

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN
AMERICA**

Church Council

MINUTES

Oct. 2–3, 2025

**Prepared by the
Office of the Secretary**

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**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES
Oct. 2–3, 2025**

The 120th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) convened Oct. 2–3, 2025, in the Symphony III Room of the Hilton Minneapolis Hotel in Minneapolis, Minn.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

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

Voting members

Officers:

The Rev. Yehiel Curry, presiding bishop
Mr. Imran Siddiqui, vice president
Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary
Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer

Vice Chair of the Conference of Bishops:

The Rev. Deborah K. Hutterer, bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod

Church Council:

The Rev. A. Elizabeth (Lisa) Ahlness	Ms. Olivia L. Martin-Call
The Rev. Ryan H. Anderson	Mr. Mitch S. McCartney
The Rev. Heather E. Brown	Mr. Joel A. Miller
Ms. Jamie Brueschoff	The Rev. Alvaro Nova
The Rev. Leroy Cannon	Ms. Deborah M. Nyquist
Mr. Benjamin J. Caseley	Deacon Kari A. Olsen
The Rev. Daniel Collins	The Rev. Moses P. Penumaka
Ms. Sheena R. Foster	Mr. Iván A. Pérez
Mr. Hans W. Giller	Ms. Linda C. Rivera (<i>excused</i>)
Ms. Jessi Grieser	Ms. Terri L. Robertson (<i>remote</i>)
Ms. Patricia P. Harper	The Rev. Barbara R. Rossing
Ms. Deidre D. Hayes	Ms. Spencer Sanders
Ms. Kristy K. Henriksen	Mr. Matthew A. Schur
Mr. Timothy Hiller	Mr. Andrew W. Stevens
The Rev. Chad M. Huebner (<i>excused</i>)	Ms. Jillian C. Stierwalt
Mr. Rindra Josoa	Ms. Jennifer E. Trom
Mr. Moses Kavishe	Mr. Christopher A. Vergara
The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King	Ms. Emma L. Witt

Liaisons from the Conference of Bishops:

Bishop Brenda K. Bos, Region 2	Bishop Scott Johnson, Region 4
Bishop Amy L. Current, Region 5	Bishop Meggan Manlove, Region 1
Bishop Christopher deForest, Region 7	Bishop Craig A. Schweitzer, Region 3
Bishop Suzanne D. Dillahunt, Region 6	Bishop Kevin L. Strickland, Region 9
Bishop William J. Gohl, Region 8	

Advisory members of the Church Council:

The Rev. Jesse W. Brown Jr., president, African Descent Lutheran Association
The Rev. Joann Conroy, president, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association
Ms. Desta Goehner, president, Association of White Lutherans for Racial Justice
The Rev. Alejandro Mejía, president, Asociación de Ministerios Latinos – ELCA
The Rev. Bimen Limbong, president, Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders
Mr. Ryan LaHurd, president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
Ms. Aubrey Thonvold, executive director, ReconcilingWorks

Churchwide Staff Resource People:

Office of the Presiding Bishop:

The Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration
Mr. Aaron Cooper, senior director for strategic communications
Mr. Ryan P. Cumming, director for theological ethics (*remote*)
Ms. Jennifer G. DeLeon, director for racial justice
The Rev. Ernie Hinojosa, associate executive for vision
The Rev. Louise N. Johnson, executive for vision
Ms. Rhondean Johnson, executive, human resources and diversity, equity and inclusion
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment
The Rev. Kaari Reiersen, director for corporate social responsibility (*remote*)
Ms. Mary J. Streufert, executive director for theological discernment
Deacon John E. Weit, executive for worship
The Rev. Roger A. Willer, program director for theological ethics (*remote*)
Ms. Rachel K. Wind, executive for development

Office of the Secretary:

Mr. Dana Adams, director for meeting management
Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel
Mr. Adam DeHoek, senior director for research and evaluation (*remote*)
Mr. Dan F. Eppley, manager for official documentation (*remote*)
The Rev. N. Keith Fry, executive for Office of the Secretary administration
Mr. Paul K. Irwin, associate general counsel
Deacon MaryAnn Schwabe, executive for synod relations
Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, executive for governance

Christian Community and Leadership:

The Rev. Sara A. Cutter, interim executive director

Service and Justice:

The Rev. Khader El-Yateem, executive director

Innovation:

Ms. Rahel Mwitula-Williams, interim executive director

Media:

Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, public relations manager

Separately Incorporated Ministries:

Mr. Tim Blevins, president and CEO, Augsburg Fortress Publishers
Mr. Andrew DeYoung, president-elect and CEO-elect, Augsburg Fortress Publishers
Ms. Jennifer Hockenbery, interim executive director, Women of the ELCA
Mr. Christopher Johnson, president and CEO, Portico Benefit Services
Ms. Eva Roby, president and CEO, Mission Investment Fund
Ms. Annette Shoemaker, interim president and CEO, ELCA Foundation

Ecumenical and International Guests:

The Rev. Deborah Jackson, ecumenical liaison of The Episcopal Church (USA) (*remote*)
The Rev. Panti Filibus Musa, archbishop of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria
Mr. Paul S. Tch , president of the Christian unity and interfaith ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
in the United States and Canada

Guest:

The Rev. Lucille “CeCee” Mills, secretary-elect

Thursday, Oct. 2, 2025
PLENARY SESSION I

MORNING PRAYER

The first plenary session was preceded by morning prayer led by the Rev. Gwendolyn S. King.

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 first plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA to order at 9:06 a.m. The Rev. Yehiel Curry, presiding bishop of the ELCA, opened the meeting with prayer. Vice President Siddiqui invited council members, liaison bishops, and advisory members to introduce themselves; following introductions, he reviewed the agenda for the meeting. Agenda items were distributed to council members electronically prior to the meeting.

A motion was made to adopt the agenda. Vice President Siddiqui invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC25.10.32 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 Yehiel Curry described his preparations for beginning his tenure as presiding bishop, noting that his primary emphasis for his first year will be connectivity in this church. This will be the lens through which he will approach his work as presiding bishop.

PRESENTATION OF WELCOME GIFT FROM THE ASOCIACIÓN DE MINISTERIOS LATINOS

(Agenda I.B.1.)

On behalf of the Asociación de Ministerios Latinos, the Rev. Alejandro Mejía, president of the association, presented the presiding bishop with a gift to serve as a reminder that he is in the prayers of members of the association.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY, AND ACTING CHAIR OF THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

(Agenda I.C.)

Vice President Siddiqui, Secretary Sue E. Rothmeyer, and the Rev. Deborah K. Hutterer, bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod and vice chair of the Conference of Bishops, invited questions from council members regarding their respective written reports.

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

(Agenda I.D.)

The Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration, provided an introduction to the Administrative Team, explaining that the purpose of the team is to provide support to the presiding bishop. Members of the Administrative Team, the Rev. Sara A. Cutter, interim executive director for Christian Community and Leadership, the Rev. Khader El-Yateem, executive director for Service and Justice, Ms. Rahel Mwitula-Williams, interim executive director for Innovation, and Ms. Rachel K. Wind, executive for development, introduced themselves and outlined the work of the units and offices they lead.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM THE 2025 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

(Agenda I.E.)

Vice President Siddiqui reminded council members that the 2025 Churchwide Assembly ended before the assembly had time to consider three memorials received from synod assemblies. In accordance with the Rules of

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Organization and Procedure adopted by the assembly, any unfinished business of the assembly is referred to the Church Council for disposition. Proposed actions were received from the Memorials Committee.

RESPONSE TO MEMORIAL CATEGORIZED AS C2: UPDATE SOCIAL STATEMENT ON ABORTION
(Agenda I.E.1.)

The first of these memorials related to updating the ELCA’s social statement on abortion.

Northern Illinois Synod (5B) [2023]

WHEREAS, the 1991 Social Statement on Abortion (SSoA) may have been adequate for its time allowing for and addressing diversity of perspectives; and

WHEREAS, SSoA does not directly address more current medical perspectives; and

WHEREAS, SSoA does not address the historical ecclesiastical understanding of when human life begins; and

WHEREAS, SSoA does not address the broader understanding of ‘family’ – regarding sexual orientation and 21st century family units; and

WHEREAS, SSoA might consider expanding on how to right the injustices regarding life before and after birth – namely such things as pre-natal care, a living wage, family leave, social networks to support children and their families; and

WHEREAS, SSoA might consider expanding the extenuating circumstances that may call for an abortion in the light of more recent social conditions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to revise, update, or create a new Social Statement on Abortion; and be it further

RESOLVED, this process should include the partnership of clergy, deacons, and lay people who have or have had uterus as well as medical professionals, including genetic counselors, perinatologist/maternal fetal medicine doctors, NICU providers, fetal palliative care providers, and OBGYNs of our synods and congregations.

On behalf of the Memorials Committee, Secretary Rothmeyer moved the committee’s proposed response to the memorial. Council members asked for and received clarification regarding the nature of social policy resolutions from Ms. Mary J. Streufert, executive director for theological discernment, and Mr. Ryan P. Cumming, director for theological ethics.

VOTED:

CC25.10.33

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Northern Illinois Synod on updating the social statement on *Abortion* (1991) or to create a new social statement on this issue;

To re-affirm the theological and ethical teachings of the social statement on *Abortion* and its study guide because of its attention to complexity and nuance and its continued use in discernment and conversation;

To encourage study of recent resources such as the book *ReEngaging ELCA Social Teaching on Abortion* by Caryn D. Riswold (Augsburg Fortress, 2024) that analyzes the foundations and contemporary applications of this social statement;

To refer the memorial to churchwide organization staff members of Theological Ethics and Gender Justice and Women’s Empowerment to develop additional study resources to address the concerns expressed in this memorial;

To decline at this time the request to update, revise, or create a new social statement on *Abortion*; and

To direct that the ELCA Church Council authorize the development of a social policy resolution that applies the ELCA statement on *Abortion* to the challenging personal struggles and pastoral issues brought about because some social conditions have changed since 1991.

RESPONSE TO MEMORIAL CATEGORIZED AS C8: SOCIAL MESSAGE ON RURAL LIFE AND MINISTRY
(Agenda I.E.2.)

The second memorial related to a social message on rural life and ministry.

Montana Synod (1F) [2025]

WHEREAS, nearly one-third of ELCA congregations minister in rural and remote communities; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census marks a significant population movement from rural to urban communities indicating challenges for rural congregations to maintain membership and giving; and

WHEREAS, rural communities face significant inequities in health, education, and economic opportunity when compared to urban communities; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has not produced materials for theological reflection on the challenges facing and gifts provided by rural communities since its inception; and

WHEREAS, rural and remote congregations offer models of innovation and adaptation to economic and sociological constraints for ministry; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Montana Synod memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to commission a study and the production of a social message on the challenges facing rural and remote communities and gifts provided by ministry in rural and remote contexts; furthermore, be it

RESOLVED, that Montana Synod memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to encourage and equip synods and member congregations to dedicate a time of study on rural and remote issues and rural ministry; and be it further

RESOLVED that this message reflect the diversity of rural communities across geographic regions to include consideration of remote communities and sovereign tribal nations.

On behalf of the Memorials Committee, Secretary Rothmeyer moved the committee's proposed response to the memorial. Vice President Siddiqui invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC25.10.34

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Montana Synod for development of a new social message on the challenges facing rural, remote communities, and sovereign Tribal Nations, and gifts provided by ministry in rural and remote contexts;

To direct Theological Discernment staff in the ELCA churchwide organization to review the request for a new social message on rural, remote communities, and sovereign Tribal Nations and bring a recommendation to the ELCA Church Council no later than the Spring 2026 meeting on what means should be authorized to address the questions involved; and

To direct Christian Community and Leadership staff in the ELCA churchwide organization to assess available resources on rural congregations and communities and to provide a report and recommendation for resource development to the ELCA Church Council no later than Fall 2026.

RESPONSE TO MEMORIAL CATEGORIZED AS D1: JUSTICE FOR PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS

(Agenda I.E.3.)

The third memorial related to a justice for Palestinians and Israelis.

Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2024]

WHEREAS, the ELCA in its Social Statement *For Peace in God's World* has committed to serve as "a reconciling presence" and to promote respect for human rights, particularly for "groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has denounced the attacks and hostage-taking on October 7, 2023, by Hamas and has denounced the subsequent disproportionate death toll among Palestinian civilians; and

WHEREAS, we deplore the illegal settlements and the Israeli military occupation in Palestine and the killing of more than 34,000 civilians in Gaza since October 7, 2023; and we lament both the destruction of Gaza's infrastructure, housing, schools and universities, hospitals, and places of worship—and the reality that 2.2 million people are experiencing displacement and facing malnutrition and starvation, as a result primarily of Israel's continuing air strikes and blocking entry of humanitarian aid trucks; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Presiding Bishop and Conference of Bishops have expressed sorrow over the loss of innocent lives on both sides and have called for a ceasefire and for resumption of negotiations toward an overall political resolution; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in assembly to lament the trauma experienced by Palestinians and Israelis over the course of the past two years, as well

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as the resurrected historic traumas experienced by both peoples; and to confess that as Americans we share responsibility for what has taken place; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in assembly to urge the United States Administration and Congress to work to end the Israeli occupation in Palestine; to stop the unconditional supply of weapons and military aid to Israel; and to support and participate fully in the restoration of infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

On behalf of the Memorials Committee, Secretary Rothmeyer moved the committee’s proposed response to the memorial. Vice President Siddiqui invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC25.10.35 To receive with gratitude the memorial on “Justice for Palestinians and Israelis” from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod;

To reaffirm this church’s commitment, set forth in the social statement *For Peace in God’s World* (1995), to serve as a reconciling presence, including through promoting respect for human rights, particularly for “groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children”:

To lament the trauma experienced by Palestinians and Israelis and encourage congregations to recognize and respond to the need to confess shared responsibility for the suffering;

To reaffirm this church’s sense of urgency for ongoing advocacy, awareness, and accompaniment through the Sumud initiative;

To request that the Service and Justice unit, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, implement the recommendations in the memorial for continuing accompaniment, awareness-raising, and advocacy efforts to end the Israeli occupation in Palestine, to stop the unconditional supply of weapons and military aid to Israel, and to support and participate fully in the restoration of infrastructure in the Gaza Strip; and

To request that the Service and Justice unit provide a report to the Church Council at its Spring 2026 meeting.

RECESS

The first plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council recessed at 9:56 a.m. and reconvened at 10:15 a.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The 120th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America entered executive session at 10:15 a.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 10:19 a.m.

REPORT OF ACTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Vice President Siddiqui reported that the following action took place during executive session.

VOTED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

CCES25.10.36 To appoint the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock as interim executive for administration, beginning Oct. 1, 2025.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.F.)

Vice President Siddiqui updated the council on recent work of the Executive Committee of the Church Council.

RATIFICATION OF APPOINTMENTS TO CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

(Agenda I.F.1)

Following the elections at the Churchwide Assembly, newly elected Church Council members indicated their committee preferences. At its September 2025 meeting, the Executive Committee completed its review of the requests and determined committee assignments to recommend to the Church Council. The proposed committee assignments were shared with council members electronically prior to the meeting.

Secretary Rothmeyer moved ratification of the appointments on behalf of the Executive Committee. Vice President Siddiqui invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC25.10.37 To ratify the appointments recommended by the Executive Committee of the Church Council to the Church Council standing committees for the 2025–2028 triennium.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBER INTERACTION WITH SYNODS

(Agenda I.F.2)

Since its November 2005 meeting, the Church Council has committed itself to building relationships between the churchwide organization and synods, congregations, and related institutions, organizations, and ministries at the beginning of each triennium. Church Council members are encouraged to engage with their synods whenever possible and to commit to doing so.

Secretary Rothmeyer moved the proposed action on behalf of the Executive Committee. Vice President Siddiqui invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

VOTED:

**CC25.10.38 To acknowledge the commitment of the Church Council to have greater interaction of members of the Church Council with synod councils and synod assemblies in their respective areas; and
To encourage members of the Church Council to accept this responsibility and interact with their own synods in various ways.**

ELECTION PROCESS FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT-LARGE POSITIONS

(Agenda I.F.3)

At its first meeting after the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council elects members to at-large positions on the Executive Committee.

To facilitate its work between regular meetings by ensuring input and perspectives from each of its standing committees, the chairs of these committees are elected to the Executive Committee. This was acted upon at the April 2025 Church Council meeting [CC25.04.24d2].

The Executive Committee recommended that the remaining three members of the Executive Committee be selected through the following process:

- a. The first ballot shall be a nominating ballot for each of the following identified categories:
 - 1). Rostered man from the class of 2031 (one position). Vote for only one eligible nominee.
 - 2). Lay man from the class of 2031 (one position). Vote for only one eligible nominee.
 - 3). Lay person (one position). Vote for only one eligible nominee.
- b. Any nominee wishing to withdraw may do so prior to the established deadline.
- c. The second ballot for the first two categories shall be conducted first. Each ticket shall be limited to the two people (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of legal votes on the ballot who have not withdrawn. The one nominee on each ticket receiving the highest number of legal votes cast shall be elected.
- d. The second ballot for the third category shall list all remaining eligible lay persons who have not withdrawn. The nominee receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected.
- e. Upon completion of the balloting, the Executive Committee shall be deemed constituted.

Secretary Rothmeyer moved affirmation of the process on behalf of the Executive Committee. Vice President Siddiqui announced that, following the first ballot, any nominee who did not withdraw their name from consideration

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would be asked to respond in writing to the following prompt: “What gifts, passion, or perspective would you bring to the Executive Committee?”

The vice president provided additional clarification regarding the proposed election process, invited discussion, and, there being none, called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC25.10.39 To affirm the process for the election of the Executive Committee for the 2025–2028 triennium.

CONFERRING OF HONORARY TITLE

At the November 2014 Church Council meeting, the honorary title “presiding bishop *emeritus*” was conferred upon the three former presiding bishops of the ELCA: the Rev. Herbert W. Chilstrom, the Rev. H. George Anderson, and the Rev. Mark S. Hanson [CC14.11.30]. Within the ELCA, there is an understanding that when the title is conferred, the use of the title does not continue the person’s service or function within the churchwide organization. Executive Committee proposed that this honorific title be bestowed on the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton.

Secretary Rothmeyer moved the proposed action on behalf of the Executive Committee. Vice President Siddiqui invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC25.10.40 To confer on the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton the honorary title of “presiding bishop *emerita*.”

UPDATES ON CERTAIN CHURCH COUNCIL ACTIONS

(Agenda II.D.2.)

The Church Council acted on a number of recommendations from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. The Executive Committee is responsible for following up as needed on these actions and provided an update on responses to date.

- *Appointment of members to the Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose (see CC25.04.07):*

This task force has several directives for its work, including:

- Assess the adequacy and clarity of the several purpose statements in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* and make recommendations for modification;
- Assess the impact of the current governance structures and interdependence of the three expressions of this church on the fulfillment of its mission, and in so doing, develop recommendations for governance improvements;
- Consider how existing governance structures have (or may have) perpetuated systemic inequalities, and in so doing, develop recommendations to promote inclusion and equity; and
- Evaluate the current structure of the synods (including number, geographic boundaries, governance structure, and other relevant factors) and make recommendations for change.

In addition, the Churchwide Assembly referred memorials in three categories to this task force:

- Memorials in Category B1: Accompaniment and Accountability of Bishops
- Memorials in Category B6: Legal Action in Support of ELCA Communities
- The memorial in Category B7: Congregation Constitutions

The task force will make periodic progress reports to the Executive Committee and present a report and recommendations to the Fall 2027 Church Council meeting. Vice President Siddiqui provided the names of persons appointed to the task force: Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry, Secretary Lucille “CeCee” Mills, Ms. Kathryn Baerwald, Ms. Rachel Faulkner, Bishop Regina Hassanally, Ms. Cherrish Holland, Mx. Ruth Ellen Howard, Mr. Mitch McCartney, Mr. Ian McFarland, Mr. Anthony Ormsbee-Hale, Mr. Frank Roth, the Rev. Adam Sornchai, Deacon Lindsay Stertzbach, and Mr. Simon Wong.

- *Addition of a timeline to “immediate action on dismantling racism” response (see CC25.04.04):*

At its April 2025 meeting, the Church Council acted on a recommendation from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church titled “Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism.” The recommendation “urges the

creation of mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination.” [CC25.04.04]

In addition, the 2025 Churchwide Assembly voted to direct the Church Council “to add a timeline to its actions taken in response to CRLC Recommendation 1 and to provide progress updates to this church with a final report by Fall 2027, including possible constitutional changes, and to recommend that if this work is not accomplished by Fall 2027, the Church Council consider calling a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the governing documents of this church.” [CA25.02.08]

Vice President Siddiqui announced that the Executive Committee of the Church Council intended to meet with the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity (STAD) Advisory Team in early 2026 to discuss the response of the Church Council to the Churchwide Assembly and Church Council directives. In response to a question from an advisory member of the Church Council, Mr. Mitch S. McCartney, member of the Executive Committee and of the Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose, provided additional details regarding the demographic diversity of the persons on the Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose.

- *Deferment of consideration of ELCA Name Change (see CC24.11.20u):*

At its November 2024 meeting, the Church Council received a response from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church regarding the complexities surrounding the question of whether the denomination name, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” should be changed. Vice President Siddiqui reported that the Executive Committee voted to defer consideration of a name change until after the Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose has completed its work.

PERSONAL REFLECTION ON FAITH

(Agenda I.F.)

The Rev. Leroy Cannon shared personal reflections on faith.

RECESS

The first plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA recessed at 10:55 a.m. on Oct. 2, 2025, following announcements and a prayer.

Thursday, Oct. 2, 2025
PLENARY SESSION II

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Siddiqui called the second plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA to order at 3:05 p.m. and provided an overview of the agenda for the session, noting that it had been revised from the distributed agenda.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY/JUSTICE THROUGH FAITH EDUCATION

(Agenda II.A.)

Ms. Jennifer G. DeLeon, director for racial justice, and Ms. Mary J. Streufert, executive director for theological discernment, led council members in an educational session on racial and gender justice.

UPDATE FROM THE VISION TEAM

(Agenda II.B.)

The Rev. Louise N. Johnson, executive for vision, and the Rev. Ernie Hinojosa, associate executive for vision, reviewed the origins and purpose of the Vision Team. They updated the council on the work of the team and answered questions, emphasizing that the team welcomes feedback from council members regarding their work.

FIRST BALLOT FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT-LARGE POSITIONS

(Agenda II.C.)

Vice President Siddiqui introduced the first ballot for at-large positions on the Executive Committee of the Church Council and, following prayer, called for the vote. The vice president outlined next steps in the election process following the ballot.

ECUMENICAL AND INTERNATIONAL GREETINGS

(Agenda II.E.)

The Rev. Deborah Jackson, ecumenical liaison from The Episcopal Church (USA), the Rev. Panti Filibus Musa, archbishop of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, and Mr. Paul S. Tch , president of the Christian unity and interfaith ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, brought greetings on behalf of their respective churches.

RECESS

The second plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council recessed at 4:25 p.m. and reconvened at 4:35 p.m.

ELECTIONS REPORT: FIRST BALLOT FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT-LARGE POSITIONS

(Agenda II.G.)

Rostered Man from Class of 2031 (one position):

The Rev. Moses P. Penumaka	14	The Rev. Alvaro Nova	7
The Rev. Ryan H. Anderson	12	The Rev. Chad M. Huebner	1

Lay Man from Class of 2031 (one position):

Mr. Christopher A. Vergara	15	Mr. Moses Kavishe	7
Mr. Andrew W. Stevens	10	Mr. Timothy Hiller	3

Lay Person (one position):

Mr. Hans W. Giller	9	Ms. Olivia L. Martin-Call	2
Ms. Jennifer E. Trom	4	Ms. Linda C. Rivera	2
Mr. Benjamin J. Caseley	3	Ms. Spencer Sanders	2
Ms. Jessi Grieser	3	Mr. Timothy Hiller	1
Mr. Rindra Josoa	3	Ms. Deborah M. Nyquist	1
Ms. Patricia P. Harper	2	Ms. Jillian C. Stierwalt	1
Mr. Moses Kavishe	2		

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Secretary Rothmeyer shared announcements.

RECESS

The second plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA recessed following prayer at 4:41 p.m. on Oct. 2, 2025.

Friday, Oct. 3, 2025
PLENARY SESSION III

MORNING PRAYER

The third plenary session was preceded by morning prayer led by Ms. Jamie Brueschoff and Mr. Joel A. Miller.

CALL TO ORDER AND LEGAL BRIEFING

(Agenda III.A.)

Vice President Siddiqui called the third plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA to order at 9:05 a.m., and the council entered into executive session for a legal briefing. Minutes were not kept during executive session. The council returned to open session at 9:36 a.m.

SECOND BALLOT FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT-LARGE POSITIONS

(Agenda III.B.)

The second ballot for at-large members of the Executive Committee was held to elect one member in each of the following identified categories: lay man from the class of 2031, rostered man from the class of 2031, and lay person. Council members voted for one eligible nominee in each category.

CHURCH COUNCIL ADVISORY MEMBERS

Vice President Siddiqui invited the advisory members of the Church Council, who had requested a point of privilege, to address the council. On behalf of the advisory members, the Rev. Joann Conroy, president of the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association, shared appreciation for inclusion of leaders of the ethnic communities and ReconcilingWorks in the council's work and suggested additional ways advisory members could be included in that work.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

(Agenda III.C.)

Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, provided an in-depth discussion of her written report, outlining churchwide organization finances through August 2025. She noted that churchwide organization unrestricted spending to date has exceeded revenue by about \$1.9 million, compared to a budgeted loss of \$7.9 million. Revenue has exceeded expectations by about \$2.8 million, largely due to better-than-projected Mission Support and investment income. Spending is at about 92 percent of budget, but will likely be closer to 95–100 percent of budget by the end of the fiscal year.

Treasurer Fedyk provided an overview of sources of unrestricted revenues. She stated that, through August, Mission Support was about three percent ahead of projections, but two percent behind FY24 levels. Noting the volatility of most of the unrestricted revenue sources, the treasurer explained that this accounts in part for conservative budget projections. The treasurer provided a summary of unrestricted spending.

Noting that World Hunger is the one restricted fund over which the Church Council has authority, Treasurer Fedyk provided an overview of World Hunger revenues and expenses through August 2025. She stated that, typically, most World Hunger revenue is received during the fourth quarter of the fiscal year.

Treasurer Fedyk provided a summary of the overall financial health of the churchwide organization, saying that a challenge facing the organization is that unrestricted revenues cannot keep pace with current churchwide organization expenses. In light of this, it is important that this church prioritize expenses that maximize the effectiveness of ELCA ministries.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Agenda III.D.)

The Rev. A. Elizabeth (Lisa) Ahlness, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, introduced the members of the committee and provided an overview of the committee's recent meeting, remarking that future work of the committee includes review of proposed changes to the FY2026 budget as well as revision of the charter of the committee.

ELECTIONS REPORT: SECOND BALLOT FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT-LARGE POSITIONS

(Agenda III.E.)

Secretary Rothmeyer reported the results of the second ballot for Executive Committee at-large positions.

Rostered Man from Class of 2031 (one position):

The Rev. Moses P. Penumaka 23
The Rev. Alvaro Nova 9

Lay Man from Class of 2031 (one position):

Mr. Christopher A. Vergara 22
Mr. Andrew W. Stevens 10

Lay Person (one position):

Mr. Hans W. Giller	12	Ms. Jessi Grieser	6
Ms. Jennifer E. Trom	11	Mr. Moses Kavishe	3

Secretary Rothmeyer declared that Pastor Penumaka, Mr. Vergara, and Mr. Giller had been elected.

VOTED

CC25.10.41: To elect to the Executive Committee of the Church Council the nominee receiving the greatest number of votes in each identified category:

- The Rev. Moses P. Penumaka (rostered man from class of 2031)
- Mr. Christopher A. Vergara (lay man from class of 2031)
- Mr. Hans W. Giller (lay person).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The third plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA entered into executive session at 10:19 a.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 council returned to open session at 10:40 a.m.

RECESS

The third plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council recessed at 10:41 a.m. and reconvened at 11:01 a.m.

REPORT OF THE FAITH, SOCIETY, AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

(Agenda III.G.)

Ms. Jamie Brueschoff, chair of the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee, introduced the members of the committee and provided an overview of the work of the committee, particularly related to implementation of exchangeability of deacons with The Episcopal Church (USA). She outlined similarities and differences between social statements, social messages, and social teachings, noting work in progress related to each.

DEBRIEF OF THE 2025 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

(Agenda III.H.)

Mr. Adam DeHoek, senior director for research and evaluation, summarized preliminary results of the evaluation provided to voting members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. He stated that the survey had a response rate of approximately 33 percent, and pointed out that the demographics of respondents mirrored the demographics of overall assembly voting members, giving the team confidence that the results of the survey are representative. He concluded by noting that the comprehensive report of the survey will be provided at the November 2026 council meeting.

PERSONAL REFLECTION ON FAITH

(Agenda III.J.)

Mr. Rindra Josoa shared personal reflections on faith.

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Secretary Rothmeyer made announcements.

RECESS

Following prayer, the third plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA recessed at 11:31 a.m. on Oct. 3, 2025.

Friday, Oct. 3, 2025
PLENARY SESSION IV

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Siddiqui called the fourth plenary session of the 120th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA to order at 2:00 p.m.

REPORTS FROM VARIOUS COMMITTEES

(Agenda IV.A.)

Mr. Iván A. Pérez, chair of the Service and Justice Committee, introduced committee members and outlined recent work of the committee, noting recommended actions being brought before the Church Council from the committee. He explained the nature of corporate social responsibility investment screens.

APPROVAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ISSUE PAPER

(Agenda IV.A.1.)

Mr. Pérez stated that a recommended action brought forward by the committee related to the issue paper on artificial intelligence had been removed from *en bloc*. The Rev. Kaari Reiersen, director for corporate social responsibility, introduced the proposed issue paper. On behalf of the Service and Justice Committee, Mr. Pérez introduced a motion to adopt the issue paper.

MOVED;

[SECONDED]: To approve the proposed Issue Paper on Artificial Intelligence as presented.

Mr. Cumming provided additional clarification on the nature of issue papers in general and the issue paper on artificial intelligence in particular. He noted that in response to the action taken by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, further assessment of this church's engagement with artificial intelligence would be undertaken. Council members spoke in support of the motion. A liaison bishop encouraged engagement with ecumenical partners to learn from them in addressing the issue.

VOTED:

CC25.10.42 To approve the proposed Issue Paper on Artificial Intelligence as presented.

REPORTS FROM VARIOUS COMMITTEES (CONT.)

(Agenda IV.A.)

Mr. Mitch S. McCartney, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, introduced committee members, outlined the work of the committee, and reviewed *en bloc* items brought forward by the committee. Ms. Sheena R. Foster, chair of the Christian Community and Leadership Committee, introduced committee members and outlined the work of the committee. Mr. Giller, chair of the Board Development Committee, outlined the work of the committee and invited council members who would like to join the committee to contact him.

NEW BUSINESS

(Agenda IV.B.)

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

CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM *EN BLOC*

(Agenda IV.C.)

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

***EN BLOC* APPROVAL OF CERTAIN ITEMS**

(Agenda IV.D.)

The *en bloc* resolution includes agenda items that were judged to be non-controversial in nature that do not require plenary discussion and a separate vote. As the items were voted on *en bloc*, there was no discussion. The text of *en*

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bloc items and associated background information was shared with Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting. Vice President Siddiqui called for a vote on the *en bloc* actions.

VOTED:

CC25.10.43 **To take action *en bloc* on the remaining items listed in *En Bloc* Items, Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions, and Responses to Synod Actions.**

ACTIONS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

A. Ratification of Synod Constitution Amendments

Background:

Provision 10.12. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* stipulates: “Each synod shall have a constitution, which shall become effective upon ratification by the Church Council. Amendments thereto shall be subject to like ratification....” Several synods submitted constitutional amendments for ratification.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43a1 **To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Northwest Intermountain Synod (1D).**

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43a2 **To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Northeastern Iowa Synod (5F).**

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43a3 **To ratify the amendment to the constitution of the Northern Great Lakes Synod (5G).**

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43a4 **To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Upstate New York Synod (7D).**

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43a5 **To ratify the amendment to the constitution of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G).**

B. ELCA Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies

Background:

A revision to Section 7.12 (Social Media) is being proposed for the Personnel Policies of the Churchwide Organization to add the sentence, “Employees who violate this policy may be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.”

Employees of the churchwide organization of the ELCA, including contracted employees, are expected to read, understand, and comply with the Personnel Policies of the Churchwide Organization, which are adopted by the Church Council in accordance with bylaw 14.21.06. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43b **To approve the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies; and
To authorize the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with Human Resources in the
Office of the Presiding Bishop, to make any necessary editorial corrections for accuracy.**

C. Review of Corporate Social Responsibility Documents

Background:

The Church Council is responsible for reviewing this church’s ongoing work in corporate social responsibility. The council reviewed two revised issue papers and two social criteria investment screens.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43c **To approve the amendments to the following corporate social responsibility documents to
serve as the basis for ongoing corporate social responsibility work in this church:**

- **Health Issue Paper**
- **Climate Change Issue Paper**
- **Tobacco Social Criteria Investment Screen**

- **Alcohol Social Criteria Investment Screen; and**
To request that the original issue papers be archived for historical and research purposes.

D. Approval of Church Council Minutes and Ratification of Executive Committee Actions

Background:

The minutes of the Church Council meeting of July 27, 2025, were provided to council members electronically.

The minutes of the council's Executive Committee meetings on July 27, 2025, Aug. 19, 2025, and Sept. 16, 2025, were provided to council members electronically.

Council members provided notations or typographical errors in the distributed text of the minutes in writing to the executive for Office of the Secretary administration and corrections were entered into the protocol copies of the minutes.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43d **To approve the minutes of the July 27, 2025, meeting of the Church Council; and**
To ratify actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the July
27, 2025, Aug. 19, 2025, and Sept. 16, 2025, meetings.

E. Church Council Elections

Background:

Pursuant to provision 14.22. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the Church Council is to elect nominees to vacancies on boards and committees of the churchwide organization.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43e1 **To elect Ms. Deborah M. Nyquist to serve as Church Council liaison to the Gender Justice and**
Women's Empowerment Consulting Committee for a term ending August 2031.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43e2 **To elect the Rev. Tracy M. Williams to serve on the Committee on Discipline for a term**
ending in 2031.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43e3 **To elect the Rev. Nicole R. Ferry to serve on the Nominating Committee for a term ending**
in 2031.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43e4 **To elect Mr. James B. Shockley to fill a vacancy on the Committee on Appeals with a term**
expiring in 2028.

RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

F. Reconsideration of the Social Message on End-of-Life Decisions

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA25.01.06y]

To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Reconsideration of the Social Message on End-of-Life Decisions" from the Saint Paul Area Synod;

To forward this memorial to the ELCA Church Council, acting in consultation with the Theological Discernment staff of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, as the appropriate body to authorize a reconsideration; and

To identify the section titled "Physician-Assisted Death" for a substantive reconsideration in light of legal, medical, and social changes in end-of-life care and medical assistance in dying. While focused on that section, other references connected to that topic in the social message could be reconsidered.

Response from Office of the Presiding Bishop, Theological Ethics (October 2025)

The concern for development or reconsideration of a social message (like "End-of-life Decisions") is expressed by the Churchwide Assembly (CWA) as a request. As the next step, the director for theological ethics will consult with leadership groups, such as a committee of the Conference of Bishops, to assess and provide recommendations to Church Council (CC) about the timing and kind of development process, in consideration of other pending requests and in consultation with stakeholders. CC makes those decisions in their role of oversight of the ELCA.

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Due to limited staff capacity (and church capacity), social teaching development is managed carefully. The current practice is to develop or reconsider one social message per year, alongside one social statement development (a five-year process). Current projects for 2026 include:

- Reconsideration of the social statement on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*;
- Development of study materials related to a social message on Child Protection;
- Development of study materials related to the new social statement on *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All* (2025); and
- Follow-up work related to 2025 CWA actions, including Motion J (Resolution on AI in the Church).

There is capacity (both of staff and of the church, which participates through communal discernment) to act on one request in 2026. This request for a reconsideration of “End-of-life Decisions” is now to be evaluated along with two other pending requests:

- Development of a new social message on confronting white supremacy; and
- Reconsideration of the social message on “Homelessness.”

There is no financial cost for evaluation of a social message request. Development or reconsideration of a social message generally costs \$10,000–12,000. This includes hiring a contract writer, research-related expenses, data analysis, translation, and printing.

The director for theological ethics will bring to the November 2025 CC meeting a recommendation about which of the pending requests should be authorized for 2026. The request for reconsideration of “End-of-Life Decisions” will either be accepted and authorized for 2026 or will remain in the pool of requests for future evaluation. If this request is left as pending, Theological Discernment will maintain a list of individuals who have expressed interest in aiding the process as consultants and of individuals whose expertise is a significant gift to the church’s discernment of this social teaching.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

**CC25.10.43f To receive the timeline on “Reconsideration of the Social Message on End-of-Life Decisions” from the Office of the Presiding Bishop;
To anticipate a recommendation for which social message will be authorized for 2026 at the November 2025 Church Council meeting; and
To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

G. Review of ELCA Investments and Procurement

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA25.01.06i]

To reaffirm this church’s commitment to using the tools of corporate social responsibility to call corporations to treat people fairly and with dignity and create sustainable communities through the screening of social purpose funds through social criteria investment screens; and

To direct the Service and Justice unit and ELCA Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team to provide guidance in regard to current concerns and advice on best practices to encourage responsible and just corporate behavior and provide to the ELCA Church Council a summary of findings and options for action.

Response from Service and Justice unit, Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team (October 2025)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the ELCA uses the tools of screening of investments, shareholder advocacy, and community investing to work with corporations, calling them to ensure that people are treated fairly and with dignity and to create sustainable communities. The CSR program is guided by staff in the ELCA’s Service and Justice unit and a team of advisors with experience in CSR or expertise in the topic at hand. The team meets regularly to discuss drafts of documents and possible topics for CSR work. The *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* places CSR oversight with the Church Council, which “may direct the churchwide organization to exercise the corporate social responsibility of this church by filing shareholder resolutions, casting proxy ballots, and taking other actions as it deems appropriate” (14.21.14.).

ELCA CSR staff consult the CSR Review Team regularly on the topics of screening, shareholder advocacy, and boycotts, with the goal of supporting Portico Benefit Services in its endeavor to encourage responsible corporate behavior.

ELCA CSR does not determine procurement on the part of the ELCA; however, CSR has cooperated with ELCA IT on its AI policies, and IT has consulted with CSR on its buying guides.

At the October 2025 and the January 2026 meetings of the CSR Review Team, the group will consider whether additional resources are needed to fulfill this directive from the Churchwide Assembly and report back to the Church Council in the spring of 2026.

Additional costs, if any, would be related to any resources recommended by the CSR Review Team, or would be related to publicizing of current resources such as the shareholder advocacy issue papers and ELCA consumer purchasing guides.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC25.10.43g **To receive the timeline on “Review of ELCA Investments and Procurement” from the Service and Justice unit and to anticipate a response at the Spring 2026 Church Council meeting; and**
To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

H. Indian Boarding School Remembrance

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA25.01.07]

- Observe the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30;
- Urge Augsburg Fortress and the Service and Justice unit, in consultation with other appropriate churchwide organization units, to create adult and children/youth educational programs and materials concerning Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools to broaden and deepen awareness at congregations, synods, and ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA; and to consistently publish articles in all of this church’s publications;
- Locate all known records related to the ELCA’s predecessor bodies’ involvement with Indian boarding and day schools and to educate others about Indian boarding schools;
- Encourage ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
- Organize and care for all information in the ELCA’s possession that was recorded about Indian boarding and day schools and the students who attended them, forcibly or otherwise; carry out this work in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative and the ELCA Archives;
- Recognize that this information belongs to and is a source of healing for student survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations;
- Ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner;
- Identify the revenue source(s) to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts, and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all Indian boarding school records in the Archives.

Response from Service and Justice unit (October 2025)

1. *Observe the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30;*
 - The ELCA churchwide organization has worked to observe the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools every year since 2021. This has been done at the encouragement and guidance of ELCA Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations in partnership with ELCA Strategic Communications and has been accomplished through *Living Lutheran*, sharing information with synod communicators for their sharing with their audiences/congregations, and social media posts.
 - The communication produced is educational and promotes observing the National Day by wearing orange shirts and encouraging personal social media posting.
 - It is the hope of the Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative (TSTTI) that all ELCA units, teams, council, committees, and expressions participate in the observance by promoting participation, sharing educational materials, and wearing orange.
 - These are continual actions.
2. *Urge Augsburg Fortress and the Service and Justice unit, in consultation with other appropriate churchwide organization home areas, to create adult and children/youth educational programs and materials concerning Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools to broaden and deepen awareness at congregations,*

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synods, and ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA; and to consistently publish articles in all of this church's publications;

- Deadline for first round of materials will be May 2026 to begin deeper education before the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools in 2026.
 - Continued publishing of articles will prayerfully happen leading up to National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools in September 2026.
3. *Locate all known records related to the ELCA's predecessor bodies' involvement with Indian boarding and day schools and to educate others about Indian boarding schools;*
 - This work has begun by the TSTTI and records from the Bethany Indian Mission/boarding school Wittenberg, Wis., have been catalogued and relocated from Region 3 archives to the ELCA Archives where they are being scanned, cared for, and organized digitally.
 - This work is continual and research on additional boarding and day schools is being performed by TSTTI.
 4. *Encourage ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;*
 - Potential deadline for encouraging affiliate ministries is April 1, 2026.
 5. *Organize and care for all information in the ELCA's possession that was recorded about Indian boarding and day schools and the students who attended them, forcibly or otherwise; carry out this work in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative and the ELCA Archives;*
 - The partnership between the TSTTI and ELCA Archives is a strong one. The support offered by ELCA Archives has been tremendous.
 - This work and partnership are continual and long term.
 6. *Recognize that this information belongs to and is a source of healing for student survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations;*
 7. *Ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner;*
 - The TSTTI and ELCA Archives will work to ensure any records located will be cared for and shared appropriately.
 8. *Identify the revenue source(s) to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts, and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all Indian boarding school records in the Archives.*
 - BUDGET IMPLICATION—The work of the TSTTI for the past four years has been performed by lay and clergy volunteers. Funding to support the work related to continued organizing, professional research, educational materials and programs, ELCA Archives needs to care for and digitize records. These are only initial needs with further development to be considered. An initial proposed amount is \$25,000 for FY2026.
 - BUDGET IMPLICATION—The ELCA Archives does not have extra funds to complete the digitization of 12 large-sized ledger books, five large-sized photographs, and six reels of 16mm motion picture film.

Estimated digitization costs:

2,538 pages to digitize with estimated price/page range of \$1.75/page–\$2.75/page = \$4,441.50–\$6,979.50*

Six reels (three-inch diameter) of 16mm film, vendor cost estimate = \$1,348.50

Five oversized photographs at \$6/photograph = \$30*

Total estimated cost: \$5,820–\$8,358

Total estimated cost including 10 percent contingency: approximately \$6,402.00–\$9,194.00

*Cost is an approximation and is not based on official estimates obtained from third party vendors. Actual costs may be higher depending on quote from third party vendor, the final page count, condition of materials, and/or any special treatment records might need (e.g., special handling or repair).

Timeline:

- April 2026: As work directed is continual and prayerfully lasting, updates related to each “Resolved” can be made to Church Council.

- April 2026: ELCA Archives will be able to provide the Church Council an update on the digitization of the records of the Bethany Indian Mission.
- November 2026: As work directed is continual and prayerfully lasting, updates related to each “Resolved” can be made to the Church Council.
- November 2026: ELCA Archives will be able to provide the Church Council an update on the metadata (labeling) of the digitized Bethany Indian Mission collection.
- November 2026: ELCA Archives will be able to provide the Church Council an update on locating any records in the ELCA Archives related to ELCA predecessor church bodies’ involvement with Indian boarding and day schools.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC25.10.43h

To receive the response and timeline on “Indian Boarding School Remembrance” from the Service and Justice unit;

To request progress reports be provided to the Service and Justice Committee and to anticipate a final response at the Spring 2027 Church Council meeting; and

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

I. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW)

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA25.01.06c]

- Direct the churchwide organization to address the MMIW crisis by the following: Encourage congregations, synods and the churchwide organization to observe annually MMIW Awareness Day on May 5 and to promote the wearing of red to raise awareness of MMIW;
- Strengthen education by urging Augsburg Fortress, the ELCA World Hunger Education and Network’s team, and ELCA Service and Justice unit staff to work together to develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis;
- Increase awareness by requesting the ELCA Strategic Communications team to promote participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women;
- Lament and repent by urging Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA Worship team to work together to provide worship resources to include prayers of repentance and intercession for congregation and synod use;
- Plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing people;
- Advance partnership by requesting the ELCA Service and Justice unit staff to collaborate with governmental, ecclesiastical, and non-profit organizations to increase public awareness and provide concrete ways for congregations to support affected families through prayer, search efforts, and appropriate outreach; and
- Advance advocacy by requesting the ELCA Witness in Society team to support legislation at state, local, and national levels addressing MMIW.

Response from Service and Justice unit (October 2025)

1. *Direct the churchwide organization to address the MMIW crisis by the following: Encourage congregations, synods and the churchwide organization to observe annually MMIW Awareness Day on May 5 and to promote the wearing of red to raise awareness of MMIW;*
 - Suggested deadline for churchwide organization leadership to encourage observance is Lent 2026. Lent having been the most recent period promotion previously.
2. *Strengthen education by urging Augsburg Fortress, the ELCA World Hunger Education and Network’s team, and ELCA Service and Justice unit staff to work together to develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis;*
 - This work is continual and the suggested deadline for gathering the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery’s Sub-Task Force on MMIW with appropriate churchwide organization staff is Jan. 31, 2026.
3. *Increase awareness by requesting the ELCA Strategic Communications team to promote participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women;*
 - ELCA Strategic Communications has actively worked to increase awareness and participation over the last three years, and this work will be continual.

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4. *Lament and repent by urging Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship team to work together to provide worship resources to include prayers of repentance and intercession for congregation and synod use;*
 - Suggested deadline for gathering appropriate staff and partners is Jan. 31, 2026.
5. *Plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing people;*
 - Planning for public service will begin in 2026 as the Churchwide Assembly Planning Team begins to plan for the 2028 Churchwide Assembly by the ELCA Worship team and partners.
6. *Advance partnership by requesting the ELCA Service and Justice unit staff to collaborate with governmental, ecclesiastical, and non-profit organizations to increase public awareness and provide concrete ways for congregations to support affected families through prayer, search efforts, and appropriate outreach;*
 - This work is continual and suggested deadline for gathering the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery’s Sub-Task Force on MMIW with appropriate unit staff is Jan. 31, 2026. The MMIW Sub-Task Force already meets regularly.
7. *Advance advocacy by requesting the ELCA Witness in Society team to support legislation at state, local, and national levels addressing MMIW.*
 - Work is continual.

Timeline:

- April 2026: Report to Church Council related to promotion of May 5 MMIW Awareness Day; initial gathering of MMIW Sub-Task Force and appropriate churchwide staff; promotional and publishing opportunities by Strategic Communications; gathering of ELCA Worship, Augsburg Fortress, and appropriate churchwide staff and their initial discussions on worship resources; MMIW Sub-Task Force and unit staff related to support of families and appropriate outreach.
- November 2027: Report to Church Council by Churchwide Assembly Planning Team on 2028 Churchwide Assembly and service of lament and repentance.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

**CC25.10.43i To receive the response and timeline on “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women” from the Service and Justice unit;
To request progress reports be provided to the Service and Justice Committee and to anticipate a final response at the November 2027 Church Council meeting; and
To request that the secretary inform the synods of this action.**

J. Youth Gathering DEIA

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA25.01.06d]

To reaffirm the commitment of the ELCA Youth Gathering Team to continue and expand DEIA-centered trainings, resources, policies, procedures, and structures for the gathering staff, volunteers, and participant leaders;

To affirm the desire for a rapid response team for the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering in partnership with the Minneapolis Area Synod and led by the ELCA director for racial justice, so that it will be replicated at all ELCA Youth Gatherings beyond 2027; and

To request the ELCA Youth Gathering Team explore options to implement a racial equity audit for the Youth Gathering that would address barriers for participation with the goal of increasing and strengthening the leadership of the youth participants with persons of color and intersecting identities.

Response from Christian Community and Leadership unit, Youth Gathering [October 2025]

The Youth Gathering Team in the Christian Community and Leadership unit provided the following:

Timeline:

- **Fall 2025** – Gathering staff and the senior director for discipleship and inclusive communities will host an initial conversation with churchwide staff, particularly the director for racial justice, senior director for diversity, equity, and inclusion, executive for theological discernment, coordinator for disability ministries, coordinator for deaf ministries, and the colleagues and director of ministries of diverse cultures and communities to discuss expanded *DEIA-centered trainings, resources, policies, procedures, and structures*

for the gathering staff, teams, volunteers, participants, and leaders and form a task force. This group will also discuss options to implement, and the costs associated with a *racial equity audit* for the Youth Gathering.

- **Fall 2025** – Gathering staff, the worship and chaplain team leader, and the operations team leader will host an initial conversation with Minneapolis Area Synod staff to discuss a *Rapid Response team for the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering* and create a task force.
- **Spring 2026** – The Youth Gathering DEIA Task Force will determine and recommend *DEIA-centered trainings, resources, policies, procedures, and structures* for the gathering staff, teams, volunteers, participants, and leaders. This group will also determine next steps regarding a *racial equity audit* for the Youth Gathering.
- **Spring 2026** – The *Rapid Response Task Force for the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering* will develop training and recruit chaplains.
- **Summer/Fall 2026** – The Youth Gathering DEIA Task Force will create and implement *DEIA-centered trainings, resources, policies, procedures, and structures* for the gathering staff, teams, volunteers, participants, and leaders.
- **Summer/Fall 2026** – The *Rapid Response Task Force for the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering* in partnership with the Youth Gathering worship and chaplain team leader will train chaplains.
- **Spring 2027** – The Youth Gathering DEIA Task Force will launch *DEIA-centered trainings, resources, policies, procedures, and structures* for the gathering staff, volunteers, participants, and leaders to be completed before June 2027.
- **Summer 2027** – The *Rapid Response Task Force for the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering* will work with all Youth Gathering teams to provide care and support before, during and after the event.

DEIA-centered trainings, resources, policies, procedures, and structures

* *These prices are an estimate and will be firmed in Spring 2026.*

Item	Estimated Cost
Gathering Staff & Team Leader Training	\$3,000
Spanish Language Translation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed materials • Closed captions for videos 	\$7,000
Video Production	\$6,000
Resource Design	\$5,000
Content Writers	\$10,000
Participant Onsite DEIA Workshop	\$20,000
TOTAL	\$51,000

Rapid Response Task Force

Item	Estimated Cost
In-Person Meeting	\$3,000
Chaplain–Rapid Response Team Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flights (\$500 per person @ 3 people) • Housing (1 nights @ \$215 per room @ 3 rooms) • Meals (2 days @ \$75 per person @ 10 people) 	\$10,000

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misc. Travel Expenses 	
Rapid Response Team Onsite Expense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing (6 nights @ \$215 per room @ 6 rooms) Meals (7 days @ \$75 per person @ 6 people) Misc. Travel Expenses 	\$12,000
Onsite Rapid Response Call Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Zendesk Users IT equipment Space in Convention Center 	\$5,000
TOTAL	\$25,000

Racial Equity Audit

Item	Estimated Cost
Racial Equity Audit	unsure
In-Person Meeting	\$3,000
Implementing Racial Equity Audit	unsure
TOTAL	\$

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC25.10.43j

**To receive the response and timeline on “Youth Gathering DEIA” from the Christian Community and Leadership unit;
 To request progress reports be provided to the Christian Community and Leadership Committee and to anticipate a final response at the November 2027 Church Council meeting;
 and
 To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

K. Interpretation for ELCA Churchwide Assembly and Youth Gathering

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA25.01.06]

To encourage use of local interpreters at Churchwide Assemblies and Youth Gatherings;

To direct the planning teams of the Churchwide Assembly and Youth Gathering to commit to investigating and finding the most responsible means to provide translation and interpretation services.

Response from Christian Community and Leadership unit, Youth Gathering (October 2025)

The Youth Gathering team in the Christian Community and Leadership unit provided the following:

Timeline:

- Spring 2026** – In partnership, the Gathering staff, senior director for discipleship and inclusive communities, coordinator for deaf ministries, the colleagues and director of ministries of diverse cultures and communities, the secretary, and their staff will host an initial conversation to discuss investigating and finding the most responsible means to provide translation and interpretation services.
- Fall 2026** – The Gathering staff, senior director for discipleship and inclusive communities, coordinator for deaf ministries, the colleagues and director of ministries of diverse cultures and communities will determine and recommend translation and interpretation services best suited for the Youth Gathering as it relates to print materials and simultaneous interpretation.

- **Spring-Summer 2027** – The Gathering staff and teams will implement throughout the cycle Spanish translation for printed materials such as core materials, curriculums, logos, and theme design and will strive to provide Spanish translation for on-site materials within the limited deadlines for the printing and production companies. The Gathering staff and teams will implement a plan to hire simultaneous Spanish and ASL interpreters for core program components such as Mass Gathering, MYLE programs, and worship.

Translation and Interpretation Services for Youth Gathering

** These prices are estimates and will be firmed in Spring 2026.*

Item	Estimated Cost
Spanish Translation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000+ pages @ \$20 per page • 600+ signs @ \$20 per page 	\$32,000
ASL Interpretation – \$500 per day @ 7 days @ 6 people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honoraria • Meals • Travel • Hotel 	\$21,000
Spanish Interpretation – \$400 per day @ 7 days @ 6 people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honoraria • Meals • Travel • Hotel 	\$16,800
TOTAL	\$69,800

The Churchwide Assembly Planning Team anticipates beginning the research work of investigating and finding the most responsible means to provide translation and interpretation services in late 2026.

The background information that was shared in the Report of the Memorials Committee for this memorial was, “CWA documents (900+ pages and 30+ event signs) can range from \$20 per hour to upwards of \$5 per minute. The estimate does not include the cost of additional design time and additional production costs if printing is involved, nor does it include any rush fees that might be needed to complete the work in a timely manner. Other factors that will increase costs are additional reviews for highly technical or theological documents. As a point of reference, The Episcopal Church provides reports to its General Convention, also known as the “Blue Book,” that cost approximately \$125,000 for translation.... The cost for ASL interpretation services for a week-long event is approximately \$500 per day, per interpreter, plus travel, lodging, and meal expenses. The cost for Spanish interpretation for a week-long event is approximately \$10,000 for four interpreters, plus travel, lodging, and meal expenses.”

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC25.10.43k

To receive the response on “Interpretation for ELCA Churchwide Assembly and Youth Gathering” from the Christian Community and Leadership unit and the Office of the Secretary;

To commend the planning teams of the Churchwide Assembly and Youth Gathering in their ongoing efforts to provide translation and interpretation services at churchwide assemblies and youth gatherings; and

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

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L. Restoration of Funding of USAID

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA25.01.06f]

To direct the Witness in Society Advocacy Team to seek and promote occasions for timely and impactful advocacy on restoration of USAID, including opportunities for the presiding bishop to address this issue.

Response from Service and Justice unit, Witness in Society (October 2025)

The Trump administration's cuts to U.S. foreign assistance administered through USAID and the State Department have caused significant disruptions to humanitarian and development programs around the world. While USAID as an independent agency was dismantled, it still exists under the law. The remaining programs previously administered by USAID have been transferred to the Department of State, at significantly reduced capacity.

2025 ELCA advocacy priorities include restoration and support for humanitarian aid:

- Ensure that Congress appropriates and the executive branch distributes funds for lifesaving global health programs.
- Protect and strengthen foreign aid programs that reduce extreme poverty and hunger; enhance U.S. international food and nutrition programs authorized in the Farm Bill.
- Provide emergency support to countries facing natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies.

Since January, Witness in Society (WIS) staff have engaged in advocacy to push for restoration of terminated foreign aid programs and robust funding of these programs in the upcoming fiscal year (FY26), including:

- WIS staff engagement in regular meetings with congressional Republican and Democratic offices
- Leadership with interfaith partners to organize a September 2025 fly-in bringing global faith leaders to Washington, D.C., to meet with lawmakers to make the case for foreign aid. Witness in Society funded and supported two leaders, a pastor from Indiana and a companion partner from Guatemala, who actively participated in this advocacy opportunity.
- Partnership with an ELCA bishop to write and transmit a letter in support of foreign aid to her senators, one of whom is the Senate Majority Leader.
- Invitation and facilitation of an advocacy visit of a leader from a global companion church who met with key Republican and Democratic congressional offices to push for restoration of an HIV/AIDS program that was terminated.
- Activation of ELCA advocacy network at strategic policy moments through action alerts to ensure members of congress hear of their constituents' support of foreign aid programs.

Advocacy on this issue has led to some level of congressional pushback on the administration, particularly in the Senate. ELCA advocacy efforts will continue, including identifying opportunities for the presiding bishop to speak. Funding for advocacy on foreign aid restoration comes from the Witness in Society budget.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC25.10.431

To receive the response on “Restoration of Funding of USAID” from the Service and Justice unit;

To commend the Witness in Society staff for their continued advocacy efforts to seek and promote occasions to restore terminated foreign aid programs and support robust funding for humanitarian aid; and

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

M. Public Discourse about Palestine-Israel

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA25.01.06cc]

To commend the recommendation from the 2022–2023 Review Summary and Recommendations on Israel and Palestine document for formal review and update of the “Strategy for Engagement in Palestine and Israel” (2005) and to present a timeline for the consideration of the updated strategy, encouraging continued collaboration between ELCA Sumud and the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in partnership with ELCA Sumud, to convene a consultation with representatives of the ELCA Conference of Bishops, Church Council, Palestinian partners from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and other key stakeholders to discuss matters of language for addressing the injustice happening to the Palestinian people on the ground, and to report to the Church Council its findings and any recommendations.

Response from Service and Justice (October 2025)

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Team will form a committee to review, assess, and offer recommendations for the “Strategy for Engagement in Palestine and Israel” (2005) timeline.

Timeline:

- Committee formed by March 2026
- Review process completed and presented by end of 2026
- Final report to Church Council by March 2027.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC25.10.43m

**To receive the response on “Public Discourse about Palestine-Israel” from the Service and Justice unit;
To request progress reports be provided to the Service and Justice Committee and to anticipate a final response at the November 2027 Church Council meeting; and
To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

N. Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA25.03.13]

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Witness in Society Advocacy Team, to write to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives calling on the U.S. government:

- to recognize and work to end the genocide against the Palestinian people, to halt military assistance to Israel used to devastate Gaza, and to investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law;
- to redouble its efforts to end human rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank, focusing on the most egregious and ongoing violations, including: indiscriminate and disproportionate bombing of Gaza resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of children, women, and men; deprivation of adequate access to drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity; destruction of buildings—including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools—and the destruction of electricity, sewerage, and water infrastructure essential for survival; and, the detention of hostages and political prisoners;
- to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state, and support Palestine’s full membership in the United Nations, and
- to reject proposals to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, to address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and to work to end the rampant settler violence and vandalism against Palestinians in the West Bank;

Response from Service and Justice unit (October 2025)

The Witness in Society Team will prioritize these focus points for public policy advocacy and action:

1. Write letter from the presiding bishop to the White House as instructed (completed, August 2025).
2. Opposing unrestricted military aid to Israel
3. U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 2334
4. Upholding of Human Rights Law
5. U.S. government recognition of Palestinian Statehood in coordination with Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC)
6. Protection of 1967 Borders and Territorial Integrity
7. Opposition to Settler Violence
8. Amplification of Palestinian Voices
9. Opposition to displacement/forcible transfer of Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank
10. Continued support of financial security of Augusta Victoria Hospital
11. Review and consider the ELCA’s interfaith advocacy relationships—especially within the Jewish community—that would ensure values alignment of partnerships with the ELCA’s updated position on Israel-Palestine

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The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Team will engage these awareness focus points:

1. Education around U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 2334
2. History and significance of international definitions of military occupation and genocide
3. Education around displacement and forcible transfer
4. Distinction between Jewish siblings and the government of Israel
5. Palestinian sovereignty
6. Accompaniment relationships with ELCA partners in Palestine/Israel
7. Building relationship and shared understanding of Palestine-Israel context with WCC statement on Gaza as baseline

The MENA Team will engage these accompaniment focus points:

1. Amplification of Palestinian Voices
2. Meeting with ELCJHL stakeholders and ALAMEH (Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage) to present resolution and hear feedback
3. Ensuring ongoing financial support to ELCJHL and local partners—March 2026

A final report to Church Council will be brought to its April 2026 meeting. There is no anticipated budgetary impact as the work will be done as part of existing staff portfolios.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

**CC25.10.43n To receive the response on “Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine” from the Service and Justice unit;
To request a final response at the April 2026 Church Council meeting; and
To request that the secretary inform the synods of this action.**

RESPONSE TO SYNOD ACTION

O. ELCA Middle East Strategy Follow-Up

New England Synod (7B) [2025]

WHEREAS, the New England Synod is a companion synod with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its 2016 assembly passed “Justice for the Holy Land through Responsible Investment (Assembly Action CA16.06.27),” and

WHEREAS, this action directed “the ELCA’s Corporate Social Responsibility review team to develop a human rights social criteria investment screen based on the social teachings of this church and, in the case of Israel and Palestine, specifically based on the concerns raised in the ELCA Middle East Strategy.” And it encouraged “ELCA members, congregations, synods, agencies and institutions to engage in shareholder advocacy in support of human rights;” therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod Council urge the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA to require the ELCA’s Corporate Social Responsibility review team to provide a public written report to the ELCA on the actions taken to adhere to the intent of the 2016 resolution as it pertains to the ELCA Middle East Strategy.

Executive Committee Action [EC25.05.26b]

To refer the “Board of Pension Investment Screening” resolution from the New England Synod to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Corporate Social Responsibility review team for a response; and

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

Response from Office of the Presiding Bishop, Theological Ethics [October 2025]

This action seems to refer to social policy resolution CA16.06.31 (“Justice for Holy Land through Responsible Investment”), adopted by the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

“To direct the ELCA’s Corporate Social Responsibility review team to develop a human rights social criteria investment screen based on the social teachings of this church and, in the case of Israel and Palestine, specifically based on the concerns raised in the ELCA Middle East Strategy.”

The ELCA’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) develops investment screens and issue papers based on ELCA social teachings. These screens are developed in consultation with Portico, a separately incorporated ministry. The screens and issue papers are implemented by Portico through Social Purpose Funds and shareholder advocacy. This is done in consideration of Portico’s legally binding fiduciary duty to investors.

A public written report on actions related to the 2016 social policy resolution would require consultation with Portico and review of the implementation of the human rights investment screen, shareholder advocacy since 2018 (when the screen and an accompanying issue paper were approved), and corporate dialogues on these issues. This would also necessitate a review of the implementation of the human rights investment screen more recently, since a broadened human rights investment screen was approved in 2024 to include language that focuses on “egregious denials of human rights taking place in occupied or controlled territories.”

Such a report could include the number of companies that were screened out of Social Purpose Funds, positive investments made in response to the 2016 social policy resolution and accompanying CSR resources, the number of shareholder resolutions filed by Portico, and the number of corporate dialogues Portico has participated in since 2016. Importantly, the report would be limited to information Portico can legally share about shareholder resolutions and dialogues.

Such a report would require time for information collection, consultation, and review, including review by legal counsel for both Portico and the ELCA. Because Portico is a separately incorporated ministry, collection of information would be a request rather than a directive, dependent on Portico’s capacity. This report would require approximately 90–120 days to prepare from the date that the presiding bishop requires CSR to provide the report.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC25.10.43o

To request that the presiding bishop consider directing the Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team to provide a public written report to the ELCA on the actions taken to adhere to the intent of the “Justice for the Holy Land through Responsible Investment” social policy resolution [CA16.06.31] as it pertains to the ELCA Middle East Strategy;

To recognize that such a report would be limited to the information Portico Benefit Services can legally share about shareholder resolutions and dialogues and would require approximately 90–120 days to prepare from the date the presiding bishop requests such a report; and

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

EVALUATION AND DEBRIEFING

(Agenda IV.F.)

Vice President Siddiqui led the council in discussion of the flow of the meeting and reflection on the work carried out. He concluded by encouraging council members to complete the meeting evaluation available electronically.

INFORMATION RELATED TO CHURCH COUNCIL ROLE IN INSTALLATION OF PRESIDING BISHOP

(Agenda IV.G.)

Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, executive for governance and cochair of the Installation Planning Committee, and Mr. Dana Adams, director for meeting management, provided information about the role of the Church Council in the installation of the presiding bishop the next day and answered questions related to transportation and security for the installation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Secretary Rothmeyer shared announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

Following prayer, the 120th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA adjourned at 3:02 p.m. on Oct. 3, 2025.