EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Church Council

MINUTES

April 11–14, 2024

Prepared by the
Office of the Secretary

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Plenary Session I 3

Call to Order and Adoption of the Agenda 3
Report from the Presiding Bishop 3
Report of the Executive Committee 3
Election of Executive for Administration 3
Executive Session 3
Report of Action from Executive Session 4
Reception of U.S. Lutheran–Catholic Dialogue 12th Round 4
Q&A on Reports of the Vice President, Secretary, and Chair of the Conference of Bishops 4
Greetings from Ecumenical Guests 5
Personal Reflection on Faith 5
Adjournment 5

Plenary Session II 6

Committee Meetings and Mid-Day Prayer 6
Racial and Gender Justice Education 6
Adjournment 6

Plenary Session III 7

Call to Order 7
Personal Reflection on Faith 7
Update on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church 7
Report of the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee 7
Consideration of a Social Message on Gun-related Violence and Trauma 7
Consideration of Next Social Message 8
Review of Social Statement on Civic Life and Faith 9
Recognition of Service 9
Update from the Budget Prioritization Task Force 9
Adjournment 9

Plenary Session IV 10

Call to Order 10
Report from the Administrative Team 10
Report of the Treasurer 10
Report of the Budget and Finance Committee 10
FY24 Spending Authorization for ELCA World Hunger 11
Adjournment 11

Plenary Session V 12

Call to Order and Legal Briefing 12
Report of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee 12
Roth Option for ELCA Retirement Plan 12
ELCA Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies 12
Adjournment 13

Plenary Session VI 14

Call to Order 14
Personal Reflection on Faith 14
Reports from Various Committees 14
New Business 14

CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM *EN BLOC* 14
EN BLOC APPROVAL OF CERTAIN ITEMS 14
Actions of the Church Council 15
A. Revisions to Resolutions Regarding Authority to Act in Financial Matters 15
B. Approval of Minutes 15
C. Church Council Appointments and Elections 15
Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions 16
D. Mission Development Process 16
E. Fortifying Urban Ministries 17
F. Right to Boycott 19
G. Black Migrant Strategy 20
Responses to Synod Actions 21
H. Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings 21
I. Support of Jubilee USA Network 23
UNFINISHED BUSINESS 24
ELCA CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL POLICIES (*CONT.*) 24
EVALUATION AND DEBRIEFING 25
ANNOUNCEMENTS 25
ADJOURNMENT 25

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL

MINUTES
April 11–14, 2024

The 116th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) convened April 11–14, 2024, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill.

The Executive Committee of the Church Council met in the early afternoon on Thursday, April 11. The meeting of the Church Council began with worship with Holy Communion at 3:00 p.m. (all times Central Daylight Time unless otherwise noted). The Rev. Leroy Cannon presided, the Rev. Nicholas M. Billardello III preached, Ms. Olivia L. Martin-Call served as assisting minister, and Mr. Kevin Anderson served as lector.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

The following people were present for all or part of the meeting:

Voting members

Officers:
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop
Mr. Imran Siddiqui, vice president
Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary
Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer

Chair of the Conference of Bishops:
The Rev. Yehiel Curry, bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod

Church Council:
The Rev. A. Elizabeth (Lisa) Ahlness
Mr. Kevin Anderson
Ms. Tracey A. Beasley
The Rev. Benjamin B. Bergren
The Rev. Marcus A. Bigott *(excused)*
The Rev. Nicholas M. Billardello III
Ms. Susan Boxberger
The Rev. Heather E. Brown
Ms. Jamie Bruesehoff
The Rev. William H. Callister
The Rev. Leroy Cannon
Ms. Divine
The Rev. Joanne E. Engquist
Ms. Kerry A. Fehrman
Ms. Sheena R. Foster
Mr. Hans W. Giller
The Rev. Emily K. Hartner
Ms. Kristy K. Henriksen
The Rev. Pamela J. Hoh
Ms. Cherrish Holland
Mr. Rindra Josoa *(excused)*
The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King
Mr. David M. Lenz
The Rev. Tara R. Lynn
Ms. Olivia L. Martin-Call
Mr. Mitch S. McCartney
Mr. Joel A. Miller
Mr. Ethan G. Miller-Perez
Mr. Keoni Newman *(excused)*
Deacon Kari A. Olsen
Mr. Iván A. Pérez
Ms. Linda C. Rivera
Mr. Noah F. Roux
Ms. Valerie J. Shaw *(excused)*
Ms. Andraine A. Sinaga
Mr. Loren A. Solberg
The Rev. Kjersten L. Sullivan
Ms. Loni Taylor
Ms. Jennifer E. Trom

Representatives of the Conference of Bishops:
Bishop Brenda K. Bos, Region 2
Bishop Amy L. Current, Region 5
Bishop Christopher deForest, Region 7
Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahunt, Region 6
Bishop Scott Johnson, Region 4
Bishop Laurie A. Jungling, Region 1
Bishop James S. Dunlop, Region 8
Bishop Craig A. Schweitzer, Region 3
Bishop Pedro M. Suárez, Region 9

Advisory members of the Church Council:
Mr. Albert Asfour, acting president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
The Rev. Jesse W. Brown Jr., president, African Descent Lutheran Association

Ms. Desta Goehner, president, White Lutherans for Racial Justice
The Rev. Alejandro Mejía, president, Latiné Ministries Lutheran Association
Mr. Dan Michel, representative, ReconcilingWorks
The Rev. Moses P. Penumaka, president, Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders
The Rev. Larry Thiele, representative, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association *(absent)*

Churchwide Staff Resource People:
Office of the Presiding Bishop:
Ms. Jackie Baumhover, director for strategy *(online)*
The Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration
Ms. Jennifer G. DeLeon, director for racial justice
Ms. Victoria Flood, senior director for Mission Support
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment
Ms. Judith E. Roberts, senior director for diversity, equity, and inclusion
Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for gender justice and women's empowerment and director for the Quality of Call Initiative
Deacon John E. Weit, executive for worship
The Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics
Ms. Rachel K. Wind, executive for development
Ms. Andrea Young, senior director for People Solutions

Office of the Secretary:
Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel
Mr. Dan F. Eppley, official documentation manager
The Rev. N. Keith Fry, executive for Office of the Secretary administration
Mr. Paul K. Irwin, associate general counsel
Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, executive for governance

Christian Community and Leadership:
The Rev. Philip C. Hirsch, executive director
The Rev. Sara A. Cutter, senior director for operational effectiveness

Service and Justice:
The Rev. Khader El-Yateem, executive director
The Rev. Barbara Lund, senior director for operations and innovation

Innovation:
Mr. Iain Chester, executive director

Media:
Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, public relations manager and interim senior director for strategic communications

Separately Incorporated Ministries:
The Rev. Suzanne Burke, publisher, congregational resources, 1517 Media
Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director, Women of the ELCA
Mr. David Quello, chief investment officer, Portico Benefit Services
Ms. Annette Shoemaker, interim president and CEO, ELCA Foundation

Ecumenical Guests:
The Rev. Mark Goodman, The Episcopal Church (USA)
Ms. Linda Grainger, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
The Rev. Betsy Miller, Moravian Church in America

Guests – Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church Representatives:
The Rev. Carla Christopher, co-chair
Mr. Leon Schwartz, co-chair

Thursday, April 11, 2024
PLENARY SESSION I

CALL TO ORDER AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
(Agenda I.A.)

Mr. Imran Siddiqui, vice president of the ELCA and chair of the Church Council, called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, opened the meeting with prayer. Agenda items were distributed to council members electronically prior to the meeting.

A motion was made to adopt the agenda.

There being no discussion, the chair called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC24.04.01 To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDING BISHOP
(Agenda I.B.)

Presiding Bishop Eaton thanked the Rev. Michael L. Burk for his service as presiding bishop *pro tempore*. She reported that she will be meeting with leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) to provide support as leaders of the ELCJHL continue to be a voice for peace in the midst of suffering and war. She provided an update on discussions between this church and Global Refuge, the organization formerly known as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. The presiding bishop reported on the God's Love Made Real initiative, noting that data analysis of survey results is nearing completion and discussed ways in which the data will be used. She emphasized the large number of initiatives, working groups, and task forces in progress, and the importance of transitioning to actionable items. Calling attention to the significant turnover in leadership of this church that is scheduled to occur over the next few years, the presiding bishop emphasized the importance of retaining institutional memory through this transition.

Returning to themes she raised in 2013 before she was called to her current office, Presiding Bishop Eaton emphasized that we are church, we are Lutheran, we are church together, and we are church for the sake of the world. Acknowledging the importance of providing for the needs of people, the presiding bishop stressed that the defining characteristic of this church is proclamation of God's Word.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
(Agenda I.C.)

Vice President Siddiqui provided an update on recent activities of the Executive Committee and encouraged Church Council members to consult the minutes of meetings of the Executive Committee for more details.

ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE FOR ADMINISTRATION
(Agenda I.C.1.)

The executive for administration is the chief administrator of the churchwide organization. According to ELCA Constitution continuing resolution 15.12.A22., "The executive for administration shall be elected by the Church Council upon nomination of the presiding bishop and shall serve coterminous with the term of the presiding bishop."

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The 116th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America entered executive session at 4:44 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. Minutes for meetings held in executive session are added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary. The Church Council exited executive session at 4:50 p.m.

REPORT OF ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

VOTED: ***Two-thirds Vote Required***

CC(ES)24.04.02 To elect the Rev. Dr. M. Wyvetta Bullock as the executive for administration for a term coterminous with the term of the presiding bishop, as provided in churchwide continuing resolution 15.12.A22.

RECEPTION OF U.S. LUTHERAN–CATHOLIC DIALOGUE 12TH ROUND

(Agenda I.C.2.)

Next year will mark 60 years of dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics in the United States. Across these decades, significant strides have been made in discovering the unity the two churches share, detailed in what are now twelve Common Statements. In late 2023, Fortress Press published *Faithful Teaching: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue XII.*

The common statement of the twelfth round of the U.S. Lutheran–Catholic dialogue is presented as an ecumenical resource by the ecumenical and inter-religious relations team in the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop in cooperation with the Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The twelfth round was co-chaired by the Rev. Lowell G. Almen (ELCA) and Bishop Denis J. Madden (USCCB). Representatives of both churches formed the dialogue team. The Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Committee of the ELCA Conference of Bishops recommended the Church Council receive the Common Statement.

Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment, provided background and context of the U.S. Lutheran–Catholic dialogue, clarifying the significance of "receiving" the statement in this context. She provided an overview of the content of the statement, noting points of common ground as well as areas of continuing difference. The statement encourages Lutherans and Catholics to proclaim the gospel in the world today, to hold each other accountable for that proclamation, and to explore ways to proclaim the gospel together.

VOTED:

CC24.04.03 To receive "Faithful Teaching," the Common Statement of the Twelfth Round of the U.S. Lutheran–Catholic Dialogue.

Q&A ON REPORTS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY, AND CHAIR OF THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

(Agenda I.D.)

Vice President Siddiqui invited Church Council members to ask questions about the reports that were shared electronically with council members prior to the meeting.

Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, invited Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel for the ELCA, to provide an overview of recent challenges in congregations and synods obtaining insurance. He stated that the churchwide organization is taking steps to address these issues. In response to another question, Secretary Rothmeyer reported that some synods are exploring alternative patterns for gathering rather than having a Synod Assembly each year. The *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* require only that synods hold assemblies at least triennially. Secretary Rothmeyer reported on personnel changes in the Research and Development area within the Office of the Secretary and noted that, as of April 10, 2024, approximately 6,100 Annual Congregation Reports (Form A) have been received, a response rate of 69%.

RECESS

The first plenary session of the 116th meeting of the Church Council recessed at 5:23 p.m. and reconvened at 5:36 p.m.

GREETINGS FROM ECUMENICAL GUESTS

(Agenda I.E.)

Ms. Linda Grainger, secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), brought greetings on behalf of National Bishop Susan Johnson and the ELCIC. The Rev. Betsy Miller brought greetings on behalf of Provincial Presidents David Bennett and Neil Routh and the Moravian Church in America. The Rev. Mark Goodman brought greetings on behalf of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and The Episcopal Church (USA).

PERSONAL REFLECTION ON FAITH

(Agenda I.F.)

Ms. Loni Taylor shared personal reflections on faith.

ADJOURNMENT

The first plenary session of the 116th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA adjourned at 6:14 p.m. on April 11, 2024, following announcements, prayer, and a hymn.

Friday, April 12, 2024
PLENARY SESSION II

COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND MID-DAY PRAYER

The Board Development Committee met at 7:00 a.m. at the Lutheran Center. The following committees met at 2:00 p.m. at the Lutheran Center: Budget and Finance; Christian Community and Leadership; Faith, Society, and Innovation; Legal and Constitutional Review; and Service and Justice. A mid-day prayer gathering led by the Rev. Alejandro Mejía, president, Latiné Ministries Lutheran Association, was held at 12:15 p.m.

RACIAL AND GENDER JUSTICE EDUCATION

(Agenda II.A.)

Beginning at 9:00 a.m., Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for gender justice and women's empowerment and director for Quality of Call Initiative, and Ms. Jennifer G. DeLeon, director for racial justice, led council members in an educational session on gender and racial justice.

ADJOURNMENT

The second plenary session of the 116th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA adjourned at 12:00 p.m. on April 12, 2024.

Saturday, April 13, 2024
PLENARY SESSION III

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Siddiqui called the third plenary session to order at 10:00 a.m.

PERSONAL REFLECTION ON FAITH

(Agenda III.A.)

The Rev. Joanne E. Engquist shared personal reflections on faith.

UPDATE ON THE COMMISSION FOR A RENEWED LUTHERAN CHURCH

(Agenda III.B.)

Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) co-chairs the Rev. Carla Christopher and Mr. Leon Schwartz shared an update on the CRLC. Mr. Schwartz reviewed the mandate of the commission from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly and presented an overview of the work of the commission and its committees. Pastor Christopher emphasized ways the commission is collaborating with other initiatives and constituencies within this church and provided a preliminary overview of findings from a survey and listening sessions organized by the CRLC.

REPORT OF THE FAITH, SOCIETY, AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

(Agenda III.C.)

The Rev. Tara R. Lynn, chair of the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee, reported that the committee received reports from churchwide organization staff. Ms. Judith E. Roberts, senior director for diversity, equity, and inclusion, shared an update with the committee on the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity. Pastor Lynn emphasized from Ms. Roberts' report the expansion of availability of Fund for Leaders support to include students in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries program, increasing opportunities for leaders of color within this church. Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for gender justice and women's empowerment and director for the Quality of Call Initiative, updated the committee on development of a process for reflection and repentance regarding the sins of patriarchy and sexism that will begin at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment, led the committee in discussion of the common statement of the twelfth round of U.S. Lutheran–Catholic dialogue focused on how this church can best live into its reception of the document.

CONSIDERATION OF A SOCIAL MESSAGE ON GUN-RELATED VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA

(Agenda III.C.1.)

Church Council Action [CC23.04.08g]

To authorize the development of a social message on the epidemic of gun-related trauma in the U.S. with attention to the cluster of issues underlying it, such as national gun policy, personal security, growing community violence, public health, and social perplexity in light of existing social teaching and in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (2018).

Response from the Theological Ethics Desk (April 2024)

Social messages are topical documents adopted by the ELCA Church Council to focus attention and action on timely, pressing matters of social concern to the church and society. They are used to address pressing contemporary concerns in light of the prophetic and compassionate traditions of the scriptures. They may elaborate and focus ELCA teaching and policy but must be consistent with previously adopted teaching and policy positions, especially from social statements. (In this case see "For Peace in God's World" and the message on "Community Violence" at www.elca.org/socialstatements.) Social messages draw attention to specific topics, and they encourage moral discernment and action.

The draft comment period lasted from Oct. 15, 2023, to Feb. 1, 2024, and included feedback from three major participants groups.

- Approximately 250 ELCA members filled out the online survey.

- An unusually large number of non-ELCA individuals used the public occasion of the survey for comment. A complete report on survey results is available in a full public report at https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Current-Social-Writing-Projects/Gun-Trauma.
- More than 40 individuals provided extended comments by email.

The director for theological ethics worked with a writing contractor, Dr. Per Anderson, retired professor at Concordia College, Moorhead, Minn. They were assisted throughout the entire process by members of a consultant group who provided initial insights and then critiqued text until a final draft text was published online, Oct. 15, 2023.

The first circle consultants included: Mr. Colter McCarty (Montana), Bishop William Tesch (Minnesota), Dr. David Yamane (North Carolina), the Rev. Ron Letnes (Minnesota), the Rev. Angela Smith (Pennsylvania), the Rev. Gwendolyn King (Church Council), the Rev. Michael Vinson (Colorado), Mr. Joel Miller (Church Council), Ms. Sara Lilja (New Jersey), and Ms. Lashonda Hicks Curry (Illinois).

After the close of the draft public comment period, and with attention to all sources of feedback, including emails and other communications, the director developed a revised text working with the lead writer. A revised text was shared in early February for review and suggestion by the consultant group and the Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee of the Conference of Bishops. In late February, the proposed text was shared with all bishops. This proposed social message represents the result of these careful efforts to hear public comment and work with reviewers and bishops to craft a text for Church Council consideration.

On behalf of the committee, Pastor Lynn introduced the proposed social message and Secretary Rothmeyer moved adoption of the social message.

VOTED: ***Two-thirds Vote Required***

CC24.04.04 To adopt "Gun-related Violence and Trauma" as a social message of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

CONSIDERATION OF NEXT SOCIAL MESSAGE

(Agenda III.C.2.)

Churchwide Assembly action [CA22.01.05r]

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Saint Paul Area Synod, Central States Synod, and Northeastern Iowa Synod concerning development of a social statement on child abuse and protection; and

To request that the Church Council consider authorizing development of a social message on child abuse and protection.

Response from the Theological Ethics Desk (April 2024)

ELCA social teaching and policy result from an extensive, inclusive, and accepted process of deliberation throughout this church. The development, adoption, application, and interpretation of social teaching entails a shared responsibility across all three expressions of our church in which various actors carry out specific roles as spelled out in "Policies and Procedures for Addressing Social Concerns."

The ELCA Church Council's role in the development of social messages includes oversight and is proactive since the Church Council serves as the ELCA's interim legislative body. Social messages may be requested by several leadership bodies but are adopted by council action and the council's responsibility includes determination both of whether and when requests will be authorized.

The general capacity of the theological ethics desk for writing projects during any given year, in terms of human and financial resources, is work on one social statement, one social message, and one study resource. Recommendations for social message development also take into account the capacity of review bodies such as the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council.

The theological ethics team currently is developing a new social statement on "Civic Life and Faith" and will lead another task force in reconsideration of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009) beginning in late Spring 2024. Given this, the theological ethics team envisions that the next proposed social message or social message reconsideration be anticipated for consideration at the Fall 2025 Church Council meeting. That timing would mean no overlap for comment periods or review processes with the work of the two social statement task forces.

There are currently three requests for social message development:

- Development of a new social message on child protection and maltreatment;
- Reconsideration of "Message on Homelessness: A Renewal of Commitment" (1990); and

- Reconsideration of one element of "Message on End-of-Life Decisions" (1992)

The recommendation of the director for theological ethics is to authorize a social message on child protection and maltreatment. This recommendation follows extensive conversation with various stakeholders, including other churchwide organization staff, the Theological Ethics Advisory Working Group, and the Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee of the Conference of Bishops.

The primary factors that support this recommendation include:

- The capacity level indicated above, which means only one social message can be initiated in 2024;
- The extent of the problem of child maltreatment and abuse in society and the church, largely hidden to general awareness;
- The overwhelming urgency expressed by stakeholders for the development of this social message; and
- The absence in ELCA social teaching and policy on this topic.

On behalf of the committee, Pastor Lynn introduced the proposed action and Secretary Rothmeyer moved it.

VOTED:

CC24.04.05 To authorize the development of a social message on child protection and maltreatment as requested by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly [CA22.01.05r], in light of existing social teaching and in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (2018).

REVIEW OF SOCIAL STATEMENT ON CIVIC LIFE AND FAITH

Mr. Loren A. Solberg reported on the review process for the social statement on civic life and faith. Pastor Willer provided details of opportunities for Church Council members to engage in the review process.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

Presiding Bishop Eaton asked the council to join her in expressing appreciation for the leadership of Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky over 22 years of service as executive director of Women of the ELCA. Ms. Post Bushkofsky will be retiring soon.

UPDATE FROM THE BUDGET PRIORITIZATION TASK FORCE

(Agenda III.D.)

At its November 2023 meeting, the Church Council established a task force "to address the need for the council and Administrative Team (with advisors) to explore needed changes to budget work and priorities." [CC23.11.16.]. The task force is composed of members of the Executive Committee (or designees of the committee chairs), the Administrative Team and its advisors, two members from the advisory members of the Church Council, and one liaison bishop.

Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, provided an update on the work of the task force. The current focus is on reviewing the purposes of the churchwide organization in order to more intentionally align resources with purpose, she said. Ms. Jackie Baumhover, director for strategy, joined the meeting electronically and provided additional detail on the work of the task force.

ADJOURNMENT

The third plenary session of the 116th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA adjourned following announcements and prayer at 11:48 a.m. on April 13, 2024.

Saturday, April 13, 2024
PLENARY SESSION IV

PRESENTATIONS BY ADVISORY MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

During the lunch break, Church Council members attended presentations hosted by the advisory members of the Church Council.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Siddiqui called the fourth plenary session to order at 2:00 p.m. Ms. Sheena R. Foster opened the meeting with prayer.

REPORT FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

(Agenda IV.A.)

The Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration, presented an overview of God's Love Made Real (GLMR), the initiative formerly known as Future Church, and reviewed the purposes of the churchwide organization. Ms. Rachel K. Wind, executive for development, provided background information on the origins and development of the GLMR initiative. Mr. Iain Chester, director for innovation, offered examples of ways in which the churchwide organization is living into the intentions of GLMR, along with updates on the Vision Project established to support the churchwide organization and GLMR and on the work of the Innovation home area. Pastor Bullock concluded the report by emphasizing the interconnectedness of the initiatives.

In response to questions, Pastor Bullock, Presiding Bishop Eaton, and the Rev. Philip C. Hirsch, executive director for Christian Community and Leadership, provided guidance to council members regarding how best to serve as ambassadors for the GLMR initiative in their home synods. Presiding Bishop Eaton provided additional clarification on the nature and purpose of the Vision Project.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

(Agenda IV.B.)

Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, announced that the external audit of the FY23 results has been initiated. She provided an overview of unrestricted churchwide organization revenues and expenses for the past decade, noting that, on average, revenues have declined about $500,000 per year and that more predictable sources of income including Mission Support have become a smaller percentage of churchwide organization income. Treasurer Fedyk emphasized the importance of Mission Support to the stability of the budget of the churchwide organization, saying that, as more predictable sources of income become a smaller proportion of revenue, it is important for the churchwide organization to be flexible.

Treasurer Fedyk shared final results for FY23. Mission Support and direct giving were below projections for the fiscal year but were offset by investment income and bequest income in excess of projections. She reported that there was no plan to adjust the spending authorization for the churchwide organization at this time, so no Church Council action was needed.

Treasurer Fedyk provided an overview of ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response results for FY23. World Hunger spending for FY23 was nearly $25 million versus revenues of about $20 million. She reminded council members of previous council actions related to World Hunger spending and emphasized the importance of implementing sustainable spending patterns to avoid unexpectedly removing support from organizations that rely on this funding source.

Treasurer Fedyk reported on a listening initiative being launched by Portico Benefit Services to explore ways to optimize availability of benefits for individuals and congregations. She introduced members of the project team and invited council members to direct questions to them.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Agenda IV.C.)

Ms. Kerry A. Fehrman, vice chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, provided the report of the committee, including review of a motion being brought to the council by the committee *en bloc*.

FY24 SPENDING AUTHORIZATION FOR ELCA WORLD HUNGER

(Agenda IV.C.1.)

Ms. Fehrman introduced the FY24 spending authorization for ELCA World Hunger, briefly explaining the rationale for the authorization.

VOTED:

CC24.04.06 **To request the Office of the Treasurer, in consultation with the appropriate churchwide organization home areas, to review the FY24 revenue and expense performance of ELCA World Hunger through May 2024 and to share any recommendations with the Budget and Finance Committee; and**

To authorize the Executive Committee to approve any necessary revisions to the FY24 Spending Authorization in ELCA World Hunger if recommended by the Budget and Finance Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

The fourth plenary session of the 116th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA adjourned at 3:11 p.m. on April 13, 2024, following announcements.

Saturday, April 13, 2024
PLENARY SESSION V

CALL TO ORDER AND LEGAL BRIEFING

(Agenda V.A.)

Vice President Siddiqui called the fifth plenary session to order at 3:40 p.m. The council entered into executive session for a legal briefing. Minutes for meetings held in executive session are added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary. The council returned to open session at 4:22 p.m.

REPORT OF THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Agenda V.B.)

Mr. Kevin Anderson, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, presented the report, calling attention to a motion being brought to the council by the committee in the *en bloc* motions.

ROTH OPTION FOR ELCA RETIREMENT PLAN

(Agenda V.B.1)

In accordance with ELCA Constitution bylaw 17.20.02., the ELCA Church Council shall approve plan amendments involving a significant change in policy or a significant change in cost or benefits and shall approve trust amendments initiated by Portico Benefit Services.

The significant amendment proposed was to add Roth as an option for member elective contributions for the plan year beginning Jan. 1, 2025. Roth contributions to a 403(b) plan are made with income that's already been taxed, and upon meeting certain requirements, may be withdrawn upon retirement without additional federal income tax. This may be advantageous to certain members in the retirement plans. Members could make this election during annual enrollment in the 4th quarter of 2024 to begin contributions Jan. 1, 2025. Portico Benefit Services' proposed changes received the approval of its Board of Trustees at its meeting on February 23, 2024.

Mr. Anderson introduced the motion, and Secretary Rothmeyer moved approval of the amendments. Mr. David Quello, chief investment officer, Portico Benefit Services, answered questions related to the motion.

VOTED:

CC24.04.07 To approve adding Roth as an option for member elective contributions for the plan year beginning Jan. 1, 2025; and

To approve the proposed amendments by the Portico Benefit Services, as outlined in the "Proposed Portico Plan Amendments" document.

ELCA CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL POLICIES

(Agenda V.B.2)

The Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies are adopted by the Church Council in accordance with ELCA Constitution bylaw 14.21.06. Several revisions were proposed for the policies. They included 1) minor editorial changes and corrections; 2) updates to clarify and reflect current practices; and 3) additions and changes to ensure compliance with existing, new, and forthcoming labor laws. Any formatting inconsistencies will be addressed prior to publication.

Mr. Anderson introduced the motion.

Moved;

[Seconded]: To approve the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies; and

To authorize the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with People Solutions in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to make any necessary editorial corrections for accuracy.

Following discussion, a motion was made to postpone consideration of the amendments until the sixth plenary session.

Moved;
Seconded;
Carried: **To postpone consideration of the motion to approve the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies until plenary session six.**

Vice President Siddiqui declared that the motion had passed. Mr. Anderson concluded his report by providing an update on the committee's work considering amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* recommended by the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) audit of the ELCA governing documents and by the Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group. He reported that the committee is undertaking this work in dialogue with the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church and in consultation with the Office of the Secretary.

ADJOURNMENT

The fifth plenary session of the 116th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA adjourned at 5:02 p.m. on April 13, 2024, following announcements and a hymn.

Sunday, April 14, 2024
PLENARY SESSION VI

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Siddiqui called the sixth plenary session to order at 10:00 a.m.

PERSONAL REFLECTION ON FAITH

(Agenda VI.A.)

Mr. David M. Lenz shared personal reflections on faith.

REPORTS FROM VARIOUS COMMITTEES

(Agenda VI.B.)

Committees not bringing forward motions for action were invited to provide reports. The Rev. Kjersten L. Sullivan, chair of the Christian Community and Leadership Committee, provided an overview of recent work of the committee. She highlighted ongoing evaluation of how this church plants new congregations and announced additions to the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities. The Rev. Joanne E. Engquist, chair of the Service and Justice Committee, presented the report of the committee. She emphasized the importance of the Service and Justice home area effectively engaging and equipping synods and congregations. The Rev. Khader El-Yateem, the new executive director for the Service and Justice home area, provided an update on events in the Middle East and the response of this church to those events. Mr. Loren A. Solberg, vice chair of the Board Development Committee, reported on the work of the committee, including efforts to promote racial and gender justice more effectively during Church Council meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

(Agenda VI.C.)

Secretary Rothmeyer announced that there was no new business before the council.

CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM *EN BLOC*

(Agenda VI.D.)

Secretary Rothmeyer reported that no items had been removed from *en bloc*.

EN BLOC APPROVAL OF CERTAIN ITEMS

(Agenda VI.E.)

The *en bloc* resolution includes agenda items that were judged to be non-controversial in nature and did not require plenary discussion and a separate vote. As the items were voted on *en bloc*, there was no discussion. Vice President Siddiqui announced that because one of the *en bloc* actions was a constitutional amendment requiring a two-thirds vote, *en bloc* actions would be voted on in two actions.

VOTED: ***Two-Thirds Vote Required***

CC24.04.08 **To take action *en bloc* on the item amending the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* listed in *En Bloc* Items.**

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.08 **To adopt the following amendment to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:***

19.01.A23~~3~~4. *In a year when the presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary shall be elected, those who will serve as voting members of the upcoming Churchwide Assembly shall be invited to identify the names of up to three persons who might be considered for election as presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary. Names shall be submitted to the Office of the Secretary at least four months prior to the assembly. The Office of the Secretary shall contact those persons identified and request biographical information. At least ~~60~~30 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical*

information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members.

The vice president declared that the motion had passed and called for a vote on the remaining *en bloc* actions.

VOTED:

CC24.04.09 To take action *en bloc* on the remaining items listed in *En Bloc* Items, Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions, Responses to Synod Actions, and Responses to Previous Church Council Actions.

ACTIONS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

A. Revisions to Resolutions Regarding Authority to Act in Financial Matters

In April 2021, the Church Council adopted CC21.04.06a regarding the Appointment of Assistant Officers. This revision updated the appointments.

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09a RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant treasurers of this corporation: ~~Cecilia Favela,~~ Santiago Padilla, ~~and~~ Annette Roman, and Stephanie Ulba to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the Treasurer;

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing or attesting, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant secretaries of this corporation: Thomas A. Cunniff, ~~Aja M. Favors, and~~ Norman K. Fry, and Paul K. Irwin to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the Secretary.

RESOLVED, that prior resolutions adopted by this Council, including CC21.04.06a and the prior actions identified in CC15.04.31b, are hereby rescinded and replaced by this action.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Church Council meeting on Nov. 9–12, 2023, were provided to Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting.

The minutes of the council's Executive Committee meetings on Nov. 9, 2023, Dec. 12, 2023, Jan. 17, 2024, Feb. 20, 2024, and March 19, 2024, were provided to members of the Church Council electronically prior to the meeting. Minutes for the Jan. 10, 2024, meeting held in executive session were added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary.

Council members were invited to provide notations or typographical errors in the distributed text of the minutes to the Office of the Secretary prior to the meeting.

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09b. To approve the minutes of the Nov. 9–12, 2023, meeting of the Church Council; and

To ratify actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the Nov. 9, 2023, Dec. 12, 2023, Jan. 10, 2024, Jan. 17, 2024, Feb. 20, 2024, and March 19, 2024, meetings.

C. Church Council Appointments and Elections

The Church Council has the responsibility to elect people to fill terms on boards of separately incorporated ministries (SIMs), certain social ministry organizations, and seminaries. ELCA Constitution bylaws 8.21.03. and 8.21.04. outline basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries.

Biographical information for nominees was provided to Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting.

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09c1 **To elect to the advisory board of directors of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary at Lenoir-Rhyne University to a first term beginning June 1, 2024, and expiring May 31, 2028: The Rev. Kenneth Charles Blyth, the Rev. Jennifer Goodwin Roberts, Deacon Tammy Jones West, and the Rev. Michael Lonny Rhyne;**

To re-elect to the advisory board of directors of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary at Lenoir-Rhyne University to a term beginning June 1, 2024, and expiring May 31, 2026: The Rev. Richard Goeres; and

To re-elect to the advisory board of directors of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary at Lenoir-Rhyne University to a second term beginning June 1, 2024, and expiring May 31, 2028: The Rev. Angela Ford Nelson.

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09c2 **To re-elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University to a second term beginning July 1, 2024, and expiring June 30, 2027: The Rev. Niklaus Christian Schillack and the Rev. Abraham D. Allende.**

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09c3 **To re-elect to the board of directors of United Lutheran Seminary to a second term beginning July 1, 2024, and expiring June 30, 2027: Ms. Elizabeth Baran Wagner.**

[Note: *In the original action CC24.04.09c3, the election of Ms. Wagner was erroneously presented as a re-election to a second term. The error was later corrected by a vote of the Executive Committee of the Church Council (EC24.04.19).*]

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09c4 **To elect to the board of trustees of the Publishing House of the ELCA – 1517 Media – to fill a vacancy with a term expiring in August 2025: Mr. Kurt Barneson Galvez.**

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09c5 **To appoint to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc. with a three-year term expiring in 2027: Mr. Peter J. Enko.**

RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

D. Mission Development Process

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.10]

To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Equity and Clarity in the Mission Development Process" from the Delaware-Maryland Synod;

To refer this memorial to the Congregational Vitality Training and Development team in the Christian Community and Leadership home area to establish a working group in partnership with the appropriate leaders in the Delaware-Maryland Synod to study and refine current ELCA guidelines and systems for appointments, calls, funds, and support mechanisms for mission developers and new ministries; and

To request that the working group consult with and provide regular reports to the Church Council beginning by Fall 2023 to ensure that the purposes and objectives of this memorial are being fulfilled.

Response from the Christian Community and Leadership home area (November 2022)

The ELCA Christian Community and Leadership home area Congregational Vitality Training and Development Team leaders have contacted Delaware-Maryland Synod staff to create a working group in partnership with Delaware-Maryland Synod leaders who composed this memorial. The Rev. Sandra Chrostowski, senior director, Congregational Vitality and New Ministry Training and Development, and the Rev. Ruben Duran, senior advisor for New Ministry Development, have been appointed as conveners of this working group which will identify partners across this church for consultation and collaboration with the goal of scheduling an online meeting during the first quarter of 2023.

This working group will study and refine current ELCA guidelines and systems in place for appointments, calls, funding, and support mechanisms for mission developers and new ministries. The working group will also provide regular reports, beginning at the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting, to ensure that the purposes and objectives of this memorial are being fulfilled.

Church Council Action [CC22.11.34q]

To receive the progress report on "Equity and Clarity in the Mission Development Process" from the Christian Community and Leadership home area;

To request a progress report on the work by the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting; and

To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Christian Community and Leadership home area (November 2023)

In the beginning of 2023, there was a leadership transition and team realignment. Late in June, a new senior director was hired. With a new senior director came new priorities, one of which was to gain understanding of the grants and grants processes. An audit of the New Starts grants began in July and is nearing completion, after which a team will evaluate and redesign the granting process. This team will be made up of current directors for evangelical mission, including the Rev. Alejandro Mejía of the Delaware-Maryland Synod. The new grants process is scheduled to start next fiscal year. More will be reported by the next spring Church Council meeting.

Church Council action [CC23.11.20o]

To receive the response on "Equity and Clarity in the Mission Development Process" from the Christian Community and Leadership home area;

To request a progress report on the work by the Spring 2024 Church Council meeting; and

To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Christian Community and Leadership home area (April 2024)

An audit of New Starts grants was finished at the beginning of November 2023. On Nov. 10, the audit results were presented to the Christian Community and Leadership (CCL) Committee of the Church Council. Recruitment of team members was delayed due to the rolling out of the information so it could be shared with the Conference of Bishops (COB). On Feb. 8, 2024, the CCL Committee of the COB was briefed about the audit results and then they were shared with the entire COB.

On Feb. 22, 2024, the audit results were shared with the directors for evangelical mission (DEMs). Once that was complete DEMs were identified who would be invited to be a part of the Grants Restructure team. Those who accepted the invitation were the Rev. Alejandro Mejía (Delaware-Maryland Synod), Mr. Joey Ager (Southwestern Washington Synod), the Rev. Herb Shao (Northwest Washington Synod), Mr. Branden Dupree (Metropolitan New York Synod), the Rev. Rebel Hurd (Northwestern Minnesota Synod), the Rev. Matthew Short (Greater Milwaukee Synod), and the Rev. Miguel F. Gómez-Acosta (CCL). Two bishops will be invited into the conversations but have yet to be identified. All team members have agreed to meet in fiscal year 2024 to have final results for fiscal year 2025.

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09d **To receive the response on "Equity and Clarity in the Mission Development Process" from the Christian Community and Leadership home area;**

To request a final report by the Spring 2026 Church Council meeting; and

To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

E. Fortifying Urban Ministries

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.08]

To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Fortifying Ministries in Underserved Urban Areas" from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod;

To affirm the strategic direction of the ELCA Fund for Leaders ministry to enhance the capacity of people of color through its disbursement of scholarships to Theological Education for Emerging Ministries candidates;

To refer this memorial to the Congregational Vitality Training and Development Team in the Christian Community and Leadership home area to create a churchwide Urban Ministry group, in partnership with the appropriate leaders in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, to accompany ELCA synods in their urban strategies that lead to the enhancement of congregational vitality and ministry sustainability in the urban context. The group will 1)

collaborate with other studies already underway, 2) resource synods by gathering best practices in urban ministry and emerging ideas in the care and creative use of church facilities, 3) identify supportive networks within this church and among ecumenical partners, and 4) encourage piloting innovative ways to address the realities and complexities of urban ministry, including enhancing urban internship opportunities. The group may consider additional topics as needed;

To request that the churchwide Urban Ministry group consult with and provide regular reports to the Church Council to ensure that the purposes and objectives of this memorial are being fulfilled; and

To provide a final report to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly on the results of its study, new urban initiatives, and ways for this church to fortify the witness and service among people and communities in underserved urban areas.

Executive Committee Action [EC22.09.23b3]

To refer the 2022 Churchwide Assembly action on "Fortifying Urban Ministries in Underserved Urban Areas" to the Christian Community and Leadership home area for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Christian Community and Leadership home area (November 2022)

Responsibility for the implementation of this memorial has been assigned to the Christian Community and Leadership (CCL) home area. The Rev. Sandra Chrostowski, senior director, Congregational Vitality and New Ministry Training and Development, and the Rev. Ruben Duran, senior advisor for New Ministry Development, have been appointed as conveners of a churchwide organization group to address this memorial on urban ministry, in partnership with leaders in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod who sent this memorial forward and who passed a similar resolution on urban ministry for their synod.

Two initial action steps have been taken:

1. An initial consultation with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod staff has taken place. The synod has appointed the Rev. Regina Goodrich, pastor of Mediator Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, Penn., and dean of the synod's Central Conference, and the Rev. Brian Penman, the synod's director for evangelical mission, as *ad hoc* members of the Synod Task Force for Urban Ministry. They are identifying members for this task force and are planning to meet for the first time in early November.
2. Pastors Chrostowski and Duran have begun to develop criteria for the selection of participants for the churchwide group on Urban Ministry including representation from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod leadership. The intention is to have group membership finalized in December and to begin convening in early 2023.

Church Council action [CC22.11.34p.]

To receive the response on "Fortifying Urban Ministries in Underserved Urban Areas" from the Christian Community and Leadership home area;

To request a progress report on the work by the Spring 2024 Church Council meeting; and

To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Christian Community and Leadership Home Area (April 2024)

In the beginning of 2023, Christian Community and Leadership (CCL) experienced a leadership transition and team realignment. Late in June the new senior director, the Rev. Miguel F. Gómez-Acosta, was hired. Pastor Gómez-Acosta was able to touch base with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Bishop Patricia Davenport at the November 2023 Conference of Bishops meeting to identify who on her staff was the contact person for the Fortifying Urban Communities synod task force. However, due to other priorities having to do with budget cuts and responding to requests for ministry reviews, he was not able to connect with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod's director for evangelical mission (DEM), the Rev. Bryan Penman, until February 2024.

At that meeting, staff were notified that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod's task force has been meeting since 2022. As part of their work, they partnered with Innovation Lab to conduct surveys of their urban congregations. Pastor Penman agreed to serve on a churchwide organization team to discuss the issue and agreed to invite two other members from the task force to be a part of the national conversation.

Pastor Gómez-Acosta also followed up with the executive director for Innovation, Mr. Iain Chester. Mr. Chester reported that surveys and visitations were conducted in 2023. His team has a list of learnings that was shared with the

local task force and has agreed to share those findings at the first meeting of the churchwide organization's Fortifying Urban Ministries team. Currently staff are in the process of identifying other DEMs to serve on this team.

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09e **To receive the response on "Fortifying Urban Ministries in the Underserved Urban Areas" from the Christian Community and Leadership home area;**

To request a final report on the work by the Spring 2025 Church Council meeting; and

To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

F. Right to Boycott

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.05e]

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod and the New England Synod in relation to Palestinian human rights; and

To urge Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and ELCA members to call on the president of the United States and the U.S. Congress to oppose legislation penalizing or criminalizing support for nonviolent boycotts, divestment, and/or sanctions on behalf of Palestinian human rights.

Executive Committee Action [EC22.09.23b5]

To refer the 2022 Churchwide Assembly action on "Right to Boycott" to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Service and Justice home area for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synods of this action.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Service and Justice home area (November 2022)

The Public Messages Working Group, an internal churchwide organization working group, reviewed the request for the presiding bishop and ELCA members to call on the U.S. President and Congress to oppose legislation penalizing or criminalizing support for nonviolent boycotts, divestment, and/or sanctions on behalf of Palestinian human rights.

Given the current election cycle, staff recommend the request be postponed until the new Congress is in session. The intention would be to link an ELCA letter with ecumenical efforts or with a calendar event like a United Nations day or discussion. In preparation, a template and initial draft will be undertaken so the letter may be quickly edited and released when the timing is appropriate. The Church Council can expect a report on the outcomes by the April 2024 meeting.

Church Council Action [CC22.11.34t.]

To refer the 2022 Churchwide Assembly action on "Right to Boycott" to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Service and Justice home area for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synods of this action.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Service and Justice home area (April 2024)

The Public Messages Working Group has crafted a template and initial draft of an ELCA statement that would request the U.S. President and the U.S. Congress to oppose legislation penalizing or criminalizing support for nonviolent boycotts, divestment, and/or sanctions on behalf of Palestinian human rights. The intention would be to release the letter later this year, at a time when it will best benefit public conversation on this matter.

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09f **To receive the response on "Right to Boycott" from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Service and Justice home area;**

To commend the staff to release an ELCA letter to the U.S. President and the U.S. Congress to oppose legislation penalizing or criminalizing support for nonviolent boycotts, divestment, and/or sanctions on behalf of Palestinian human rights at a time when it will best benefit public conversation on this matter; and

To request that the secretary inform the synods of this action.

G. Black Migrant Strategy

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.09]

To receive with gratitude the memorial on "ELCA Strategy Regarding Black Migrants" from the Delaware-Maryland Synod;

To direct the Service and Justice home area, in consultation with the program directors for African Descent Ministries, African Nationals, and Latino Ministries; African Descent Strategy Team; African Descent Lutheran Association; Association of Latino Ministries of the ELCA; and Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities (AMMPARO), to prepare a proposal for the strengthening of advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants, that includes cost estimates, for Church Council consideration by its Spring 2024 meeting;

To strengthen the current protection and accompaniment of Black migrants through AMMPARO in partnership with ecumenical and interfaith partners both domestically and internationally;

To recommit this church to advocating for Temporary Protected Status and just and humane immigration policy through the Witness in Society team within the Service and Justice home area; and

To encourage congregations to affirm the aims of the African Descent Strategy Implementation Plan for 2020–2025 and the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent.

Response from the Service and Justice home area (April 2024)

The Service and Justice (S&J) home area received the 2022 Churchwide Assembly action requesting the preparation of a proposal for the strengthening of advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants, including cost estimates, for Church Council consideration by its Spring 2024 meeting. However, upon further review of the strategy's scope, it was determined that S&J would benefit from more input from stakeholders. It was clear that more time would be needed to prepare a well-rounded proposal. The program director for migration policy, in consultation with the Service and Justice interim executive director and the program director for African Descent Ministries, initiated a process to obtain more input from stakeholders with direct relationships with people and communities of African descent. In November, S&J formally invited stakeholders from across the ELCA to form part of a task force dedicated to "advising, developing, and implementing" the Black Migrant Strategy.

As stated in the assembly action, representatives from these groups were invited to form part of the Black Migrant Strategy Task Force: African Descent Ministries, Latino Ministries, Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities (AMMPARO), African National, African Descent Strategy Team, African Descent Lutheran Association, and the Association of Latino Ministries of the ELCA. The task force met for the first time on Jan. 8, 2024. The first task force meeting set expectations for the work, provided an opportunity for participants to share why they were motivated to work on this proposal, and laid out the next steps.

The proposal will receive further attention at the next meeting of the task force this spring. The program director for migration policy, in consultation with the task force, aims to provide a proposal for the strengthening of advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants, that includes cost estimates, for Church Council consideration by its Fall 2024 meeting. In the meantime, a report summarizing projects and programs, through AMMPARO, that address migrants of African descent from 2021–2023 is being developed to share with the task force to aid the development of the proposal.

Proposal Timeline:

Date	Topic	Status
Nov. 10, 2023	Initiate task force	Completed
Jan. 8, 2024	Task force meeting	Completed
March 18, 2024	Deadline for Church Council response	Completed
April–May 2024	Task force meeting	

Summer 2024	Draft Proposal	
Fall 2024	Finalize Proposal	

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09g **To receive the response on "ELCA Strategy Regarding Black Migrants" from the Service and Justice home area;**

To request a final proposal for the strengthening of advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants, including cost estimates, for Church Council consideration by its November 2024 meeting; and

To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

RESPONSES TO SYNOD ACTIONS

H. Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings

Northern Illinois Synod (5B) [2021]

WHEREAS, anti-Semitic words, deeds, and attitudes do real harm to our Jewish neighbors; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has repudiated anti-Semitism and expressed its desire to live in "love and respect for the Jewish people" ("Declaration to the Jewish Community," 1994); and

WHEREAS, passages of the New Testament which can be interpreted as anti-Jewish or supercessionist (i.e. supporting the idea that God has rejected the Jews) are included in our lectionary; and

WHEREAS, in the time in which the New Testament was written, the word Ἰουδαῖοι (ee-oo-DIE-oy), was used as a marker of geographic and ethnic identity (that is, it denoted people from Judaea as distinct from Galilee, Samaria, or other parts of the world) and "Israelite" was used to identify the people who worshiped the God of Israel wherever they lived, that is the people whom we today would identify as "Jewish;" and

WHEREAS, the word "Jews" in the New Testament is usually an inaccurate translation of the Greek Ἰουδαῖοι, and

WHEREAS, the preferred translation used by Augsburg Fortress is the NRSV, which uses the inaccurate and potentially harmful translation "Jews" in almost every instance; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the preachers and teachers of the Northern Illinois Synod be encouraged to address the issues of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish theology (such as the teaching that the Jewish people are responsible for the death of Jesus and/or the idea that God has rejected the Jews); and, be it further

RESOLVED, that preachers, teachers, and lectors of the Northern Illinois Synod be encouraged, when reading in public, to substitute a more appropriate translation of Ἰουδαῖοι where the English translation uses the word "Jews." Examples include "Judaeans," "Religious Leaders," and "locals;" and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for referral and disposition to the appropriate unit or office of the churchwide organization in accordance with the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church in order to address the issues of anti-Jewish language in this church's lectionary and teaching materials.

Executive Committee Action [EC22.06.19c5]

To refer the "Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings" resolution from the Northern Illinois Synod to the Worship Team in the Christian Community and Leadership home area, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Christian Community and Leadership home area (November 2022)

The concern about anti-Jewish interpretations of biblical texts is not new and remains an important challenge for this church to address. Two issues are often at play. One is interpretation of translations of biblical texts (as this resolution identifies) and the other is how the readings are grouped together for public worship, for example in the Revised Common Lectionary.

Several resources are already available to help guide worship planners and preachers in navigating these important concerns. "Preaching and Teaching with Love and Respect for the Jewish People" is recently available from the ELCA Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations. This resource explores challenging topics, lectionary selections, and Bible passages to inform Christian preaching and teaching so that they respect the integrity of the Jewish tradition

and avoid anti-Jewish interpretations of New Testament texts. Another key resource developed by the panel is "Talking Points: Topics in Christian-Jewish Relations," especially #5 on "Difficult Texts."

An essay titled, "'The Jews' in John's Passion," was published in the 2020 edition of the *Sundays and Seasons* worship planning resource from Augsburg Fortress. This essay includes an emended translation of the passion according to John for use on Good Friday. This essay and emended text are now available both on SundaysAndSeasons.com and on ELCA.org.

Similar emendation principles were used in *Readings for the Assembly*, a three-year lectionary resource published in 1995–1997. An emended edition of *Readings for the Assembly* is being made available on SundaysAndSeasons.com for provisional use beginning this Advent. The Principles for Emendation note alignment with guidance on "Language and the Christian Assembly" in the 2002 ELCA document *Principles for Worship*, the updated edition of the NRSV (NRSVue) published in 2021, and follow the encouragement of *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* (2019).

Ecumenical and full communion partners are having similar conversations regarding anti-Jewish interpretations of biblical readings. The Episcopal Church, at its general convention in July 2022, adopted a resolution that calls for a task force "to address both the anti-Semitic, anti-Jewish or supercessionist impact of lectionary readings, especially for Holy Week, and to develop proposals to mitigate that impact." The ELCA is a member of the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT), which is an ecumenical consultation of liturgical scholars and denominational representatives from the United States and Canada. The CCT was instrumental in the development of the Revised Common Lectionary. Ongoing conversation with these groups, and others, will be important as the ELCA considers future recommendations. The ELCA Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations is prepared to support ELCA Worship team's participation in these efforts.

The ELCA Worship team will continue conversation with key stakeholders, such as the Worship Resource Development Working Group (the combined worship teams of the churchwide organization and 1517 Media/Augsburg Fortress); the Consultation on Common Texts; ecumenical partners such as The Episcopal Church; the Conference of Bishops; and will be in consultation with the executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment and the ELCA Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations. In addition, the ELCA Worship team and the Worship Development staff at 1517 Media/Augsburg Fortress will ensure these topics are addressed when considering future resources such as preaching helps and worship formation.

Church Council Action [CC22.11.34z.]

To receive the progress report on "Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings" from the Christian Community and Leadership home area;

To request an update be provided by the Spring 2024 Church Council meeting; and

To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Worship Team (April 2024)
[The Worship Team moved from the Christian Community and Leadership home area to the Office of the Presiding Bishop]

In response to this resolution in the ELCA and a similar resolution in The Episcopal Church, the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT) met in May 2023 and voted to establish a working group on Anti-Semitism and the Lectionary. The working group, which is expected to bring an interim report to the April 2024 meeting of the CCT, will investigate three possible courses of action: offering alternative readings during Holy Week and certain other parts of the liturgical year, creating a statement about Jewish-Christian relations for use with the lectionary, and recommending specific translations for particular passages or words. The CCT is an ecumenical collaboration of liturgical scholars and denominational representatives from the United States and Canada who produce liturgical texts and curate a three-year lectionary for common use by Christian churches worldwide.

As the CCT continues its work and anticipates future recommendations in collaboration with the ELCA and other denominations, the ELCA Worship team will seek to educate within the ELCA on appropriate resources to address anti-Jewish interpretations in the lectionary. Future posts on the ELCA Worship blog are planned as more consensus is made on appropriate next steps.

A review and evaluation of the provisional emended edition of *Readings for the Assembly* is planned in the next year. Although anti-Jewish interpretation is only one principle being addressed in this work, the feedback gained in the review process will help inform future work in the ELCA and ecumenically.

Ongoing worship resource development in the ELCA, by both the ELCA Worship team and by Augsburg Fortress/1517 Media, will continue to address this topic as appropriate, such as in preaching essays or ideas for relevant days in the lectionary.

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09h **To receive the update from the Office of the Presiding Bishop on the "Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings" resolution;**

To commend the Worship team in its ongoing efforts to address this topic in collaboration with ELCA and ecumenical partners, and by distributing and contextualizing future resources from The Consultation on Common Texts and other sources; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

I. Support of Jubilee USA Network

Upstate New York Synod (7D) [2023]

[Originally submitted as a memorial to the Office of the Secretary, but the resolution did not memorialize the Churchwide Assembly. The secretary has determined that the action should be reclassified as a resolution.]

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council of the Upstate New York Synod memorialize the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to reaffirm its support of the Jubilee USA Network in an updated social policy resolution.

Executive Committee action [EC23.11.53c2]

To refer the "Support of Jubilee USA Network" resolution from the Upstate New York Synod to the Witness and Society team in the Service and Justice home area for a report or a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Response from Service and Justice, Witness and Society Team (April 2024)

The ELCA is a founding member of the Jubilee USA Network, a coalition of interreligious partners who work together to tackle the structural causes of poverty and toward canceling the debt of poor countries around the world so that resources may be redirected to reduce poverty and provide healthcare and education for those most in need.

In recent years, Jubilee USA won debt relief in Haiti and the three Ebola-impacted West African countries, bankruptcy legislation for Puerto Rico, three international agreements to promote responsible lending and stop predatory lending, two victories to keep student loan interest rates low, G7 and G20 agreements to curb tax evasion and corruption and promoted trade agreements that help end poverty. The work of Jubilee USA Network deepens and extends the advocacy work of the ELCA by providing expertise and capacity and targeted work on debt, tax, trade, and transparency policies that help end poverty.

Witness in Society (WIS) staff and Jubilee USA Network's staff are in regular conversation and engage in joint advocacy efforts. In recent years, they have held joint advocacy meetings with various entities of the federal government and multilateral organizations, including with staff at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the International Monetary Fund, and the U.S. Federal Reserve. During the COVID-19 pandemic, WIS and Jubilee USA Network's staff collaborated on advocacy efforts to ensure low-income countries had access to COVID-19 vaccines. This included facilitation of Bishop Eaton's participation in a high-level meeting on global vaccine access with the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Janet Yellen. Other advocacy activities have included joining together on targeted sign-on letters to policymakers to highlight concerns related to structural causes of poverty and high levels of debt in low-income countries and Puerto Rico. In addition, WIS staff represent the ELCA on the Board of Directors for Jubilee USA Network. Jubilee USA Network receives an annual ELCA Advocacy Partnership Grant to support its advocacy activities.

The 1999 Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution in support of the Jubilee 2000: USA Campaign.

The Witness in Society team recommends that the Church Council reaffirm the ELCA's support of the Jubilee USA Network in a new social policy resolution (SPR), in the spirit of the resolution by the Upstate New York Synod Council. All SPRs that are 25 years old are reviewed and often archived and the Jubilee 2000: USA Campaign (CA99.03.06) SPR will automatically be reviewed because of its age. The Church Council would need to authorize the development of a new SPR. In consultation with Theological Ethics in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, it has

been determined that an April authorization could likely mean a resolution for consideration at the November 2024 Church Council meeting.

VOTED: ***EN BLOC***

CC24.04.09i **Resolved, that a social policy resolution on affirming Jubilee USA Network be presented to the November 2024 Church Council meeting in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (2018); and**

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(Agenda VI.F.)

Secretary Rothmeyer announced that there was one piece of unfinished business before the council.

ELCA CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL POLICIES (*CONT.*)

Vice President Siddiqui reminded Church Council members of the business before the council.

Moved;

[Seconded]: **To approve the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies; and**

To authorize the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with People Solutions in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to make any necessary editorial corrections for accuracy.

Pastor Engquist moved to amend the original motion by substitution.

Moved;
Seconded;

Carried: **To substitute the following paragraph for paragraph 2.6.3 of the originally proposed revision of Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies:**

2.6.3. Restrictions Applicable to Certain Positions

Except for the salaried officers, employees of the churchwide organization may not serve as voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, as voting or advisory members of the Church Council, or as voting or advisory members of the boards of separately incorporated ministries, the Committee on Appeals, the Committee on Discipline, the Committee of Hearing Officers, or the Nominating Committee. Employees may serve as advisors or staff support to any such board, however, or as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly, as provided in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. For purposes of this provision only, "employees of the churchwide organization" includes employees of synods whose compensation is provided, in whole or in part, and who are supervised, in whole or in part, by the churchwide organization pursuant to a purchase of services agreement specific to that employee. It does not include employees of congregations, synods, or other ministries merely because their compensation may be paid, in whole or in part, from funds received as grants from synods or the churchwide organization, nor does it include those under short-term contracts (usually not to exceed six months) with the churchwide organization for specific, limited purposes. (*This provision, as it relates to advisory members and employees under purchase of service agreements, is effective September 1, 2025.)*

Vice President Siddiqui declared that the motion to amend by substitution had passed and called for a vote on the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies as further amended by the Church Council.

VOTED:

CC24.04.10 **To approve the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies; and**

To authorize the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with People Solutions in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to make any necessary editorial corrections for accuracy.

EVALUATION AND DEBRIEFING

(Agenda VII.G)

Vice President Siddiqui led the council in discussion of the flow of the meeting and reflection on the work carried out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Agenda VII.H.)

Secretary Rothmeyer and Vice President Siddiqui provided various announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

The 116th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA adjourned at 11:17 a.m. on April 14, 2024, following devotions.