

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

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

The statement contains two versions. The short statement is 40 articles and expresses the comprehensive list of convictions and commitments. The full statement includes those same 40 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 titled a "call to action" because it is precisely this. It urges members to recognize patriarchy and sexism as sinful and invoke systemic changes that foster abundant, flourishing life for all persons within both church and society.

Why is the ELCA discussing 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, which was considered and adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

In addition, *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A 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.

How has the content of this document been determined?

The content and range of issues covered in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A 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. 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.

During the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, voting members considered the recommended proposed text and voted on proposed amendments. On Aug. 9, 2019, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* as an official ELCA social statement.

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.

What are the “Implementing Resolutions”?

In addition to the contents of the social statement, *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* also includes 18 implementing resolutions, which were also approved by the Churchwide Assembly. These accompanying implementing resolutions are a set of actions that 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.
