



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

On June 26, 2019, a listening group was convened by the ELCA Domestic Mission unit in Chicago to help inform the process for creating a new document to replace “Vision and Expectations.”

In reading the minutes from the 1990 Church Council LINK meeting where “Vision and Expectations” was adopted, we noted that it was not to be “a prescriptive document,” but rather “a teaching opportunity about shared expectations, which this church has of its” rostered ministers.

We saw how “Vision and Expectations” had become conflated with the church’s need for discipline and was used as a juridical document (which is the specific purpose of another document called “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” LINK causing great pain for many.

In our June 2019 conversation, we reflected on the need and purpose for this document and recognized our rostered ministers have to be able to navigate our church’s commitment to Christ and spreading the gospel in a way that is congruent with our constitution, social statements and teachings. For that to happen well, our leaders need to be mindful of many things like cultural competency, racial equity, creation care, confessional integrity and the presence of the Spirit speaking through the wideness of God’s people.

Since we are a community of believers, we would like to invite you into a process of asking what the church needs. Our inclination is to begin fresh and not try to edit the document that was drafted to replace “Vision and Expectations,” called “Trustworthy Servants of the People of God,” and to start with your voices. And so, we invite you into this process by asking that you answer one simple question on this survey: What does the church need?

PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TrustworthyServants>

Anticipated next steps:

- Listening group meeting (June 2019).
- Gathering information via survey from rostered ministers, candidates, lay leaders and seminary partners on what the church needs (August – September 2019).
- A listening event at the Churchwide Assembly (Aug. 6, 2019).
- Intentionally reach out to various communities for input, such as candidates, deacons, gender and sexual minorities, survivors of clergy misconduct, ethnic specific communities, confessionally conservative, and those from all four convictions identified in the social statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” LINK to encourage participation in the survey and process.
- Zoom listening sessions with rostered ministers, candidates, lay leaders and seminary partners (September).
- Update to Conference of Bishops (September 2019).
- Curation of information (October 2019).
- Summary posted on website when available.
- Listening group meeting (October 2019) when the next steps are communicated.
- Update to Church Council (November 2019).

Listening group members:

Bishop Kurt Kusserow, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod

The Rev. Amanda Gerken-Nelson, Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries

Emma Wagner, ELCA Church Council

The Rev. Cherlyne Beck, manager for candidacy and leadership, ELCA

The Rev. Phil Hirsch, executive director, ELCA Domestic Mission

Barbara Keller, ELCA Sexual Abuse Prevention

The Rev. Lamont Wells, Ethnic Specific Associations

Sister Krista Anderson, program director for the support of rostered ministers, ELCA

Christopher Evans, associate dean for academic and student affairs, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary