstatement that have been raised recently by others. These included the issue of whether an appeal process should be made available when a request is denied, the issue of whether the policy should continue to give the synodical bishop sole discretion to determine whether to forward a request for reinstatement to a candidacy committee, and the issue of whether and when a bishop should be allowed or expected to disqualify him or herself and transfer the responsibility to another synodical bishop.

The reviewers examined each of these and conclude that, while some arguments can be made for each of the possible changes, potentially larger problems would be created in each case if the change were made. In considering reinstatement, as in other areas related to rostering, this church relies on the integrity and knowledge of its bishops and candidacy committees. Guidance and counsel on the use of these policies is an essential part of the orientation and ongoing support offered to bishops and other synod staff members and should continue to be so.

Church Council Action:

To thank the Northern Great Lakes Synod Council for its resolution related to the reinstatement of rostered clergy, and to acknowledge that the policy on the reinstatement of rostered clergy has been reviewed carefully;

To decline to recommend any substantive changes in that policy, but to request that the Vocation and Education unit and the Office of the Secretary edit the policy documents to increase clarity and to avoid redundancy in the process;

To convey the above information as the Church Council's response to the resolution of the Northern Great Lakes Synod; and

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

**G. 2009 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE
Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D)**

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Council forward for consideration and possible action to the Executive Committee of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) the following proposed rule for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly:

When a Churchwide Assembly adopts a social statement, all resolutions and recommendations for implementation of said social statement shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote by the Churchwide Assembly.

Executive Committee Action:

At its October 2008 meeting, the Executive Committee of the Church Council voted [EC08.10.21]:

To receive the resolution of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod related to the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly;

To anticipate action by the Church Council at its November 2008 meeting to recommend the Rules of Organization and Procedure to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly;

To acknowledge that the action of the Church Council at its November 2008 meeting will be the response of the council to the synod's resolution; and

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

Background from the Office of the Secretary:

In each biennium, the Church Council submits a recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure (Rules). Voting members of the assembly act on the Rules in the first plenary session. Pursuant to *Robert's Rules of Order*, a two-thirds vote of the assembly is required for adoption of the Rules. These proposed Rules for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly have been developed and refined as a result of experiences at the ten previous Churchwide Assemblies, as well as the experiences of predecessor church bodies.

Most of the proposed changes in the 2009 Rules were made to update or reorganize the document or to clarify an issue (e.g., the meaning of "germane motion" or "memorial"). The most substantive amendments are in

Part Ten. In Part Ten the following rules were proposed by the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee to the Church Council:

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

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations or resolutions originating from or relating to the subject of a social statement task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to such recommendations or resolutions.

Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations or Resolutions from a Social Statement Task Force Requiring Amendment of Constitutional Provisions or Bylaws

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations or resolutions originating from or relating to the subject of a social statement task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to such recommendations or resolutions that require amendment of a constitution or bylaw provision for implementation.

The second paragraph is the Rule that was adopted by the 2003, 2005, and 2007 Churchwide Assemblies and is consistent with the constitution of the ELCA.

The Office of the Secretary and the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee proffered these Rules in Part Ten not as advocates of a particular point of view, but primarily to clearly frame the discussion of this section and to address transparently the pending resolution of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod.

These Rules also are consistent with what has been proposed in the past and what had been practice with respect to social statements and their implementing resolutions prior to the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, as is evident from this review of the following recent history of the rules in this section:

2005 Churchwide Assembly

At the November 2004 Church Council meeting, the Rules for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly were considered. In Part Ten, "Amendments to and Votes on Major Statements," under the heading "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports," the following rules were commended to the Churchwide Assembly [CC04.11.65]:

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report that require amendment of a constitution or bylaw provision for implementation.

A two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to a social statement of this church on the subject of the policy or social statements received from the immediate predecessor church bodies of this church that have not been replaced or superseded by social statements or decisions of this church.

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to an existing policy that has been adopted by the Church Council upon recommendation of a board or committee, as authorized by the constitution or bylaws of this church.

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report that the Church Council recommended to the Churchwide Assembly and specified that a two-thirds affirmative vote of the assembly will be necessary for adoption.

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report that would establish policy for the oversight by synods of the official rosters of this church.

A majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report that are provided as advice to congregations of this church, except recommendations in implementing resolutions for a social statement for which a two-thirds vote is required.

At the first plenary session of the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, the assembly considered the Rules. It voted initially to adopt the Rules, exclusive of quoted and

highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that are already in force, and the material removed for separate consideration [CA05.01.01]. The Rules approved in the section "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports" included only the following:

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report that require amendment of a constitution or bylaw provision for implementation.

Paragraphs two–six were removed for separate consideration.

After considerable debate on those paragraphs, the assembly voted to adopt the Rules, Section I, page 13, Part Ten, paragraph 3, "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports":

A two-thirds majority vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to an existing policy that has been adopted by the Church Council upon recommendation of a board or committee, as authorized by the constitution or bylaws of this church.

No other proposed rule in this section was adopted, nor were amendments to them approved.

2007 Churchwide Assembly

At its April 2007 meeting, the Church Council considered the Rules for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. In Part Ten, "Amendments to and Votes on Major Statements," under the heading "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports," the following rules had been proposed:

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to them that require amendment of a constitution or bylaw provision for implementation.

A two-thirds vote of the members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or amendments or substitute resolutions related to them that would establish for this church a new practice or policy that is contrary to an existing policy that has been adopted by the Church Council upon recommendation of a board or committee, as

authorized by the constitution or bylaws of this church.

After extensive debate, the Church Council voted [CC07.04.24] to recommend that the Churchwide Assembly adopt the Rules (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that are already in force). Under the heading in Part Ten "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports," the following rule was recommended:

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to them that require amendment of a constitution or bylaw provision for implementation.

At the first plenary session of the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, the assembly considered the Rules. In Part Ten under the heading "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Task Force Reports," the following rule was adopted:

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from a task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to them that require amendment of a constitution or bylaw provision for implementation.

Social Statements and Implementation Resolutions

Bylaw 12.12.01. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* states:

12.12.01. A social statement, which is developed by the appropriate churchwide unit and presented to the Churchwide Assembly as a proposed social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall require for adoption a vote of two-thirds of those voting members present and voting in a Churchwide Assembly. The text of a proposed social statement shall be approved and recommended to the assembly by the Church Council.

Up until 2007, social statements and their implementing resolutions were combined in a single action, which required a two-thirds vote for approval. Specifically, only a single action on "Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor," combining approval of the social statement and implementing resolutions, was taken by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly [CA03.05.13]. Similarly,

only a single action on "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All," combining approval of the social statement and implementing resolutions, was taken by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly [CA99.05.14]. Again, only a single action on "For Peace in God's World," combining approval of the social statement and implementing resolutions, was taken by the 1995 Churchwide Assembly [CA95.05.24]. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly voted a single action [CA93.04.06], combining approval of the social statement and implementing resolutions, on "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice." It also took a single action on "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture" [CA93.07.43]. The 1991 Churchwide Assembly voted a single action on the social statement on abortion [CA91.06.38], combining approval of the social statement and implementing resolutions. It also took a single action on "Social Practice Statement on the Death Penalty" [CA91.03.09] and a single action on "The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective" [CA91.02.04].

In 2007, the practice was altered. The 2007 Churchwide Assembly took separate actions on the social statement "Our Calling in Education" and its implementing resolutions. It approved (Yes-949; No-35) the social statement in one action [CA07.05.21], which required a two-thirds vote, and approved (Yes-996; No-17) the implementing resolutions in another action [CA07.07.22] with a simple majority.

Church Council November 2008 Action on Rules

At its November 2008 meeting the Church Council considered the Rules for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

Following debate, the Church Council voted first to approve the Rules, with the exception of Part Ten. Then the council voted to approve Part Ten with the deletion of the paragraph "Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendation or Resolutions from a Social Statement Task Force," cited above, and the retention of the following:

Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations or Resolutions from a Social Statement Task Force Requiring Amendment of Constitutional Provisions or Bylaws

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations or resolutions originating from or relating to the subject of a social statement task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to such recommendations or resolutions that require amendment of a constitution or bylaw provision for implementation.

2009 Churchwide Assembly

The 2009 Churchwide Assembly will debate and vote on the Rules of Organization and Procedure during its first plenary session. Amendments and substitute motions

to the recommendation of the Church Council are in order at that time.

Church Council Action:

To receive the background information provided by the Office of the Secretary to the Northwestern Minnesota Synod resolution related to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly Rules of Organization and Procedure; and

To request that the Office of the Secretary provide the background information to the synod as the response of the Church Council to the resolution.

H. ECOLOGICALLY AND FISCALLY SOUND PRACTICES Saint Paul Area Synod (3H)

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ through his works and words taught us to lead by example, and Mahatma Gandhi called us to "be the change you want to see in the world"; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans have led by example and been in the forefront of ethically inspired social change for centuries, including the abolitionist, civil rights, and peace movements of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the serious threats of global warming and environmental degradation caused by humans call Lutherans again to look inwardly and act outwardly in order to preserve God's miraculous creation and leave a livable environment in which future generations will thrive; and

WHEREAS, many products commonly used in homes and churches contain toxins harmful to the environment and humans, especially children; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted a social statement in 1993, "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice," lifting up Christians' concern for the environment that is "shaped by the Word of God spoken in creation, the Love of God hanging on a cross, the Breath of God daily renewing the face of the earth"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA since adoption of the 1993 social statement has worked to make it manifest through policies and practices; and

WHEREAS, reducing the ELCA environmental footprint is both ecologically and fiscally sustainable; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the ELCA build on its environmental initiatives by ensuring that future church gatherings, from local to churchwide, are, to the degree practicable, low-waste events by reducing handouts, printing on both sides of the paper, using recycled paper, using reusable and recyclable materials, providing for recycling, informing attendees of preferred practices, and otherwise adopting best management practices; and be it further

RESOLVED, that local and churchwide ELCA offices and buildings undergo comprehensive energy audits and make any energy-conservation retrofits recommended by the audits that have a pay-back of five years or less; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA investigate opportunities to use non-toxic cleaners and other products that are effective, affordable, and safe; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, when possible, ELCA offices purchase a minimum of five percent of their electricity from renewable sources; and be it further

RESOLVED, that individual ELCA congregations be encouraged to adopt as many of the above practices as are practicable.

Response from the Executive Committee:

At its April 2008 meeting, the Executive Committee voted [EC08.04.07]:

To receive the resolution of the Saint Paul Area Synod Council related to "ecologically and fiscally sound practices";

To refer the resolution to the Administrative Team with the 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.

Response from the Administrative Team:

The response from the Administrative Team is as follows:

The churchwide organization through its various units has worked broadly and steadily in reducing the ELCA environmental footprint in a way that is ecologically and fiscally sustainable. The primary areas of emphasis in the management of our facilities focus on the efficient use of energy, water and other resources; the reduction of waste, pollution and environmental degradation; and the protection of staff members', tenants', and visitors' health and productivity. This report highlights some of the recent efforts supporting these goals within the churchwide organization.

Selection of a Building Management Company

Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) was selected a few years ago to manage the churchwide property and offices in Chicago. JLL is an industry leader in green building initiatives and was recipient of the 2007 Energy STAR Partner of the Year Award by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Stars of Energy Efficiency Chairman's Award from the Alliance to Save Energy. JLL provides a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Certification and four of the O'Hare Plaza management staff are currently in the process of attaining this certification.

The credentials and experience of our building management company in environmental stewardship are important to the churchwide organization because they

give us access to resources, solutions, and support programs to help us in our own efforts to be good stewards of the environment.

Lutheran Center Reconfiguration

Over the course of 2006 and 2007, the Lutheran Center offices were reconfigured to align the organization with the new unit structure and to attend to general wear and tear issues that needed to be addressed after twenty years of heavy usage. During the process of replacing carpet and office furniture and installing new wiring, priority was given to recycling, reusing, or donating items being replaced. Management services negotiated an agreement with a company to take down the old work surfaces, refurbish them and put them up for sale, keeping all these materials out of the landfills. Chairs and other miscellaneous furniture pieces were donated and other parts, including copper piping and wiring, were recycled.

During the construction process, energy efficiency was also improved by re-lamping all floors with low voltage lamps and installing window film on the first floor lobby and eleventh-floor hospitality suite and reception areas to keep the building cool.

In order to ensure a healthy work environment for staff and tenants, non-toxic paint was used throughout.

Recycling Program

The Lutheran Center has worked with the building management company to increase the amount of garbage that can be recycled. A new recycling program was implemented in November 2007 at O'Hare Plaza that allowed us to recycle mixed items such as aluminum, glass, and plastics, as well as paper. This resulted in a noticeable increase in recycling and lowered the amount of trash. The ELCA building achieved the lowest per-square-foot trash removal expense in the JLL Suburban Chicago portfolio at \$.02 per square foot. Beyond the recycling of paper, cardboard, and mixed items, the ELCA also recycles batteries, light bulbs, toner and laser inkjet cartridges, and e-scrap.

Capital Purchases

As items need replacement, the churchwide organization takes the opportunity to find energy-saving solutions. Items that reach the end of their useful life and are replaced over time with Energy Star appliances include the conference center dishwasher, floor refrigerators, and ice machines. Recent major capital investments include the cooling tower that is being replaced and will use 40% less energy to run. Sensors have been installed in the freight elevator lobbies and will be installed in all elevator cars so that the down lights only come on when the cars are in use, saving energy.

Water-saving faucets and bathroom fixtures have been in place for several years on all floors.

Meetings and Events

Water and ice dispensers have been purchased for meetings in the conference center and lunchroom and biodegradable cups, plates, and utensils have been researched and purchased. Staff and visitors are encouraged to bring their own mugs to meetings. The Office of the Secretary has worked with one caterer, Tasty Catering, that has made significant strides in their own green efforts, and they were invited to present their story to Lutheran Center staff.

Environment-Friendly Products

All cleaning products used at the Lutheran Center are environmentally preferred products, the paint used in the Lutheran Center is non-toxic, and our HVAC is filled with non-toxic polyglycol which can be reused for 8 years and is pumped in for the summer and out for winter.

Office Services

The Management Services section works with units to encourage good practices around the use of office supplies. All customers are expected to copy documents as two-sided. While recycled paper has tended to produce more dust that jams the copy machines, Management Services continues to test products in order to find an effective recycled paper option. There has been a notable and consistent downward trend in the volume of outgoing mail as units are turning to more electronic communications and posting of resources. Post office software solutions catch wrong addresses and avoid unnecessary production, envelope, and mailing costs.

Technology Initiatives

Technology equipment is a critical area that the Lutheran Center focuses on in order to meet good environmental stewardship standards. We utilize Great Lake Electronics Corp. to dispose of old equipment and reuse and recycle all parts. Great Lakes has a zero-landfill policy and everything is recycled in accordance with EPA, HIPAA, and other local, state, and federal regulations.

Information Technology has developed a plan to reduce and consolidate the number of printers in the building through use of multi-functional units, which will result in the reduction of energy expended to run this equipment. They are also moving to server virtualization which, through reduced number of physical servers, will decrease our electrical power consumption, cooling needs, and emissions.

Information Technology and Office of the Treasurer

will be shifting to a new general ledger system mid-2009. The design and approval processes are being reviewed to emphasize workflow and web accessibility in order to save on printing costs and paper usage.

Planning Team

A new cross-unit team on environmental stewardship has been appointed to lead planning around continuing green initiatives and to creatively engage and communicate with churchwide staff about what they can do to help care for God's creation as part of our work here at the Lutheran Center.

Church Council Action:

To thank the Saint Paul Area Synod for its concern for the environment and particularly for the "Caring for Creation" practices of the churchwide organization;

To thank the churchwide organization for its many environmental initiatives, including those that are detailed above;

To encourage the Saint Paul Area Synod and the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to practice "Caring for Creation" in their own contexts; and

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

I. 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:

At its March 2007 meeting, 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 [April 2008]:

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, per direction of the Executive Committee of the Church Council, engage 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.

Church Council Action:

At its April 2008 meeting, the Church Council voted [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.

Response from the Board of Pensions [November 2008]:
Method of funding the cost of medical benefits

The resolution states that rising medical costs are adversely affecting salaries because health coverage contributions are determined as a percentage of compensation. It calls on the ELCA Board of Pensions to review the way it funds medical benefits.

Although medical cost trends have moderated somewhat in recent years, health care costs continue to increase faster than general inflation and faster than the incomes of most congregations. ELCA plan rates increased by an average of five percent in each of the last two years. While these increases are lower than national averages, we understand that the high cost of medical coverage continues to be a challenge for ELCA congregations, particularly those of limited means.

To understand the relationship between salaries and health plan contributions it is helpful to consider an example. The table below shows a hypothetical pastor whose defined compensation in 2008 is \$50,000. The cost of family coverage is 31.8 percent of compensation or \$1,325 per month. The rate for 2009 will be 32.4 percent, which will be applied to the pastor's defined compensation in 2009. The table illustrates the health contribution and combined compensation plus health contribution, with 2009 salary increases of up to five percent. For example, if the pastor's salary increased by three percent, the health contribution would increase by 4.9 percent and the combined amount would increase by 3.5 percent. **[Please turn to next page for chart and graph.]**

Does tying health contributions to compensation adversely affect pastors' compensation? In the opinion of the Board of Pensions, it should not. As long as health costs are rising faster than salaries, the combined amount always will increase faster than the salary alone. This is true whether health contributions are tied to salary or not. The challenge for congregations is to continue to provide adequate and fair compensation, while also covering the ever-increasing cost of health coverage.

Why does the ELCA base health plan contributions on compensation? This unique practice arises from the ELCA philosophy of benefits, which states that the cost of the benefits program should be shared on a basis that takes into account differences in congregations' and other

employers' ability to pay, with employers of greater means paying more in order to help employers of lesser means within their synods. This recognizes that the ELCA is one interdependent church and helps to keep the program—particularly the health plan—affordable for congregations of lesser means.

The Board of Pensions has a three-tier rate structure (e.g., member only, member and spouse (or children), and member, spouse and children) with six rate classes. Each synod is assigned the rate class that will produce contributions that are closely aligned with the expected cost of coverage in that synod. As a result, each synod covers its expected cost of coverage and salary-based sharing takes place within each synod.

This arrangement originally was intended as a way for larger congregations to support smaller congregations. In practice, that is not what is happening. Small congregations far outnumber the large ones, so it is nearly impossible for the system to work as originally intended. Furthermore, many larger congregations sponsor lower-paid lay employees as well as higher-paid clergy. As a result some larger congregations actually benefit from the sharing concept.

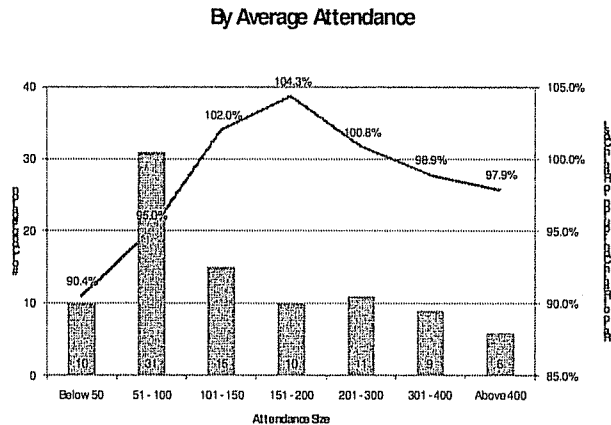
The Board of Pensions has analyzed the 2007 health contributions of the sponsoring congregations in the Southwestern Texas Synod and found the same pattern. Of the 170 congregations in the synod, 124 currently are sponsoring one or more members in the ELCA benefits programs. Eliminating members who are either over age 65 or waiving ELCA health coverage because they are covered by a spouse's plan, there are 92 congregations in the analysis. These congregations sponsor a total of 155 employees, including 102 pastors, 52 non-rostered lay employees, and one associate in ministry). The analysis focuses on the ratio of the "health contribution" to "health cost," which is defined as the contribution that would apply if the contributions did not vary by compensation.

Southwestern Texas Synod (Rate Class 3)

Family coverage

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009 with salary increase of:</u>					
		<u>0%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>5%</u>
Defined Compensation							
Annual	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,500	\$51,000	\$51,500	\$52,000	\$52,500
Monthly	\$4,167	\$4,167	\$4,208	\$4,250	\$4,292	\$4,333	\$4,375
Health contribution							
% of compensation	31.8%	32.4%	32.4%	32.4%	32.4%	32.4%	32.4%
Monthly amount	\$1,325	\$1,350	\$1,364	\$1,377	\$1,391	\$1,404	\$1,418
Increase over 2008		1.9%	2.9%	3.9%	4.9%	6.0%	7.0%
Compensation plus health							
Monthly amount	\$5,492	\$5,517	\$5,572	\$5,627	\$5,682	\$5,737	\$5,793
Increase over 2008		0.5%	1.5%	2.5%	3.5%	4.5%	5.5%

Ratio of Health Contribution to Health Cost



The graph above shows the ratio of the “health contribution” to “health cost” by average attendance. For congregations with average worship attendance of 100 or fewer (41 out of 92), the ratio is less than 100 percent. For these congregations, the average compensation of sponsored members is below the synod average, so they are benefitting from the sharing pool. For congregations with average worship attendance of 101 to 200 (25 out of 92), the ratio is greater than 100 percent. For these congregations, the average compensation of sponsored members is above the synod average, so they are contributing to the sharing pool. For larger congregations with average worship attendance of more than 200 (26 out of 92), many are sponsoring lay employees as well as pastors. As a result the average compensation is somewhat lower than in the 101 to 200 group and the ratios range from 98 percent to 101 percent.

The Board of Pensions believes that ELCA health costs are being shared as intended. Contributions for 2009 break down as follows:

1. For sponsored members with defined compensation up to \$46,600, the minimum rates apply; minimum rates are approximately 86 percent of the synod average.
2. For sponsored members with defined compensation between \$46,600 and \$63,100, the percentage rates apply.
3. For sponsored members with defined compensation above \$63,100, the maximum rates apply; maximum rates are approximately 116 percent of the synod average.

Based on this summary, the Board of Pensions believes that the level of subsidies inherent in this contribution structure should not materially disadvantage any group of congregations.

Finally, the plan is financially efficient, paying out more than 90 cents in health benefits for every dollar of health plan contributions received. Although the Board of Pensions acknowledges that the cost of the plan is high, that is due both to the high average age of the covered population and escalating health care costs nationally. While the Board of Pensions cannot control directly either of these cost drivers, it is proactive in trying to reduce the demand for health care within the population through the comprehensive wellness program. The ELCA Board of Pensions is committed to doing everything possible to improve the health status of plan members because improving plan members’ health has multiple benefits, not the least of which is better management of health care costs.

Possibility of benefit level options (e.g., higher deductibles and optional coverage)

The resolution also states that congregations are

considering other sources of medical coverage, apparently out of a desire for more flexibility in the level of benefits provided.

The ELCA philosophy of benefits states that the benefits program should provide adequate financial protection in the event of illness, injury, disability, retirement, or death. The program's cost-sharing features should recognize the relatively low salaries paid to many church workers. Benefits should compare favorably to those available to professionals in other denominations and in secular employment. The ELCA encourages equal treatment for all church workers, both to avoid gaps in coverage and, most important, to help keep benefits from becoming an issue in the call process.

The Board of Pensions understands that congregations are looking for more flexibility. Hewitt Associates, in its comprehensive review of the ELCA benefits program earlier this year, suggested that additional flexibility in contributions and/or benefits could improve the level of satisfaction of congregations and other sponsoring employers. While employers generally would appreciate greater flexibility in the level of benefits offered, there is a prevailing view among synod bishops and other church leaders that offering more choice could cause serious unintended consequences. More specifically, pastors who serve congregations of lesser means and who in many cases receive low compensation, would be most likely to receive lower benefits. Furthermore, if benefits varied from congregation to congregation, benefits would become more of an issue in the call process.

In summary, the Board of Pensions acknowledges that rising health care costs are a continuing challenge for this church. The Board of Pensions philosophy of benefits provides a sound basis for sharing these costs among sponsoring employers and between employers and health plan members. The Board of Pensions encourages an ongoing dialogue within this church on these issues and welcomes those who have concerns to contact us.

Church Council Action:

To express gratitude to the Southwestern Texas Synod for its resolution related to the cost of medical coverage through the ELCA Board of Pensions; and

To acknowledge that rising health care costs continue to be a challenge for this church; and

To affirm that the Board of Pensions' philosophy of benefits provides a sound basis for sharing the cost of health care both among sponsoring employers and between employers and health plan members; and

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

J. VOTING MEMBER ALLOCATION

Alaska Synod (1A)

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is the body of Christ in which each person, church, synod, and region is recognized as an integral part; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is committed to the teachings of Jesus that include justice and fairness for all affiliated bodies of the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission ministry of the ELCA is to "build capacity to start new and renew congregations that are healthy and missional in diverse and multicultural contexts"; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Synod of the ELCA is in its entirety diverse and multicultural; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has acted in an unjust and unfair manner in eliminating a voting member from the Alaska Synod for all future ELCA Churchwide Assemblies; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Cluster of the Alaska Synod request in the strongest terms possible that the ELCA Office of the Secretary and the Presiding Bishop reverse the action of denying the Alaska Synod fair and just representation at all future ELCA Churchwide Assemblies, specifically that the Alaska Synod remain entitled to the following representation to each and every Churchwide Assembly: one clergy, one layperson, one Alaska Native, the chair of the Alaska Synod Council, and the bishop of the Alaska Synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Cluster of the Alaska Synod memorialize this resolution to the Alaska Synod Council and the Alaska Synod Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Synod Assembly pass this resolution in its 2008 Synod Assembly and send it to the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA requesting action prior to the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Executive Committee Action:

At its October 16, 2008, meeting the Executive Committee voted [EC08.10.22d]:

To receive the resolution of the Alaska Synod related to the synod's voting member allocation for the Churchwide Assembly;

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Secretary with a 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.

Response from the Office of the Secretary:

The number of voting members of the Churchwide Assembly that each synod elects is specified by ELCA bylaw 12.41.11., which states:

Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 5,800 baptized members in the synod. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. The synodical bishop, who is *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. There shall be at least two voting members from each synod. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect.

The allocations for each assembly are based on the baptized membership and number of congregations reported by the synod for the third year past. For example, the allocation for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly is based on the statistics reported for 2006 because synods need to be informed of the number of people to elect in 2007.

In order to keep the number of voting members of the Churchwide Assembly at approximately 1,000, the formula has varied slightly over the years. In 1987, the formula specified one voting member per 6,500 baptized members and one voting member for every 50 congregations. In the constitutional amendments approved by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, the formula was changed to that cited above, reflecting the decline in baptized membership in this church. No change in the formulation is proposed for the 2009–2011 biennium.

The history of the Alaska Synod's number of congregations and baptized membership is detailed below:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Congregations</u>	<u>Baptized Membership</u>
1987	27	9,615
1988	28	9,487
1989	28	9,638
1990	28	9,690
1991	29	9,911
1992	30	10,199
1993	30	10,304
1994	30	10,588
1995	32	10,601
1996	30	10,750
1997	30	10,957
1998	30	11,074
1999	30	11,218
2000	30	11,343
2001	30	10,778
2002	31	10,804
2003	31	10,629
2004	31	10,655
2005	31	10,475
2006	31	10,396

In addition to the voting members allocated by the constitution, because of the ELCA's commitment to inclusiveness in its assemblies (5.01.f.), the Church Council allocates additional voting members to certain synods. The history of Alaska's allocation of voting members is as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Additional Members</u>	<u>Stipulations</u>	<u>Total Members</u>
1989	3	2 of whom must be Native Alaskans	5
1991	4	At least three must be Native Alaskans (total voting members from synod would be six: two clergy, including bishop, two lay women, and two lay men)	6
1993	4	At least three must be Native Alaskans (total voting members from synod would be six: two clergy, including bishop, two lay women, and two lay men)	6
1995	2	At least two must be Native Alaskans (total voting members from synod would be five: two clergy, including bishop, one lay woman, and two lay men)	5
1997	2	At least one must be an Alaska Native person	5
1999	2	At least one must be an Alaska Native person	5
2001	2	At least one must be an Alaska Native person	5
2003	2	At least one must be an Alaska Native person	5
2005	2	At least one must be an Alaska Native person	5
2007	1	Must be an Alaska Native person	4
2009	1	Must be an Alaska Native person	4

In terms of the formula for allocation of voting members, the baptized membership and the number of congregations of the Alaska Synod have not changed

substantially since the beginning of the ELCA. Due to changes in the way statistics are rounded, in 1995 the number of voting members based on the formula

increased from two to three. At the same time, the number of additional voting members decreased. Furthermore, because of the reformulation in the 2005 constitution of the base on which voting members are calculated and because more synods are meeting the representational goals through normal elections processes, the number of additional voters and the number of synods receiving additional voters were reduced for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly.

Allocating voting members involves consideration of the demographics of this whole church as well as of its individual synods. Every effort is made to treat synods fairly and consistently, considering their size and contexts. Changes cannot be made for one synod without consideration of the allocation to every synod.

Synods were informed of the number of voting members they needed to elect for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly in a letter from the Office of the Secretary dated August 15, 2007. Elections occurred at the 2008 Synod Assemblies. As is clear from the above chart, the allocation to the Alaska Synod was the same as it had been for the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, an allocation that the synod would have received in 2005. Because of the issues of timeliness and fairness to other synods, the Office of the Secretary recommends that the Church Council decline to change the voting member allocation for the Alaska Synod for the 2009 Churchwide Assembly. The Office of the Secretary will undertake a review of the allocation of voting members for the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council Action:

To receive the background information provided by the Office of the Secretary to the Alaska Synod resolution on allocation of voting members; and

To request that the Office of the Secretary provide the background information to the Alaska Synod as the response of the Church Council to the resolution.