



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

**USER'S GUIDE FOR**  
*Faith, Sexism,*  
*and Justice:*  
*A Lutheran Call*  
*to Action*



# USER'S GUIDE FOR

## *Faith, Sexism, and Justice:*

### *A Lutheran Call to Action*

#### Introduction

ELCA social statements are used by many and varied audiences and address “big picture” issues that are thought-provoking and complex. The 2019 recommended proposed social statement *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* can be challenging, but this user’s guide can help!

This is not a study guide, but the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ asked that churchwide staff members coordinate and develop such a guide as you have here. If some terms in the proposed statement are new to you, consult the expanded glossary. If you are the kind of person who learns from concrete illustrations, look at the following statistics and examples. If you want help finding your way around the statement, check the topical index. If you would like to access resources, see the extensive footnotes and bibliography.

The content in this user’s guide is *not* voted upon by the ELCA 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Therefore, it is not the official social teaching or policy of this church. Only the wording of the social statement, when adopted, should be represented as the position of the ELCA. However, this user’s guide provides background for understanding the proposed statement. Contemporary examples, figures, and statistics regarding patriarchy and sexism may change. Stories and information become dated. The items in this guide are not considered official but do help illustrate the statement’s analysis and conclusions.

Like the social statement itself, this guide respects terms that people are using at present to describe themselves or those used by social scientists to describe communities. Some terms, such as those related to gender and sexuality, have fluid meanings and usage. Some of these may fall out of use over time. These terms are elaborated upon here with encouragement for readers in future years to learn what terms are appropriate to their particular contexts.

For more information about the process by which this statement was developed, read the FAQ: [www.ELCA.org/womenandjustice](http://www.ELCA.org/womenandjustice).

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# Expanded Glossary

## Equality and Equity – What does this mean?

People often use *equality* in a broad sense—but *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* uses *equality* and *equity* intentionally. What’s the difference?

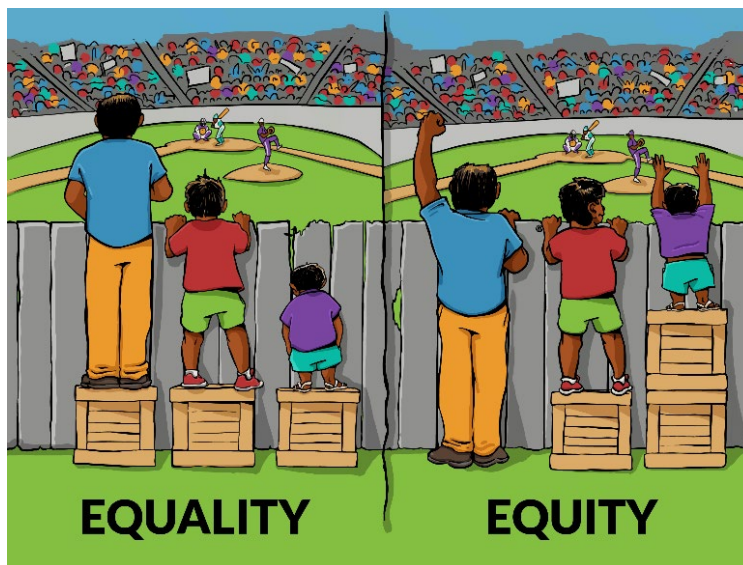
*Equality* is the idea that every person has identical value and the same human rights and should have access to the same resources. Equality can refer to the equal worth of all people or to people having equal experiences of their rights and their potential in life.

*Equity* means treatment and access to resources and influence according to a person’s needs. The principle of equity takes into account that people live within uneven playing fields due to economic inequalities, sexism, racism, etc. Because of different contexts, individuals or groups may require different resources and support to ensure that they have fundamental rights and the ability to make choices as others do (such as having a choice of quality doctors, careers, neighborhoods, etc.). The goal of equity is to ensure that each person receives what they need to flourish and is not disadvantaged.

A simple example of *equality* in public restrooms would be having changing tables in all restrooms, because men who are caregivers may also need a space to change a baby’s diaper.

A simple example of *equity* in public restrooms would be putting more stalls in women’s restrooms to serve women’s specific needs.

The graphic below is a helpful illustration to distinguish between equality and equity. However, the ideal would be to have no fence at all, which represents the elimination of all barriers, such as racism and sexism.



Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

[www.interactioninstitute.org](http://www.interactioninstitute.org) and [www.madewithangus.com](http://www.madewithangus.com)

## Gender-based Violence—What does this mean?

*Gender-based violence* is 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. It can include such things as catcalling women or bullying boys who are not perceived as “man enough.” Perpetrators commit gender-based violence as an expression of power over someone.

The ELCA already has social teaching and policy related to this topic—the social messages “[Gender-based Violence](#)” and “[Commercial Sexual Exploitation](#)”—so *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* does not go into great depth on these topics.

The social message on “Gender-based Violence” notes that:

- Gender-based violence is sin. “God does not intend for us to suffer through any abuse or violence ... [Such abuse and violence] rejects the created goodness and dignity that God gives to every human creature” (pp. 4, 6).
- The ELCA has members who are survivors of, bystanders to, and perpetrators of gender-based violence.
- Women and girls are the most common victims/survivors of gender-based violence, while the perpetrators are most often men. A social system of patriarchy supports gender-based violence.

Through the social message, this church calls on all ELCA members to recognize, name, and root out gender-based violence and its sources wherever it is happening. Members also are called to: ensure care for survivors and create safe communities that foster healing; provide education; create accountability; seek improved laws and social patterns; and challenge organizations and agencies to adopt and use policies and practices that prevent and reduce gender-based violence.

The social message on “Commercial Sexual Exploitation” notes that:

- Sexual exploitation “is destructive of God’s good gift [of sexuality] and human integrity” (p. 1).
- Commercial sexual exploitation exists as a system. The people who are in control in that system have a goal of making money. Women, girls, and boys are the primary victims of this system.
- “The sex system uses women and girls, young men and boys, to pleasure chiefly men. ... Much of the sex system lives from and reinforces culture’s deeply ingrained attitudes and power patterns that assume that women and children are not fully and equally human and are meant to be subservient to others. The sex system actualizes a world of exploiters and the exploited, often incorporating the exploitation of racism and social-economic class” (p. 5).

Through the social message, this church calls ELCA members to: work to educate themselves on commercial sexual exploitation in their communities; work to prevent sex trafficking and coercion; create space for men to talk about these issues with other men; support those recovering from being exploited; and advocate for laws and policies that will deter prostitution and punish pimps and traffickers.

## Inclusive and Expansive Language for God—What does this mean?

*Inclusive language* is 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*.

*Expansive language* is language (or imagery) referring to God that is not limited to humanity or human categories—for instance, using terms such as *water*, *rock*, *a hiding place*, *a mighty fortress*, etc.

The Scriptures include a variety of names, images, and metaphors for the Divine. For instance:

- “*For a long time I have held my peace, I have kept myself still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor, I will gasp and pant*” (Isaiah 42:14).
- “*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often I have desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!*” (Matthew 23:37).
- “*Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ... Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?*” (Luke 15:4, 8).
- “*As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem*” (Isaiah 66:13).
- “*You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance*” (Psalm 32:7).

The Christian tradition has always held that God is beyond the scope of human reason or imagination. But to talk about God, humans need words. We need words that help us to know what God reveals and that help us to understand that the Triune God defies our categories.

To do this, the Scriptures and the Christian tradition (theology, music, and artwork, for example) draw on a wide range of human (inclusive) and nonhuman (expansive) words and images. *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* does not suggest eliminating masculine imagery and language for God. Rather, it encourages an expanded, livelier use of words and images from the Scriptures and the Christian tradition. It does so because predominantly masculine words and images lead to theological problems—androcentric language and images restrict human understandings of God and of humanity.

The Lutheran theological tradition holds a strong commitment to proclaiming God’s Word so that all people can receive and know the Gospel message. Images and words for God beyond masculine language alone open up the Word of God to more people. The language of faith should be evangelical, meaning it serves to proclaim the Gospel for actual people. These are some examples:

- A congregation may find its communal life deepened by hearing both male and female references to God.
- A woman may have been abused by her father, and hearing God described as “father” is painful for her.
- A person may have also been abused by their father but find comfort in speaking of God as their father, knowing that their divine father would never hurt them.
- A man may feel a special connection to the language of God as mother after his mother has died.
- A congregation may find it easier to recognize the infinite nature of God by describing the Divine using water or light imagery.
- A person might want to better connect to the ancient and universal nature of God and so pray to God using Hebrew words such as *Adonai* and *Elohim*.

## Intersectionality—What does this mean?

*Intersectionality*<sup>1</sup> refers to the ways in which various forms of discrimination and oppression, linked to aspects of a person’s identity, overlap and often compound one another. Varying forms of discrimination and oppression affect groups differently and are often amplified for those who are marginalized in multiple ways. These complex forms of oppression often are not recognized by people who do not experience them firsthand.

Most women can describe an experience they’ve had with sexism. For instance, at least 80% of women have been catcalled.<sup>2</sup> However, it’s likely that a white woman, a Muslim woman wearing a hijab, a disabled woman, a lesbian woman, an Asian woman, and a woman of African descent, for example, have experienced different kinds of offensive comments based on other aspects of their identities.

Though catcalling is an example of sexism that takes place between two individuals, oppressions intersect on an institutional level as well, in ways that can be life-altering. Women of color, women with disabilities, women who are refugees or immigrants, women who are poor, and women who are queer all face injustices due to more than their gender, and the ways those oppressions intersect will shape their lives in different ways.

Using an intersectional lens is particularly key for people to work for justice on a specific issue.

*The concept of intersectionality suggests that seeking gender justice involves thinking critically about how all people are affected by problems and potential solutions.*

### *Examples of intersectionality:*

Intersections of sexism and racism	Many women, particularly white women, have expressed frustration with women being only romantic side characters in action movies. However, for some women of African descent, it is refreshing to see black women portrayed in movies as romantically desirable, something that was uncommon when they were growing up and still is not prominent today.
Intersections of sexism, racism, and colonialism	Much work has been done to reduce gender-based violence. However, many laws against gender-based violence fail to protect women who are American Indian or Alaska Native. These women experience significantly higher rates of sexual violence, often perpetrated by white men, due to a distinct mix of racism, sexism, and colonialism. <sup>3</sup>
Intersections of sexism, racism, and classism	Women who are night-shift janitors suffer from high rates of sexual harassment and assault at work due to a mix of sexism, classism, often racism, and their isolation on the job. However, people working on gender justice in the workplace have historically missed the complexity of the problems faced by these women, as have the people working on labor and economic justice in the workplace. Activists tended to focus on white-collar work and experiences of sexism in office settings. In California, women from the janitors’ union had to band together for these complexities to be recognized and for change to occur. <sup>4</sup>

## Patriarchy—What does this mean?

*Patriarchy* is a social system that enables men to have more power than and control over others—particularly women, people who do not conform to socially accepted gender roles, and/or people who do not fit society’s predominant ideas of maleness and masculinity.<sup>5</sup>

To learn more about this church’s views on social systems and how they can be sinful, see the social statement [\*Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective\*](#).

*Patriarchy is perpetuated by individuals of all genders, by cultures, and by institutions.* All of these forces work together to keep social systems of patriarchy supporting men and renewing itself, passing down to the next generation. Not every man may have the same advantages within a patriarchal social system, but cultures and institutions operate to support men and their advantages on a societal level.

*Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* defines patriarchy as “a social system dominated by men, identified with men, and centered on men’s actions, voices, and authority.” The chart on the next page can help readers dig deeper into what each of these characteristics means.<sup>6</sup>



	In U.S. society	In the church
<p><b>Dominated by men:</b> Men fill most of the positions of authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2018, only 24 of the organizations featured in the Fortune 500 have CEOs who are women. This is a 25% decrease since 2017, when there were 32.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>As of 2016, only 30.1% of university presidents and 31% of professors are women, while over 56% of university students are women.<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Though statistically ELCA pews are filled predominantly with women, only 34% of pastors—the most visible leaders—are women.<sup>9</sup></li> <li>In 1989, there were no women in the ELCA’s Conference of Bishops. From 2008 to 2011, only 9.2% of the bishops were women. As of May 2019, 25% of the bishops are women.<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Identified with men:</b> What is “good” or “normal” is associated with men</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People often use words such as <i>mankind</i> to mean all humans.</li> <li>Businesses often structure jobs to take 60 hours a week, with the assumption, inherited from past generations, that a partner at home will do all the housework and child-rearing.</li> <li>Role models in media are most likely men. (You wouldn’t expect a young man to have a poster of a female role model on his wall, but the reverse wouldn’t be too surprising for a young woman.)</li> <li>Celebrated core values of society are often aligned with stereotypical masculinity (self-sufficiency, logic, toughness, strength, competitiveness, control).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most Christians associate God with maleness, which leads many people to associate men more closely with the image of God.</li> <li>Male pronouns are most often used for God.</li> <li>Clergy attire is typically constructed for male bodies.</li> <li>Many people are surprised when they find out a church’s pastor is a woman, or that a woman’s vocation is to be a pastor.</li> <li>Some people will refuse to call a female pastor to their congregation or refuse to take communion from her.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Centered on men’s actions, voices, and authority:</b> Society’s focus tends to be on men and their actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most movie leads are men, particularly in films about heroes, courage, and transformation. Men’s stories often are used to represent the “human” experience.</li> <li>Men dominate conversations, and their ideas are taken more seriously.<sup>11</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historically, the stories we tell tend to be about men, written by men, and/or from men’s perspectives (from the apostles through the Protestant Reformation and the present day).</li> <li>During the early 20th century, depictions of Jesus became more stereotypically “masculine” to get more men to connect with Christ and attend church more often.<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>

## Statistics and Examples: What does patriarchy look like?

To ensure that social statements do not become quickly outdated, they do not include many statistics or stories. However, such examples can be helpful for those who are trying to understand an issue. Many more examples could be listed, but the following provide a solid understanding of the system of patriarchy.

<b>What does patriarchy look like in how we think?</b>	<p>There's a common riddle: "A father and son are in a horrible car crash that kills the dad. The son is rushed to the hospital. Just as he's about to go under the knife, the surgeon says, 'I can't operate—that boy is my son!'" How is this possible? The surgeon is the child's mother. Once you hear the answer, it seems obvious. Yet in a Boston University experiment, only 14% of college students came up with the right answer, even though two-thirds of them were women.<sup>13</sup></p>
	<p>When women talk in a mixed-gender group, they talk fewer minutes than do men, but both male and female listeners perceive them as dominating the conversation.<sup>14</sup></p>
	<p>People associate lower-pitched voices with competence, strength, and trustworthiness.<sup>15</sup></p>
	<p>From the age of six, girls begin to identify boys as being smarter and more suited to "smart" activities than girls. These gender-based stereotypes of intellectual ability continue well into adulthood and can shape career choices and interests.<sup>16</sup></p>

<b>What does patriarchy look like in health?</b>	<p>Seat belts and cars are designed with the male form in mind. In car accidents, women who are driving and wearing a seat belt have a 47% higher chance of experiencing a serious injury and a 71% higher chance of suffering a moderate injury than male drivers in comparable collisions do. For the first 30 years of testing, crash test dummies were all based on the average male form and size. There still is no requirement to perform tests with a "pregnant" crash test dummy.<sup>17</sup></p>
	<p>African American women have higher rates of maternal health problems and premature births than African women living in the U.S. <i>and</i> white women of any socioeconomic or educational level. This means, for example, that an African American woman who has a Ph.D. and lives in an affluent neighborhood is more likely to give birth prematurely than a white woman in a poor neighborhood who did not graduate from high school. Scientists suggest this is due to the stress of racism that becomes embodied in African American people.<sup>18</sup> Overall, the United States ranks worst out of all "developed" countries in terms of maternal health, ranking behind many "developing" countries as well.<sup>19</sup></p>
	<p>Heart attacks appear differently in women—the symptom of gripping one's left arm in pain, common on TV, is not common in women. Because of a lack of education and media representation, women are less likely than men to know when they're having a heart attack and to seek proper treatment.<sup>20</sup></p>
	<p>It continues to be common practice in some teaching hospitals to have medical students practice performing penetrative pelvic exams on women without their knowledge or consent after they have been anesthetized for non-pelvic-related procedures.<sup>21</sup></p>
	<p>Forced sterilization, which "renders an individual incapable of sexual reproduction," has historically been done to women without their consent or knowledge of the procedure until after it has taken place. In particular, medical professionals have used this eugenic practice to attempt to control the reproduction rates of women of color and women with disabilities in U.S. society.<sup>22</sup></p>

<b>What does patriarchy look like in the media?</b>	88% of films are directed by men and 97% of film composers are men. <sup>23</sup>
	In films, men speak twice as much as women do. <sup>24</sup>
	Female characters in G-rated movies are as likely to be wearing sexually revealing clothing as female characters in R-rated movies. <sup>25</sup> Women are six times more likely than men to be portrayed in sexually revealing clothing. <sup>26</sup>
	Men are 62% more likely than women to be portrayed as intelligent. <sup>27</sup>
	News coverage of sexual violence cases frequently paints victims, the majority of whom are women, in a negative light, citing their intoxication, appearance, clothing, etc. Male perpetrators, on the other hand, tend to be given the “benefit of the doubt” by popular news outlets and reporters. <sup>28</sup>
	Across the globe, women’s bodies are scrutinized more frequently and harshly than those of men. This experience is amplified for women of color, who tend to be underrepresented, undervalued, and/or fetishized in media. <sup>29</sup>

<b>What does patriarchy look like in politics?</b>	On the global level, only 24% of national parliamentarians/congressional representatives and only about 18.3% of appointed government officials are women. <sup>30</sup>
	News coverage of women running for office is saturated with sexist rhetoric. A study has shown that even describing women’s strengths in feminine language ( <i>caring</i> or <i>loyal</i> as opposed to <i>ambitious</i> or <i>assertive</i> ) can make them unappealing to voters. <sup>31</sup>
	In the U.S. Congress, only 23% of senators and 20% of representatives are women. <sup>32</sup> Yet 50.8% of the total U.S. population is female. <sup>33</sup>
	In the United States, only 20.9% of major cities have mayors who are women. <sup>34</sup>

<b>What does patriarchy look like in the ELCA?</b>	There is a 14% pay gap between men and women who are pastors in the ELCA. <sup>35</sup>
	In church settings, many people hear God referred to only as “He.”
	Women’s participation in the origins of the Christian church and the Lutheran movement has been devalued and even erased. This includes the women of economic means who funded Jesus’ ministry, early Christian leaders who were women, and Reformation-era women who advanced the ideas of the reformers through their intellect, status, and means. <sup>36</sup> The ministry of women who have provided hospitality and organized “behind the scenes” has also been undervalued.
	The first ordinations of Lutheran women of color took place in 1979, nine years after those of the first white women. Studies have shown that pastors of color who are women still have more trouble receiving calls than their white counterparts. <sup>37</sup>
	Of women who are pastors, 32% report having experienced sexual harassment in their ministry setting, compared to 6.5% of male pastors. <sup>38</sup>

<p><b>What does patriarchy look like for men and boys? (For more, see the section on toxic masculinity on page 18.)</b></p>	<p>Men are often expected to be more sexually active and sexually aggressive than women. When men do not live up to this expectation, they are often shamed for not being “a true man.”<sup>39</sup></p>
	<p>In the United States, 90% of fathers take some time off from work for the birth or adoption of a child, but 70% of fathers take 10 days or fewer. Only 13% of men who took parental leave received pay. Parental leave for fathers can lead to better outcomes for their children and the whole family.<sup>40</sup></p>
	<p>Gay men are at high risk for hate crimes. In 2017, nearly 60% of the hate crimes against LGBTQIA+ individuals were targeted at gay men specifically. The number of hate crimes committed against LGBTQIA+ individuals has increased every year since 2014.<sup>41</sup></p>
<p><b>What does patriarchy look like in history?</b></p>	<p>Patriarchy in the course of history is affected by racism. This continues when history is taught. School history curricula tend to focus on political events and the men who led them. In addition, the history of people of color is rarely centered, and therefore women of color are rarely focused on, which harms both students of color and white students.<sup>42</sup></p>
	<p>In popular discussion, Rosa Parks is depicted as a frail, elderly woman who refused to give up her seat on a racially segregated bus because she was tired, sparking the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955. However, Parks—only 42 at the time—was already a leader in the NAACP and the Civil Rights Movement before the boycott. In addition, organizers in Montgomery, including the Women’s Political Council, had already been brainstorming about a bus boycott: it was not a spontaneous movement but rather a strategic one.<sup>43</sup></p>
	<p>When Europeans colonized the Americas, Africa, and Asia, they imposed their cultures, including gender roles. This destroyed many societies’ practices that were more gender equitable or that embraced broader identities related to gender and sexuality.<sup>44</sup></p>
	<p>Even efforts to address patriarchy are infected with racism. For example, the history of racism within white women’s movements is rarely discussed, a trend which often continues in women’s movements today.<sup>45</sup></p>
<p><b>What does patriarchy look like in economics?</b></p>	<p>Because of various forms of sexism, there is a wage gap in the United States, which can be compounded by racism. On average:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White women make 77 cents for every dollar a white man makes.</li> <li>• Asian women make 85 cents for every dollar a white man makes.</li> <li>• Latina women make 53 cents for every dollar a white man makes.</li> <li>• African-descent women make 61 cents for every dollar a white man makes.</li> <li>• American Indian/Alaska Native women make 58 cents for every dollar a white man makes.</li> <li>• Pacific Islander women make 62 cents for every dollar a white man makes.</li> </ul> <p>Career fields dominated by women tend to pay less, and when women enter male-dominated fields in large groups, the average salary tends to go down.<sup>46</sup></p>
	<p>In many states, childcare is more expensive than college tuition.<sup>47</sup> For some parents, this means they can’t afford to work outside the home. For others, including single parents, it means that an inordinately large chunk of their income goes to childcare, which limits their savings and economic growth.</p>
	<p>The U.S. is one of only eight countries in the world that does not mandate paid maternity leave.<sup>48</sup></p>

## Privilege—What does this mean?

*Privilege* describes the advantage or special treatment of a person or group that is based not on what one does or does not do, but on the group to which one belongs. Privilege is lived out on both an individual and a societal scale. It is not something a person deliberately opts into or out of, nor is it experienced by everyone in the same ways.

*Here are some examples of different types of privilege:*

- When a right-handed person walks into a classroom, they can trust that a right-handed desk or a right-handed pair of scissors will be available to them, unlike left-handed people.
- Someone who is Christian can assume that their major religious holidays, Christmas and Easter, are viewed as national holidays and that schools will be closed.
- Able-bodied people can access all stops on a subway line, whereas people in wheelchairs are limited to stations that are wheelchair accessible.

As previously mentioned, privilege comes in many different forms and is experienced by everyone differently. These three examples show the varying degrees to which people experience privilege and/or oppression. Some experiences of privilege can be minor (for instance, right-handed privilege), while others can dramatically affect one’s daily living (for instance, able-bodied privilege). The difference becomes critical when power is involved: privileged aspects of a person’s identity can give them access to better treatment and opportunities that are often life-altering. For some examples of this, see the chart below.

*Power mixed with privilege is what creates oppression.* There are many forms of privilege—male privilege, white privilege, able-bodied privilege, Christian privilege, heterosexual privilege, etc.

*Further examples of privilege and how it persists over time:*

White and male privilege	G.I. Bill after World War II	After World War II in the U.S., the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (popularly, the “G.I. Bill”) gave honorably discharged veterans assisted access to schooling and loans. Those benefits were linked to their military service, yet white and male privilege came into play because the benefits were often kept from people of color and women who also had served. However, that privilege did not just benefit the families at that time. Many white families have continued to benefit from those veterans’ use of the G.I. Bill through inherited wealth or property. On the other hand, families of color who had a veteran grandfather who was not granted access to education and housing loans have not benefited in an equivalent way compared to their white peers. <sup>49</sup>
White and male privilege	Gender pay gap	White women make less than white men on average, and most women of color make even less. <sup>50</sup> On average, a woman of African descent would have to work until she was 86 to make the same amount as a white man who retired at 60. That diminished earning power is reflected in the resources families of color can pass down to future generations and helps perpetuate the cycle of poverty.
Economic privilege	School district funding	Because school districts are funded by property taxes, people growing up in low-income neighborhoods, whether rural or urban, are more likely to attend underfunded schools. <sup>51</sup> This affects their potential career earnings as well.

## Rape Culture—What does this mean?

*Rape culture* describes an environment in which the objectification of and assault on human bodies, particularly in a sexual way, is normalized, trivialized, and/or tolerated. The chart below gives examples of how this is a system. Systems are enacted and perpetuated on individual, cultural, and institutional levels. The examples listed are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive.

*Examples of rape culture:*

Rape Culture	Interpersonal	Cultural	Institutional
What does it look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High numbers of people of all genders experience sexual violence (1 in 3 women, 1 in 6 men, 1 in 2 transgender people).<sup>52</sup></li> <li>- Every 98 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted.<sup>53</sup></li> <li>- Men perpetrate 98% of rapes of women and 93% of rapes of men.<sup>54</sup></li> <li>- Catcalling and jokes about rape are widespread in popular culture.</li> <li>- 32% of ELCA pastors who are women report having been sexually harassed in their ministry setting.<sup>55</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women in the pornography industry are frequently abused on- and off-screen.<sup>56</sup></li> <li>- Women are often blamed for their assaults (“What were you wearing?”).</li> <li>- Some theology focuses on women as objects to be kept “clean” and “pure,” rather than as human beings.</li> <li>- Advertisements implying sexual violence are widespread in the U.S.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education about consent is not mandated in most school districts in the United States.</li> <li>- Most perpetrators of sexual violence are not convicted and will not spend time in prison.<sup>57</sup></li> <li>- The processing of rape kits tends to be insufficiently funded, which contributes to many sexual assault cases going unresolved.<sup>58</sup></li> </ul>
What are examples from history?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war against people of all genders.<sup>59</sup></li> <li>- Throughout history, women have been forced to marry their rapists, a practice which still takes place in the U.S. today.<sup>60</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sexual harassment and assault are often romanticized in songs, books, movies, and TV programs.<sup>61</sup></li> <li>- In fiction and drama, stalking and sexual harassment can result in happy relationships, which serves to normalize those behaviors.<sup>62</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It was legal for a husband to rape his wife in some American states until 1993.<sup>63</sup></li> <li>- In the U.S., state laws against intimate-partner violence did not exist (or were not enforced) until the 1960s-’80s.<sup>64</sup></li> <li>- Slaveholders could legally rape their slaves, who were viewed as property.<sup>65</sup></li> </ul>
What are intersectional examples?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- American Indian women are twice as likely to experience sexual assault as people of all other ethnicities.<sup>66</sup></li> <li>- People with disabilities are sexually assaulted at a much higher rate than able-bodied people.<sup>67</sup></li> <li>- Six out of 10 female migrants crossing into the U.S. through Mexico experience sexual abuse.<sup>68</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An analysis of 31 pornographic websites found that, on sites that depicted women being raped or tortured, nearly half of the pictured victims were Asian.<sup>69</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For girls of color, there is a “sexual-assault-to-prison” pipeline. For example, many underage victims of sexual trafficking are convicted of prostitution, despite being too young to legally consent to sex.<sup>70</sup></li> </ul>

## Sex, Gender, and Sexuality—What does this mean?

*Sex* refers to one’s biological characteristics. When a baby is born, the doctor or midwife completing a birth certificate will “assign” a sex based on external “male” or “female” genitalia. However, biological characteristics associated with sex also include chromosomes and reproductive organs. A person’s sex could be female, male, or intersex. For more information, see page 17.

*Gender* refers to one’s identity and its expression, particularly as they relate to femininity and masculinity. A person’s gender, for example, could be woman, man, genderqueer, non-binary, transgender, or something else.

To clarify gender, GLAAD (formerly the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) breaks it down into gender identity and gender expression:

- “*Gender identity*: A person’s internal, deeply held sense of their gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices. Unlike gender expression (see below) gender identity is not visible to others.”
- “*Gender expression*: External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person’s name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture.”<sup>71</sup>

*Sexuality* refers to physical and/or emotional attraction and connection. A person’s sexuality, for example, could be heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or something else.

Sexuality is particularly relevant to *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* because of how [LGBTQIA+](#) people are affected by sexism and patriarchy. For example, gay men are often belittled because they are not “masculine enough.” Lesbian women are often disparaged because they are not “feminine enough.”

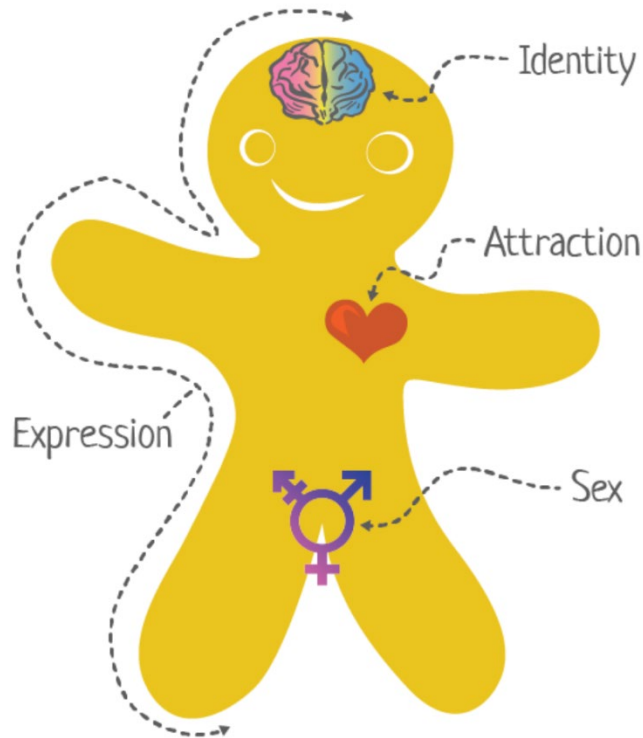
Regardless of sexual orientation, sexuality is also relevant to this text because of how women’s sexuality is often used against them and micromanaged. For example:

- Women and girls are sexually violated at alarmingly high rates.
- Women are blamed for “tempting” men into lust.
- Women and girls are viewed and treated as sexual objects.

## Understanding Sex, Gender, and Sexuality: The Genderbread Person

Given the complexities of sex, gender, and sexuality, the simplified graphic below may prove helpful. The brain symbolizes one's *gender identity*. The heart symbolizes one's *sexuality*. The purple pictogram symbolizes one's *sex assigned at birth*. The large dotted line indicates one's *gender expression*.

For more information, visit <https://www.genderbread.org>.



### *Examples:*

Jane's sex is female. Jane's gender identity is woman. Jane's sexuality is lesbian. Jane expresses her gender by wearing dresses and using makeup.

Jacob's sex is intersex. Jacob's gender identity is man. Jacob's sexuality is heterosexual. Jacob expresses his gender by growing a beard and wearing swim trunks.



## Toxic Masculinity—What does this mean?

*Toxic masculinity* refers to forms of masculinity that emphasize aggression, power, and control. Toxic masculinity encourages violent or unhealthy sexuality. This is why it is called “toxic.”

*How patriarchy perpetuates toxic masculinity:*

- Pressuring boys and men to “man up” or be “man enough,” and shaming those who fail to live up to that idealized standard.
- Equating men’s personal worth with how well they conform to these idealized stereotypes of manhood. This is especially problematic when a narrow definition of manhood overemphasizes power and control.
- Equating femininity with caring, vulnerability, and sensitivity, and therefore discouraging those traits in men.
- Teaching boys not to cry and not teaching them how to process their feelings constructively.<sup>72</sup>

Patriarchy functions by encouraging men to fear a loss of control. The remedy for this anxiety is to try to assert power over others, to regain control. This creates a destructive cycle.<sup>73</sup>

Traits stereotypically associated with masculinity, such as strength and self-reliance, are important tools in life. However, when men are not encouraged to cultivate more diverse strengths, they may not have enough tools in their toolbox to thrive.<sup>74</sup>

*How toxic masculinity hurts men and boys:*

- Men are less likely to have strong, healthy friendships with others.<sup>75</sup>
- Men are more likely to commit suicide. The more men value strict gender roles, the less likely they are to seek out preventive health care and mental health care. They also are more likely to drink heavily and abuse drugs.<sup>76</sup>
- Men are, often unconsciously, pressured not to pursue careers that are “feminine,” such as nursing or teaching, even if they feel called in that direction.<sup>77</sup>
- One in six men has been a victim of sexual violence, perpetrated most often by other men.<sup>78</sup>
- Ninety percent of homicides are committed by men.<sup>79</sup>

Although all men are raised in this patriarchal system, many factors determine their experience of and response to it, including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality, etc. (For more on this, see “Intersectionality.”)

For example: Although there is no single Latino culture, a Latino man’s experience and expectations of masculinity can be shaped by his culture, whether it is Puerto Rican, Mexican, Peruvian, etc. In the United States, Latino men must also contend with stereotypes about them from outside their own cultures. On top of all this, their sexuality, religion, economic class, and other factors also come into play. All of these factors affect how a Latino man thinks about and experiences his gender, consciously or subconsciously.

## Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming, Non-Binary, Queer, and Intersex—What does this mean?

*Transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and genderqueer* are all terms describing people whose gender does not match the sex (male or female) entered on their birth certificate when they were born. For more on gender and sex, see page 14.

There are approximately 1.4 million transgender adults in the United States.<sup>80</sup> For instance, over 25% of transgender people have experienced a hate crime based on their gender, and that number is much higher for transgender women and transgender people of color.<sup>81</sup>

*Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* includes these groups of people because they are also harmed by patriarchy, which emphasizes adhering to strict gender roles.

*The chart below explains what the different terms mean.*

Transgender	Refers to someone whose gender does not match the sex they were assigned at birth (i.e. which box was checked on the birth certificate). Transgender people may identify as a woman or as a man, expressing their gender in typically feminine or masculine ways. Some may express their gender in less binary-driven ways, and some may use one of the labels below.
Non-binary/genderqueer/gender non-conforming*	Terms often used by people who do not identify as “men” or “women.” Their gender identity and/or biological characteristics may not completely fit with the dominant and expected ways of acting as, or being, a man/boy or woman/girl. Some of these people may express their gender in a mix of masculine and feminine ways, some may not.
Queer	Umbrella term regarding sex, gender, and/or sexual orientation, often used by individuals who identify as somehow “other” from society’s norms about bodies, expressions, and sexuality. Although historically used in a derogatory manner, the term has been reclaimed as a positive label by some members within the LGBTQIA+ community.
Intersex	Refers to someone who has both male and female biological traits (chromosomes, external genitalia, reproductive organs, for example). An intersex person’s sex is sometimes labeled incorrectly by medical staff at birth who need to check a single box on their birth certificate. Many intersex people were surgically assigned a sex as children, without their consent, in order to assign them a single sex. <sup>82</sup>

\*Note: *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action* uses these terms to honor the language chosen by communities and individuals with various identities, such as gender non-conforming, non-binary, and genderqueer. To be as inclusive as possible, these are used in the social statement interchangeably as umbrella terms; this reflects some people’s understandings, though not all.

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