



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

STUDY GUIDE

Faith and Sexism Justice

A Call to Action

Leader's Welcome

Welcome to the study guide for the ELCA social statement *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*. Adopted by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, this document relies on the Gospel promise of abundance, justice, and new creation in Christ to name the ways the sins of patriarchy and sexism harm *all* people, particularly women and girls, whatever their age or racial or gender identity. Drawing on Lutheran theology, the social statement teaches that God's people are called to resist sexism and pursue gender justice for others and for themselves.

Faith, Sexism, and Justice is the culmination of a seven-year process across the ELCA. Led by a national task force and supported by synod-based volunteers, the process of the social statement was like a long conversation among ELCA members. The social statement is designed to help people hear God's promise of abundant life and call for justice, see the complex harm caused by sexism, and pursue gender justice through personal and collective actions.

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

**—John 10:10b, cited in
Faith, Sexism, and Justice, p. 15**



Leader's Welcome

THE CONTENT OF THE *FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE: A CALL TO ACTION* STUDY GUIDE

The six sessions in this study guide follow the path laid out in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Session One:

All Are Called to Lives of Justice and Abundance

In this session participants hear the Scriptures' promise that God intends all people to experience justice and abundance in their lives.

Session Two:

Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

In this session participants study sin from a Lutheran perspective and examine how the sins of patriarchy and sexism intertwine with other forms of oppression and injustice.

Session Three:

Language and Images for God Matter

In this session participants learn about the variety of images for God in the Scriptures and explore how inclusive and expansive language and images for God are consistent with Lutheran insights.

Session Four:

Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

In this session participants hear the Scriptures' affirmation of the diversity of all of God's creation and the New Testament's promise that the body of Christ is made up of members with a wide range of gifts, identities, and experiences.

Session Five:

Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

In this session participants explore four Lutheran insights—theology of the cross, justification, Christian freedom, and neighbor justice—that empower ELCA members to resist sexism and work for gender justice.

Session Six:

God Calls Us to Action in Community

In this session participants connect neighbor justice to issues in their communities and discern how they might act in the public sphere for gender justice.

Though it is better to complete all six sessions in sequence, they can be completed in any order. If your community is engaging two sessions, starting with session one will introduce participants to the vision of the social statement.



Leader's Welcome

GUIDING HEALTHY CONVERSATIONS

As Lutheran Christians, we recognize that the Holy Spirit is present among us when we gather. We celebrate that God speaks to us through Word and Sacrament—through the Scriptures, the preached Word, baptism and holy communion, and through our words to one another. When we gather to study *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, we trust that God is moving among us as we encounter new ideas and share our beliefs and hopes for justice for neighbors and ourselves.

As you encounter new information and see Lutheran teachings brought to bear on issues related to patriarchy and sexism, pay close attention to how you feel. You might feel curious, anxious, or empowered. Encourage participants to be patient and compassionate as you share your views with others. The study guide addresses complex issues that may affect people in a variety of ways. Several of the sessions refer to difficult topics, such as gender-based violence, homophobia, and racism, which many people have experienced and may reexperience as they use the study guide materials. While leading these sessions, please be attentive to participants' discomforts and needs.

Here are some tips for leading the sessions:

- Speak only for yourself and avoid language that sounds accusatory or lumps people together, such as “those people” or “anyone who believes ...”
- Rather than defend your opinion, listen carefully to others and ask questions that help them express what they're thinking, such as “What's your perspective on ...?” or “How do you understand this?”
- You can also ask people to clarify what they've said by using statements such as “What I heard you saying is ...” or “Is that correct, or what you intended to say?”
- You may ask participants to honor the session as confidential and not share what others said.

Being attentive to your own feelings and listening closely to others will deepen the conversation and create an honest environment where a diversity of voices can be heard.

You may encounter terms that are new to you. Explore the glossary at the end of the social statement for definitions of the terms. (The glossary begins on p. 75.)



Leader's Welcome

DETAILS FOR LEADERS REGARDING THE STUDY GUIDE

Handouts: A handout is included for each session and can be found at the end of each session. A PDF containing all six handouts is available [here](#).

In-person or Virtual Gatherings: The six sessions in the study guide were developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a way of making the study guide available remotely and for a wide variety of people, the activity section of each session can be offered in one of three ways. The session can be offered in person. Or you may use an online meeting platform for discussion only. Finally, you may use an online meeting platform that allows participants to post, view, and discuss their typed comments. If you offer the session virtually, it is a good idea to have an assistant manage the technology and the participants' posts so that you can focus on leading the activity or discussion. For tips on leading online sessions, see, for example, [Tips-for-Using-Zoom.pdf](#) (globallearningpartners.com).

Presenting the Digital Slides:

- To display the study guide slides, which are in PDF format, you will need to use a free PDF reader. Adobe Reader can be found at <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>.
- If you are using Windows 10, you can download a general PDF reader from the Windows store.
- With a PDF reader installed, download the study guide and double-click the file (in your "Downloads" folder) to open it.
- Then, display the slides so that one slide appears on the screen at a time. You may have to select full screen

mode or slide show from the "View" menu selection at the top left to configure this.

- The slides should then display so that either one mouse click or a tap of your space bar will advance to the next slide.

Reading Faith, Sexism, and Justice: Inspired by Martin Luther's Small Catechism and Large Catechism, the text was written in a dual format with a "short statement" and a "full statement." The full statement explains the content of the short statement with insights from Lutheran theology, the Scriptures, and current research to support the vision and content of the social statement.

Session Structure: The basic form of each study session should take about 45 minutes. The six sessions follow a similar structure and involve prayers, hearing from the social statement itself, watching and discussing a video, actively engaging the content of each session, and asking participants how they will live out the insights they have gained from the session. Each session also includes an optional Bible study and an optional conversation. The sessions can be extended to 60 or 90 minutes.

Spanish Resources: The social statement is [available](#) in Spanish (*Fe, sexismo y justicia: Un llamado a la acción*). A Spanish version of this study guide is expected on the ELCA website in the future. For the time being, if you are leading a session, please guide any Spanish-speaking participants to the Spanish version.

Videos for the Sessions: Each session has a video. The link for each video is in the individual session.

Citations and Sources: At the time of publication of this study guide in 2021, the URLs provided were live.



Session 5

Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

GETTING READY

In session four, participants heard *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action's* commitments that God's creation is diverse and that the body of Christ is composed of many diverse members. In this fifth session, participants explore four Lutheran insights that empower ELCA members to resist sexism and work for gender justice. These Lutheran teachings include a theology of the cross, justification, freedom, and neighbor justice. A theology of the cross holds that God is revealed on the cross of Jesus Christ. Lutherans also emphasize the promise that they are justified by grace through faith—not through works. In addition, Lutheran teachings celebrate the gift of Christian freedom—freedom from the power of sin and freedom for others. Finally, Lutherans affirm that justification and freedom lead them to act for justice for self and neighbor (neighbor justice) in the world.

The full text of the social statement can be found here: in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

MANAGING THE TIME TOGETHER

The basic version of each session should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

If your group has 60 or 90 minutes, you can use the extra 15 or 30 minutes to do one or two of the following.

You can:

- explore the passages from the Scriptures, or
- engage the In the Coming Week activity, or
- reflect on the Continuing the Conversation prompts.

If the session is offered during a regularly scheduled 45-minute education gathering but you want to meet for a longer time, pause at 45 or 60 minutes and give people the chance to quietly leave the session.



Session 5

Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR A 45-MINUTE SESSION

- Welcome, Opening Prayer, Session Objectives, and Context (4 minutes)
- Optional: Encounter the Scriptures (10-15 minutes)
- Explore *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Theology of the Cross, Justification, Freedom, and Neighbor Justice* (5 minutes)
- Sharing Stories Video “Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice” (10 minutes)
- Discuss the Video (7 minutes)
- Engage “A Theology of the Cross, Justification, Freedom, and Neighbor Justice” in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* (11 minutes)
- Live Out the Social Statement’s Call to Action (6 minutes)
- Optional: In the Coming Week Activity
- Optional: Continuing the Conversation (10-15 minutes)
- Closing Prayer (2 minutes)

OPTIONAL: SING TOGETHER

If you have 60 or 90 minutes, consider beginning and ending each session with a hymn. Try singing part of the hymn at the opening of the session and conclude with the rest of the hymn.

The hymns can be found in the following sources: *All Creation Sings* (ACS), *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW), *Libro de Liturgia y Cántico* (LLC), and *This Far by Faith* (TFF).

The following hymns resonate with the themes of session five:

- Build a Longer Table, ACS 1062
- For All the Faithful Women, ELW 419
- Guide My Feet, TFF 153
- Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love, ELW 708
- This Little Light of Mine, ELW 677
- What Does the Lord Require of You?, ACS 1057
- When the Poor Ones/Cuando el pobre, ELW 725
- Come to Be Our Hope, O Jesus, ACS 904

DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY SECTION

This session has three different options for the section titled Engage a Theology of the Cross, Justification, Freedom, and Neighbor Justice in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*. You can use the in-person, hands-on activity. Or you may use an online meeting platform for discussion only. Finally, you may use an online meeting platform that allows participants to submit and discuss their typed comments.



Session 5

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THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS ARE NEEDED FOR THE IN-PERSON SESSION:

- Bibles
- Access to hymns
- Print handouts for the participants, found at the end of this session. These include Bible references, quotes from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, and other necessary materials.
- All the session handouts are also in one document at https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/FSJ_Study_Guide_Session_ALL.pdf.
- Sharing Stories Video: The URL for the video is provided in the session.

Materials to have available: The participants will break into groups of four. Each group needs a poster-size sheet of paper divided into four sections and markers in four different colors. Each group will need a table where they can write on the poster paper.

If your group chooses to encounter the Scriptures, consider four different methods to read the Bible: devotional, historical, literary, and Lutheran theological. For more on this fourfold approach to the Scriptures, see https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Book_Of_Faith_4_Methods.pdf.

LEADER'S PREPARATION AND MATERIALS

Read the welcome to the **entire** study guide.

Read this study guide session.

You may want to have a paper copy with you when you lead the session.

Read pp. 42-43 and 53 on a theology of the cross; pp. 20-21 and 46-47 on justification; pp. 18, 20, 41, and 47 on freedom; and pp. 20-21 and 36-37 on neighbor justice in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Preview the video. Professor Caryn Riswold describes the gifts of a theology of the cross, justification, freedom, and neighbor justice that Lutherans bring to the work of gender justice.

If you know who the participants will be before the session meets, consider sending them a welcome email. You can encourage participants to read articles 4, 5, 7, 18, 19, and 21 on pp. 2-3, 6-7 in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Participants may also skim pp. 42-43 and 53 on a theology of the cross; pp. 20-21 and 46-47 on justification; pp. 18, 20, 41, and 47 on freedom; and pp. 20-21 and 36-37 on neighbor justice in the social statement.

Finally, you could ask participants to view the short video "What Do Lutherans Say About ... Gender Justice," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWIEKGleQa0>.

Set up the space so that everyone can see the screen, and test the audio to be sure everyone can hear the Sharing Stories video.

Consider sending an email to participants a few days after the session to encourage them to complete one of the In the Coming Week activities.



Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

WELCOME AND CONTEXT (4 MINUTES)

The leader reads the following introduction to ELCA social statements.

ELCA social statements help us make sense of complex social and ethical concerns in our communities and the world, such as education and peace. These statements provide scriptural, theological, and contemporary insights about social issues. They govern the institutional witness of the ELCA and its teachings on social questions. ELCA social statements help communities and individuals think about, discuss together, and discern paths forward as we participate in God's work in the world. Many ELCA members are involved in creating social statements, and they are adopted by a two-thirds vote of an ELCA churchwide assembly.

“A Lutheran view of the cross reminds us that we see God hidden in suffering.”

(FSJ, p. 43)



Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

OPENING PRAYER

The leader reads the following prayer aloud.

God of the cross, help us hear and respond to the cries for justice in community and in our own lives. Encourage us to trust that you are present among those who suffer. Empower us to learn new things in the hardened places of our minds. Guide us to places of freedom so that we may fully live in that abundant space as your children. Amen.



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SESSION OBJECTIVES

Someone reads aloud.

We will explore how Lutheran insights about a theology of the cross, justification, freedom, and neighbor justice guide the social statement.

We will connect these four Lutheran insights to the pursuit of gender justice.

We will connect one of these Lutheran insights to our individual and communal pursuit of gender justice.

(In the 60 or 90 minute session, we will hear how the Scriptures frame these four Lutheran insights.)



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OUR CONTEXT FOR SESSION FIVE

The leader reads aloud.

In 2019, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly approved *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*. This was a significant step toward equity, yet the church has a long way to go to advance gender justice. As the ELCA promotes gender justice, it is important for Lutherans to realize that this call to action springs from four deeply held Lutheran insights. First, a theology of the cross holds that God is revealed on the cross of Jesus Christ. Second, Lutherans emphasize the promise that they are justified by grace through faith—not through works. Third, Lutheran teachings celebrate the gift of Christian freedom—freedom *from* the power of sin and freedom *for* others. Finally, Lutherans affirm that justification and freedom lead them to acts of justice for self and neighbor (neighbor justice) in the world.

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These four central insights guide how Lutherans understand and respond to injustice and gender injustice. For example, when we consider the experiences of women who seek to migrate to the United States from Latin America and the Caribbean, we must recognize and respond to the terrifying reality that many of these women are sexually assaulted on their journey.¹ Lutherans should ask how the church can promote justice for these women who have experienced this horrific gender-based violence. *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* contends that pursuing gender justice for these women and girls flows from the core Lutheran teachings that God is with us in the midst of suffering, that we are justified, and that we are therefore free to pursue justice for ourselves and our neighbor.



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OPTIONAL: ENCOUNTER THE SCRIPTURES (10-15 MINUTES)

Someone reads aloud.

The apostle Paul explains the centrality of the cross to the Christians of Corinth. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18, 21-25.

Someone else reads aloud.

The apostle Paul teaches the Christians in Rome that they are justified by God's grace. Read Romans 3:23-26, 28.

Someone else reads aloud.

Paul teaches the Christians of Galatia about Christian freedom and how it is part of serving the neighbor. Read Galatians 5:1, 13-16a.

Spend one minute in silence, reflecting on these passages from the Scriptures.

“Justification helps us to see gender justice from the perspective of faith.”

(FSJ, p. 47)



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Choose two of the following questions and discuss them for 10 minutes. You may want to break people into groups of three or four to give everyone the chance to contribute.

- A** What does the cross of Jesus Christ do or feel like in these Scripture passages?
- B** What does the apostle Paul teach about being justified by grace?
- C** What do I hear God saying to my community or to me about Christian freedom and neighbor justice?
- D** Of these four insights (theology of the cross, justification, freedom, or neighbor justice), which one empowers you to work for gender justice?



Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

EXPLORE *FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE: A THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS, JUSTIFICATION, FREEDOM, AND NEIGHBOR JUSTICE (5 MINUTES)*

Someone reads aloud from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

God is known on the cross and present in human suffering. “[A] theology of the cross can remind us that Jesus Christ suffers on our account. ... We might endure violence because we confess faith in Jesus Christ, ... but women and girls are not called to endure gender-based violence. ... [A] Lutheran view of the cross reminds us that we see God hidden in suffering. ... [W]e can confess that God is present even in the depths of our worst experiences.” (*FSJ*, p. 43)

Someone else reads aloud from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Justification leads to freedom. “Lutherans confess that we are justified by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. ... This promise means we are freed from bondage to the people and things we trust and love more than God or the ways we try to justify ourselves. ... God’s grace frees us and empowers us to love others.” (*FSJ*, p. 2)

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Someone else reads aloud from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Freedom is part of serving the neighbor. “Because we are freed in Christ for others, we are able to respond to God’s call to love our neighbor as ourselves. In society, neighbor love takes the form of neighbor justice.”

(FSJ, p. 20)

Someone else reads aloud from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Neighbor justice is lived out in the world. “We respond to ... God’s gift by loving others. ... [T]his responsive love takes the form of justice for the neighbor in an unjust world. ... [W]e seek justice for ourselves and our neighbors within congregations, religious and secular institutions, governments, and societies. This love includes gender justice.” (FSJ, p. 21)

Spend one minute in silence to reflect on the words from the social statement.

**“For freedom Christ
has set us free.”**

(Galatians 5:1)



Session 5

Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

SHARING STORIES VIDEO: "LUTHERAN INSIGHTS PROMOTE GENDER JUSTICE" (10 MINUTES)

The link to the video for this session is <https://vimeo.com/470365669/ef87c0c445>.

DISCUSS THE VIDEO (7 MINUTES)

After viewing the video, discuss one of the following questions. You may want to break into groups of three or four to give everyone the chance to contribute.

- A** At what point in the video were you most engaged, and why?
- B** Which of the Lutheran insights that Professor Riswold discussed is the most important to your own faith? Explain why.
- C** How has the cross been used to hurt people? How does a theology of the cross empower people?



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ENGAGE A THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS, JUSTIFICATION, FREEDOM, AND NEIGHBOR JUSTICE IN *FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE* (10 MINUTES)

In-person Activity

STEP ONE: Setup. Break into groups of four. Each group needs a large piece of poster paper and four markers in four different colors. Write the four Lutheran insights in one of the four boxes.

STEP TWO: Word Association. Using a pen, each participant writes at least one word in each box that they associate with the specific Lutheran insight. These words can reflect your personal experiences or come from religious teachings or the Bible. For example, you might associate a theology of the cross with Jesus' mother, Mary. Take two minutes to write down any words that come to mind.

STEP THREE: Review. Take one to two minutes to read what others wrote.

STEP FOUR: Sharing. In the small groups, have everyone share which **one** of the Lutheran insights (theology of the cross, justification, freedom, or neighbor justice) they think is the most useful for them as they work for gender justice. This sharing should take about 5 minutes.

A Theology of the Cross	Justification
Freedom	Neighbor Justice



Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

Virtual Activity

The leader should moderate the discussion to ensure that everyone gets the chance to contribute. Participants can be put in small groups of three or four.

Using a shared electronic document or online meeting platform, ask each participant to post their answers to the following prompts. You may use a chat function, or a shared document, or a platform to have participants post their responses.

Create four separate pages or documents on which participants can post one- or two-word responses. You may use a simple document, a chat, or a platform that allows individuals to use virtual sticky notes. Each page should have one of the four Lutheran themes at the top of the page.

STEP ONE: Word Association. Post one or two words that you associate with two of the four Lutheran insights. These words can reflect your experiences or come from religious teachings or the Bible. You have two minutes to post any words that come to mind.

STEP TWO: Review. Take a moment to read what others have written.

STEP THREE: Sharing. Share (orally or in writing) which of the Lutheran insights (theology of the cross, justification, freedom, or neighbor justice) is the most useful for you as you work for gender justice. This sharing should take about 5 minutes.



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Virtual Discussion Questions

The leader should moderate the discussion to ensure that everyone gets the chance to contribute. Engage one of the prompts below.

- A** What words, life experiences, or Bible passages do you associate with one of the Lutheran insights (theology of the cross, justification, freedom, neighbor justice)?
- B** Of the four Lutheran insights, which one most empowers you to work for gender justice for self and neighbor, and why?

A Theology of the Cross	Justification
Freedom	Neighbor Justice



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LIVE OUT THE SOCIAL STATEMENT'S CALL TO ACTION (6 MINUTES)

During the Session

Choose one of the following activities to work on in pairs.

- A** Share the name of one person you will contact to discuss today's session. What will you tell them was the most useful takeaway for you? Why was it useful?
- B** How might one of the Lutheran insights lead you to take a concrete action for gender justice? (The Lutheran insights include a theology of the cross, justification, freedom, and neighbor justice.)
- C** Which of the four Lutheran insights would you like to know more about, and what people or resources could you engage to learn more? (The Lutheran insights include a theology of the cross, justification, freedom, and neighbor justice.)



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OPTIONAL: IN THE COMING WEEK (10 MINUTES)

Take a few minutes to read the optional activities below. Next, select one of these activities that you will pursue. Then reach out to another participant and agree to check in later in the week to discuss what you did to foster gender justice.

- A** Discuss the word association and mapping activity that we completed with someone who did not attend today's session.
- B** Article 26 of the social statement states: "Teachers and theologians need to be honest about how church teachings have been misused to support patriarchy and sexism" (*FSJ*, p. 52). Now ask yourself, what teachings about the Scriptures or from theology do you think have been misused to support patriarchy and sexism? Consider discussing your reflection with a friend.
- C** Read a womanist reading of *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* in "Silent Voices, Still ... But Faith ... Lifting Up the Voices of the Daughters of Hagar in 'Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action'" by Beverly R. Wallace, published in the journal *Currents in Theology and Mission* (2020).

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- D** As you think about Christian freedom, consider your personal privilege(s). Recognize that individuals have differing degrees of privilege because of their biological sex, race, age, ability, gender, income, education, or citizenship status. Read the glossary entry on the concept of privilege in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* (FSJ, p. 79), and then reflect on the following questions.
- Where do I experience a loss of freedom or privilege because of my identity?
 - Where do I enjoy unearned advantages or privileges in my daily life?
 - How might I live in Christian freedom—even if it feels limited—to support self and others in the quest for gender justice?
- E** Investigate the resources in the Explore section at the end of this session.



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OPTIONAL: CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION (10-15 MINUTES)

Discuss two of the prompts below.

- A** What fills me with hope or delights me in this session about the four Lutheran insights that promote gender justice? (They are a theology of the cross, justification, freedom, and neighbor justice.)
- B** What challenges me or confuses me in this session about the four Lutheran insights that encourage Lutherans to act for gender justice? (They are a theology of the cross, justification, freedom, and neighbor justice.)
- C** Of the four Lutheran insights described in this session, which one most empowers me to work for gender justice and why is it empowering?
- D** What other Lutheran teachings or insights motivate me to work for gender justice for self and neighbor?



Session 5

Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

CLOSING PRAYER: (2 MINUTES)

Faithful God, reveal your truth with unmistakable clarity. Lead us to live the way of the cross, loving neighbors. Give us the freedom of faith to live as your courageous children in the world. Amen.



End Notes

URLs were accessed between June and December 2021.

Session One:

All Are Called to Lives of Justice and Abundance

1. “Gender-based Violence” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2015), 18, https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Gender_Based_Violence_SM.pdf.
2. “Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America,” Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, April 2018, <https://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VoYC-LGBTQ-Brief-Chapin-Hall-2018.pdf>.
3. “Racial and Ethnic Disparities Continue in Pregnancy-Related Deaths,” Center for Disease Control, September 5, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0905-racial-ethnic-disparities-pregnancy-deaths.html>.

Session Two:

Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

1. *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, (1991), <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Church-in-Society>.
2. Johnson, Allan G., “The Tree as Metaphor,” *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), <https://www.agjohnson.us/essays/tree>.
3. “45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women: Executive Summary—Clergy Questionnaire Report 2015” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2015), https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/45th_Anniversary_of_the_Ordination_Women_Ordained_Full_Report.pdf.
4. “Thursdays in Black,” World Council of Churches, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black>.

Session Three:

Language and Images for God Matter

1. Luther, Martin, “Against Latomus, 1521,” LW 32:196.



End Notes

Session Four:

Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

1. Hess, Cynthia, et al., "Providing Unpaid Household and Care Work in the United States: Uncovering Inequality," Institute for Women's Policy Research, <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IWPR-Providing-Unpaid-Household-and-Care-Work-in-the-United-States-Uncovering-Inequality.pdf>.
2. Sears, Brad, and Christy Mallory, "Documented Evidence of Employment Discrimination and Its Effects on LGBT People," UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, July 2011, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/employ-discrim-effect-lgbt-people/>.
3. "Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People From Accessing Health Care," Center for American Progress, Jan. 18, 2018, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2018/01/18/445130/discrimination-prevents-lgbtq-people-accessing-health-care/>.
4. ELCA Office of the Secretary, August 2015.
5. "Suicide and Violence Prevention," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/suicide-violence-prevention.htm>.

Session Five:

Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

1. Parish, Anja, "Gender-based Violence Against Women: Both Cause for Migration and Risk Along the Journey," Migration Policy Institute, Sept. 7, 2017, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/gender-based-violence-against-women-both-cause-migration-and-risk-along-journey>.
2. Wallace, Beverly R., "Silent Voices, Still ... but Faith ... Lifting Up the Voices of the Daughters of Hagar in 'Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action,'" *Currents in Theology and Mission*, April 2020, <http://currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/235/260>.

Session Six:

God Calls Us to Action in Community

1. "Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths—United States, 2007-2016," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Sept. 6, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6835a3.htm>.



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Androcentric: Male-centered, focused on men.

Binary (Gender Binary): The concept that there are only two genders, man or woman, which are inherently distinct and “opposite.”

Complementary/Complementarity: The belief that God gave men and women inherently different roles and purposes that complement each other to mutual benefit. Men’s roles have often related to leadership and decision-making; women’s roles have included obeying males and caring for others. These roles are informed by the structural dynamic of dominance (male) and submission (female). The imbalance of power in the relationship contributes to male privilege.

Domestic violence: See entry for “Gender-based violence.”

Equality: The idea that people have the same rights and should receive the same resources. Equality can refer to the equal worth of all people or to people having equal experiences of their rights and their potential in life.

Equity: Fair treatment of people according to their needs.

The principle of equity takes into account that people exist on inherently uneven playing fields due to poverty, sexism, racism, etc. Because of these different contexts, individuals or groups may require different resources and support to ensure that they have the same rights and abilities to make choices as others do (such as having a choice of quality doctors, careers, neighborhoods, etc.).

The goal of equity is to ensure each person receives what each person needs to flourish and is not disadvantaged.

Ex. A simple example of equality in public restrooms would be having changing tables in all restrooms, because male caregivers may also need a space to change diapers. A simple example of equity in public restrooms would be putting more stalls in women’s restrooms in order to serve the specific needs women have.

Expansive language: Language (or imagery) referring to God that is not limited to humanity or human categories: water, a rock, a hiding place, a mighty fortress, etc. See “inclusive language.”

Gender: Identities, roles, behaviors, and attributes that cultures, societies, and individuals shape, most often linked to femininity and masculinity. The most common gender identities are woman/girl and man/boy, but other identities exist. For more, see “gender non-conforming.”

Gender identity: How a person understands one’s own gender; one’s internal sense of one’s gender.

Gender justice: Gender justice is expressed through equality and balanced power relations for people of all genders to live into their individual callings. Gender justice is sought by eliminating power imbalances among people at individual and societal levels, as well as eliminating discrimination against women and people who do not adhere to stereotypes associated with men and women.



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Gender non-conforming, Non-binary, Genderqueer:

Words that people who do not identify as “men” or “women” use to describe their gender (not sexuality). Their gender identity and/or biological characteristics may not completely fit with the dominant and expected ways of acting as, or being, a man or woman or a boy or girl. Each term might be used differently by different people, as an umbrella term or as a specific label for their gender identity. This document uses all three terms in an effort to be inclusive. (Terminology will change over time. Readers are referred to contemporary communities for up-to-date language.) For more, see “gender,” “intersex,” “transgender,” and “queer.”

Gender-based violence: Physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or other personal harm inflicted on someone for gender-based reasons, including but not limited to intimate-partner violence and domestic violence. This can include such things as catcalling women or bullying boys who are not perceived as “man enough.” Perpetrators commit gender-based violence to assert power over someone.

Genderqueer: See “Gender non-conforming, Non-binary, Genderqueer.”

Hierarchy: A system in which groups are ranked and certain groups have power over other groups. Sometimes this power over others leads to more value being assigned to the group or individuals with dominance.

Human trafficking: Coercion, abduction, and/or imprisonment of people for forced labor, often of a sexual nature. This problem is pervasive around the world, including in the U.S. Also known as modern-day slavery.

Inclusive language: Language that includes all genders when referring to humanity or God, for instance, using humans or humankind to talk about humanity, rather than man or mankind. See “expansive language.”

Intersecting, intersectionality: Humans have multiple aspects to their identities, including gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, social class, etc. These aspects of human identities are tied to systemic privilege and oppression; gender is tied to sexism, ethnicity is tied to racism, etc. Intersectionality describes the ways different forms of discrimination and systemic oppression affect each other and shape the lives of individuals and communities in distinct ways. All human identities and all forms of privilege and oppression are made up of many intersections.

Ex. A woman of African descent may have a Ph.D. and make a healthy salary, but she will still suffer from racism and sexism. However, she would experience that racism and sexism differently from how a man of African descent, a white woman, or an impoverished person might experience them. The injustices she faces, therefore, may have solutions different from those for other people.



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Intersex: As described by the Intersex Society of North America, a term for a variety of conditions people are born with: physical characteristics, anatomy, and/or genes that vary from standards set by doctors' expectations for being "female" or "male." The term refers to the fact of biological variation among humans. Some people identify as intersex, rather than using the term solely to refer to a condition; others may also identify as gender non-conforming or a similar term.

Justice: Generally, justice refers to an underlying sense of fairness, right treatment, and reciprocity. This statement emphasizes the aspects of justice that include fair and equal treatment under the law, ending oppression based on power differences, and, as emphasized in the Bible, a right relationship with God and within community.

Neighbor justice: A term proposed in this social statement that is rooted in the biblical directive to "love your neighbor as yourself." This term expresses the idea that faith is active in love and love necessarily calls for justice in relationships and in the structures of society. Neighbor justice is meeting neighbors' needs across the globe and in our local communities.

Non-binary: See "Gender non-conforming, Non-binary, Genderqueer."

Objectification: Thinking of or portraying people as objects, erasing their humanity, emotions, and rights.

Ex. Catcalling, advertisements that use sexualized images to sell merchandise, and stories in which female characters exist only as props for male characters.

Patriarchy: A social system that enables men to have more power than, and power over, women and people who do not conform to socially accepted gender roles. A patriarchal social system is dominated by men, identified with men, and centered on men's actions, voices, and authority. In various ways, this kind of social system operates to control women, girls, and people who do not fit society's predominant ideas of maleness and masculinity.

Privilege: This term refers to the relationships between groups of people in society, to the social advantage or special treatment of a group or persons in a group. This advantage is unearned and results from how a group's identity is perceived as "normal" or "better." Privilege is lived out on an individual and societal scale. Privilege is not something a person deliberately opts into or out of, nor is it experienced by everyone in the same ways.

Ex. A man benefits from male privilege when his opinion is subconsciously valued more highly in a meeting, when he is paid more for equal work, or when he walks down a street without harassment or fear of sexual assault. White people benefit from white privilege when they can shop without being followed or monitored by staff who think they may shoplift, or when the majority of heroes in textbooks and movies look like them. For a white male, the combination of white privilege and male privilege can work together. A white man may have fewer risk factors for some stress-related illnesses such as Type 2 diabetes, while his complaints of pain are more likely to be taken seriously by his doctor. For more, see "intersectionality."



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Queer: Umbrella term regarding sex, gender, and sexual orientation, often used by individuals who identify as somehow “other” from society’s sexual, romantic, or gender norms.

Although historically used in a derogatory manner, the term has since been reclaimed as a positive label by some members within that community.

Rape culture: An environment in which the objectification of and assault on human bodies, particularly in a sexual way, is normalized and tolerated. Rape culture primarily harms women and girls. Blaming rape victims for their assaults and maintaining a biased justice system are both parts of rape culture and how it is propagated.

Reproductive health care: Health services related to the reproductive system at all stages of life for all genders, including the menstrual cycle, fertility, and cancer.

Sex (biological): A scientific label assigned at birth that describes an individual’s reproductive organs and whether they have XX chromosomes (female) or XY chromosomes (male). People whose biology varies from standards set by doctors’ expectations of being “female” or “male” are typically called “intersex.” Biological sex characteristics and traits of people who are said to be female or male are also variable.

Sexism: Refers to what supports male privilege and reinforces prejudice and discrimination against women and girls due to their gender and against people who do not conform to socially accepted gender roles. Human actions and speech can be sexist, as can institutions, policies, and practices.

Sexuality: A complex individual and social concept. Individually, sexuality includes the romantic and/or sexual feelings and desires that a person experiences. People’s sexuality is also influenced by the social and cultural forces in which they find themselves.

Toxic masculinity: Refers to forms of masculinity that emphasize aggression, power, and control and sometimes violent or unhealthy sexuality. It deemphasizes weakness, caring, and vulnerability. Masculinity itself is not harmful; however, it is described as toxic when these forms of masculinity cultivate harm to self, others, and society. Toxic masculinity limits the humanity and compassion of men.

Transgender: Describes a person whose gender is different from the sex assigned or identified at birth. Some transgender individuals identify as men or as women; others don’t identify with one of those words. Some people use this term to describe their identity; for others it serves as an umbrella term. Over time its meaning may change as language evolves. See “gender non-conforming.”



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Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

EXPLORE FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE: A CALL TO ACTION

God is known on the cross and present in human suffering. “[A] theology of the cross can remind us that Jesus Christ suffers on our account. ... We might endure violence because we confess faith in Jesus Christ, ... but women and girls are not called to endure gender-based violence. ... [A] Lutheran view of the cross reminds us that we see God hidden in suffering. ... [W]e can confess that God is present even in the depths of our worst experiences.” (FSJ, p. 42)

Justification leads to freedom. “Lutherans confess that we are justified by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. ... This promise means we are freed from bondage to the people and things we trust and love more than God or the ways we try to justify ourselves. ... God’s grace frees us and empowers us to love others.” (FSJ, p. 2)

Freedom is part of serving the neighbor. “Because we are freed in Christ for others, we are able to respond to God’s call to love our neighbor as ourselves. In society, neighbor love takes the form of neighbor justice.” (FSJ, p. 20)

Neighbor justice is lived out in the world. “We respond to ... God’s gift by loving others. ... [T]his responsive love takes the form of justice for the neighbor in an unjust world. ... [W]e seek justice for ourselves and our neighbors within congregations, religious and secular institutions, governments, and societies. This love includes gender justice.” (FSJ, p. 21)

Participants are encouraged to read pp. 42-43 and 53 on a theology of the cross, pp. 20-21 and 46-47 on justification; pp. 18, 20, 41, and 47 on freedom; and pp. 20-21 and 36-37 on neighbor justice in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

ENCOUNTER THE SCRIPTURES

1 Corinthians 1:18, 21-25: The apostle Paul explains the centrality of the cross to the Christians of Corinth.

Romans 3:23-26, 28: The apostle Paul teaches the Christians in Rome that they are justified by God’s grace.

Galatians 5:1, 13-16a: Paul teaches the Christians of Galatia about Christian freedom and how it leads to serving the neighbor.

RESOURCES

Documents and history for *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* can be found at <https://www.elca.org/womenandjustice>.

Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action can be found at https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Faith_Sexism_Justice_Social_Statement_Adopted.pdf.

Fe, sexismo y justicia: Un llamado a la acción can be found at https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Fe_sexismo_y_justicia.pdf.

The study guide for *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* can be found at <https://www.elca.org/fsjstudyguide>.

The video for session five, “Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice,” can be found at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8989135/video/470365669>.

“This church’s commitment to neighbor justice compels us to expose how patriarchy and sexism are woven into individual, social, and religious life, causing harm to all people.”

(FSJ, p. 36)



Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

IN THE COMING WEEK

Discuss the word association and mapping activity that we completed with someone who did not attend today's session.

- A** Article 26 of the social statement states: “Teachers and theologians need to be honest about how church teachings have been misused to support patriarchy and sexism” (FSJ, p. 52). Now ask yourself, what teachings about the Scriptures or from theology do you think have been misused to support patriarchy and sexism? Consider discussing your reflection with a friend.
- B** Read a womanist reading of *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* in “Silent Voices, Still...But Faith... Lifting Up the Voices of the Daughters of Hagar in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*” by Beverly R. Wallace, published in the journal *Currents in Theology and Mission* (April 2020), <http://currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/235/260>.
- C** As you think about Christian freedom, consider your personal privilege(s). Recognize that individuals have differing degrees of privilege because of their biological sex, race, age, ability, gender, income, education, or citizenship status. Read the glossary entry on the concept of privilege in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* (FSJ, p. 79), and then reflect on the following questions.
- Where do I experience a loss of freedom or privilege because of my identity?
 - Where do I enjoy unearned advantages or privileges in my daily life?
 - How might I live in Christian freedom—even if it feels limited—to support self and others in the quest for gender justice?
- D** Investigate the resources in the Explore section at the end of this session.

If You Want to Know More About a Theology of the Cross, Justification, Freedom, and Neighbor Justice,

EXPLORE ...

... how Lutherans understand justification, read Psalm 51; John 1; Romans 3; Romans 5; Galatians 3; and Galatians 5. Also explore “The Augsburg Confession,” article IV, “Of Justification,” <https://bookofconcord.org/augsburgconfession.php#article4>.

... the ELCA’s understanding of neighbor justice, read pp. 20–21, 23, 48, and 60 in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan when he was asked, “Who is my neighbor?” See the Gospel of Luke 10:25–37.

... how Lutherans understand justification, read the article “Learning Lutheran Identity” by Kathryn Kleinhans, published in *Living Lutheran* (August 2019), <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2019/08/learning-lutheran-identity/>.

... a theology of the cross, see “Lutheranism 101: Culture or Confession?” by Kathryn Kleinhans, published in *Living Lutheran* (May 2007), <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2007/05/lutheranism-101/>.

... how one’s Christian freedom connects to gender justice, read the article “The Freedom of a Christian to Address Sexism” by Mary J. Streufert, published in the journal *Currents in Theology and Mission* (April 2020), <https://www.currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/229/267>.

... Martin Luther’s understanding of Christian freedom, read his work “The Freedom of a Christian,” https://www.elca500.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Freedom-of-a-Christian_final-proof_3.17.20201.pdf. Also explore the study guide written by Carmelo Santos, [Freedom-of-Christian-Final-7.28.2020.pdf](https://www.elca500.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Freedom-of-Christian-Final-7.28.2020.pdf) (elca500.org).

... privilege, read pp. 31–36 in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.



Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

ACTIVITY

<p>A Theology of the Cross</p>	<p>Justification</p>
<p>Freedom</p>	<p>Neighbor Justice</p>

