

Frequently asked questions about *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action*

What is the most important thing to know about the proposed social statement, *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action*?

The statement contains two versions. The short statement is forty articles and expresses the comprehensive list of convictions and commitments. The full statement includes those same forty articles with explanations of each one, as well as a preface and conclusion, to more thoroughly explore the deeper meaning of the text. These two formats serve different needs, yet both were crafted in the hope that the Holy Spirit will move readers into fruitful understanding, commitment, and action.

The document expresses several deep Christian themes. Grounded in God's intention of abundant life for all, it confesses patriarchy and sexism as sin. It names the resources of the Lutheran faith to address this sin and identifies what needs to be done both in the church and in society.

The social statement is entitled a "call to action" because it is precisely this. It urges members to recognize patriarchy and sexism as sinful and invoke systemic changes which fosters abundant, flourishing life for all persons within both church and society.

What does it mean that this is the "recommended proposed" social statement?

At this point in the process, this document has no official standing as teaching of the ELCA. To become an official social teaching of the ELCA, the document must be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Churchwide Assembly. It has been unanimously recommended for adoption by the Church Council.

What happens next?

This recommended proposed statement was created by the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ. It has been reviewed by the ELCA Conference of Bishops and unanimously recommended by the Church Council. This recommended proposed statement will go to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly in August for consideration. For more information about this process, see the timeline of the social statement at www.ELCA.org/womenandjustice.

Why is the ELCA studying the topic of sexism and gender justice?

The 2009 Churchwide Assembly authorized the development of a social statement on this topic because of memorials from several synods requesting it. In accordance with ELCA processes, a task force was created to study the issues, provide resource material, create a draft, and offer a proposed social statement that will be considered by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

In addition, *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* serves as the ELCA's response to the Lutheran World Federation's "Gender Justice Policy," which calls on all 148 member churches within the LWF to do work within their individual churches to foster gender justice. For more information about this initiative, please visit www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-lwf-gender-justice-policy.

What is a social statement?

ELCA social statements are teaching documents that assist members in forming judgments on social issues. They are meant to aid in communal and individual moral deliberation and moral formation. Social statements also set policy for this church and guide its advocacy and work as a public church. They result from an extensive process of deliberation and are adopted by a two-thirds vote of a churchwide assembly.

How are social statements used?

Social statements state the understanding of this church and govern its policy. They provide the framework for social teaching and ELCA members are encouraged to use them for guidance and discernment, but they do not bind the conscience of church members.

How has the content of this document been determined?

The content and range of issues covered in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* were developed through the ELCA social statement process. The ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ has led the process. The members read, deliberated, and consulted with experts on matters from the Bible to gender theory to sociology and theology. The task force published the study “Faith, Sexism, Justice: Conversations Toward a Social Statement” in 2016 to invite deliberation and response throughout the ELCA. Responses to that study were tabulated and reported to the task force.

Drawing from this learning and the feedback to the study, the task force wrote a draft social statement, which received feedback from across the church during an open comment period. Following the [reception](#) of the draft, the task force reconvened to edit the document, which is now the proposed *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action*.

This proposed social statement represents the task force’s best thinking to date about issues of sexism, patriarchy, and gender justice in both church and society. The task force concluded its work on the behalf of the ELCA by unanimously supporting the proposed statement which was sent to the ELCA Conference of Bishops and the Church Council.

What are the “Implementing Resolutions”?

In addition to the contents of the social statement, *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* also includes seventeen implementing resolutions, which also need to be considered and approved by the Churchwide Assembly. They have also been unanimously recommended by the Church Council. These accompanying implementing resolutions are a set of actions which the ELCA resolves to complete following the approval of the social statement.

Although this list is not exhaustive of what the social statement seeks to accomplish and achieve in the church, these resolutions are a first step in addressing these issues within the ministries and congregations of the ELCA.