Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
2025 Churchwide Assembly

Reports and Records:
Assembly Minutes

July 28–August 2, 2025
Phoenix, Arizona

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Secretary

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Introduction

The seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered under the theme "For the Life of the World" at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Ariz. The theme was chosen because of its reference to the Nicene Creed, which was the subject of an action by the assembly recognizing the 1,700th anniversary of the creed as well as receiving the "Common Statement on the *Filioque*," a sign of progress in dialog with the Orthodox Church. The theme also speaks to the important work given to the Church as we long for "the life of the world to come"—and as we live out the gospel for the life of the world as it is. This church is a part of the inbreaking Reign of God, and so the assembly gathered as the body of Christ to hear reports of the work being done by this church through the churchwide organization, synods, and congregations; to elect a new presiding bishop and a new secretary along with other council, board, and committee members for the churchwide organization and separately incorporated ministries; to adopt a budget; to act on resolutions and memorials addressing important issues in Church and society; to adopt a new social statement on faith and civic life and to amend the social statement on human sexuality; and to approve amendments to the governing documents of this church.

The following are the official minutes of the seventeenth meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. Approved actions are included in their entirety in the minutes at the point of presentation. Relevant exhibits are appended to provide ready reference in a single document.

Final actions of the assembly are indicated by the letters "CA" followed by the year of the assembly; thus "CA25." Then follows the notation of the day of the assembly on which the action occurred, and the number of the action taken sequentially during the assembly. Thus, "CA25.04.12" signifies that the twelfth action of the assembly occurred on the fourth day of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

References to actions of various ELCA governing bodies also are cited using a singular designation code. For example, "CC25.04.20" refers to an action taken by the Church Council (CC) at its April (4th month) meeting in 2025 (25) which represented the twentieth action (20) of that governing body in the calendar year. Similarly, the designations "EC" and "CB" refer respectively to the Executive Committee of the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops.

Citations of sections of the *Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* are codified variously as "ELCA 3.04." (a churchwide constitutional provision), "ELCA 7.31.01." (a churchwide bylaw), "S14.18." (*Constitution for Synods*), and "C10.02." (*Model Constitution for Congregations*). A dagger (†) preceding the letter "S" or an asterisk (*) before the letter "C" indicates that the provision is required rather than only recommended. Continuing resolutions are designated by a letter and the year in which they were adopted; thus, a continuing resolution adopted in 2025 is, for example, "5.01.E25."

I wish to thank all of those who made the 2025 Churchwide Assembly a success. Those who served on the assembly committees are listed in Exhibit A: Members of the Churchwide Assembly. Special thanks are offered to the Churchwide Assembly planning committee, named on p. 263. The staff of the Office of the Secretary did their usual outstanding job of coordinating logistics, organizing documentation, supporting the legislative work of the assembly, and overseeing the election processes. Many of the staff of the churchwide organization were involved in preparing for and supporting the work of the assembly. It is impossible to express adequate thanks for all the work that was done in assisting the Churchwide Assembly in living out its theme: "For the life of the world."

Video, photo, and audio highlights of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly are available online. The ELCA website also includes the "Legislative Updates" that provided voting members with daily summaries of assembly actions.

Consistent with the commitment of this church to be faithful stewards of God's creation, these minutes are posted on the ELCA website rather than being distributed in print. A limited number of bound paper copies will be stored in the ELCA Archives.

The Spirit of God empowers us to live out our vocation to act in ways that are life-giving for our world as we wait for the fullness of God's Reign. Thanks be to God.

Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary
Lent 2026

Seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Minutes

July 28–August 2, 2025
Phoenix, Arizona

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Plenary Session One

Monday, July 28, 2025
6:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) convened Monday, July 28, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 6:30 p.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated).

Welcome and Order for the Opening of the Assembly

Reference: *Worship and Song*

Presiding Bishop Eaton welcomed voting members and guests and acknowledged that the assembly was taking place on the ancestral homelands of the Hohokam, O'odham, and Piipaash peoples. The presiding bishop announced that live Spanish interpretation would be available for all plenary and worship sessions, and thanked interpreters for their valuable assistance.

Presiding Bishop Eaton led the assembly in an opening worship and introduced the theme of the assembly, "For the Life of the World." Calling attention to the relationship between this theme and the Nicene Creed, she referenced an action to be considered later during the assembly related to the Creed, that being the reception of the 2024 "Lutheran–Orthodox Common Statement on the *Filioque*." She commented that this document represents significant progress in unity between this church and the Orthodox Church. Reflecting on challenges facing the world, the presiding bishop emphasized that the assembly is an opportunity for voting members to discern how this church can serve as a clear and compelling witness for Christ in this time.

Presiding Bishop Eaton recognized former ELCA officers in attendance, including former secretaries the Rev. Lowell Almen, Mr. David Swartling, and the Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, and former vice president Mr. Carlos Peña. She presented an overview of the assembly schedule as well as resources available to assembly attendees.

Greeting from the Grand Canyon Synod

The Rev. Deborah K. Hutterer, bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod and vice chair of the Conference of Bishops, welcomed assembly members and other guests to Phoenix and the Grand Canyon Synod.

Introduction of the Local Chair

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced Ms. Mary Beth Baron, who led the local team that prepared for the assembly and for hospitality to voting members, support staff, and guests during the assembly. The presiding bishop thanked Bishop Hutterer, Ms. Baron, and all of the volunteers for the warm welcome to Phoenix.

Organization of the Assembly
Roll of Voting Members and Report of the Credentials Committee

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section I:4, Roll of Assembly Members*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, to present the report of the Credentials Committee and the Roll of Assembly Members for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Presiding Bishop Eaton noted that the Church Council had allocated a

maximum of 845 voting members for the assembly, including all members of the Church Council. Secretary Rothmeyer introduced the Roll of Assembly Members and announced that, as of 6:14 p.m., 730 voting members had registered for the assembly. Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that a quorum was present.

Introduction of the Parliamentarian

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced Mr. Maurice S. Henderson, the parliamentarian for the assembly, and reviewed his credentials.

Introduction to Electronic Voting

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure*

Consideration of the Rules of Organization and Procedure

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:1, Recommendation: Rules of Organization and Procedure*

Presiding Bishop Eaton instructed voting members on where to find the Rules of Organization and Procedure in the Churchwide Assembly Guide electronic app. She highlighted certain rules, with particular attention to deadlines that allow for an orderly disposition of the business of the assembly.

The presiding bishop reviewed the provisions of *Robert's Rules of Order* governing amendment and adoption of the proposed rules and then called on Secretary Rothmeyer to present the motion for adoption of the Rules of Organization and Procedure. Secretary Rothmeyer, on behalf of the Church Council, introduced the motion, which did not require a second because it came from the Church Council.

Moved; ***Two-Thirds Vote Required***

[Seconded]: To adopt the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted provisions and bylaws that are already in force).

The presiding bishop asked whether any voting member wished to remove any section of the Rules of Organization and Procedure from the *en bloc* vote. A voting member expressed an intention to introduce a motion to amend the Rules of Organization and Procedure by insertion of a new rule. Presiding Bishop Eaton determined that, because the intention was not to delete or amend the existing language, the assembly would first consider adoption of the Rules of Organization and Procedure *en bloc* prior to consideration of possible insertion of a new rule. The presiding bishop asked again whether any voting member desired to remove a section of the Rules of Organization and Procedure from *en bloc.* There being no request, she called for the vote on adopting the rules.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED YES-707; NO-51***

CA25.01.01 To adopt the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted provisions and bylaws which are already in force).

Rules of Organization and Procedure

PART ONE: AUTHORITY AND DUTIES

Authority of the Churchwide Assembly

The legislative function of the churchwide organization shall be fulfilled by the Churchwide Assembly as described in Chapter 12 of this Constitution. (ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 11.31.).

The Churchwide Assembly shall be the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization and shall deal with all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church. The powers of the Churchwide Assembly are limited only by the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, and the assembly's own resolutions (ELCA 12.11.).

Any matter for which adoption by a vote of two-thirds of those voting in a prior Churchwide Assembly was required by the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall require a two-thirds vote to be amended or repealed by a subsequent Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 12.12.).

Duties of the Churchwide Assembly

The Churchwide Assembly shall:

a. Review the work of the churchwide officers, and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.
b. Review the work of the churchwide units, and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.
c. Receive and consider proposals from synod assemblies.
d. Establish churchwide policy.
e. Adopt a budget for the churchwide organization.
f. Elect officers, board members, and other persons as provided in the constitution or bylaws.
g. Establish churchwide units to carry out the functions of the churchwide organization.
h. Have the sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws.
i. Fulfill other functions as required in the constitution and bylaws.
j. Conduct such other business as necessary to further the purposes and functions of the churchwide organization (ELCA 12.21.).

Assembly Presiding Officer

The presiding bishop shall … preside at the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 13.21.c.).

The vice president shall be a layperson who shall serve …, in the event the presiding bishop is unable to do so, as chair of the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 13.31.).

Assembly Secretary

The secretary shall be responsible for the minutes and records of the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 13.41.02.a.).

Notice of Meeting

The secretary shall give notice of the time and place of each regular assembly by publication thereof at least 60 days in advance on this church's website and in this church's periodical (ELCA 12.31.02.).

Notice shall be provided to all voting members or voting members-elect not more than 30 days or less than 10 days in advance of any meeting. Notice may be provided electronically

for voting members or voting members-elect who have provided email addresses, unless the voting member or voting member-elect has requested that written notice be mailed (ELCA 12.31.02.).

Agenda

The secretary shall …, in collaboration with the presiding bishop … provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 13.41.02.h.).

Program and Worship

The arrangements for agenda, program, and worship shall be under the supervision of the presiding bishop (ELCA 12.31.04.).

Arrangements

Logistical arrangements for churchwide assemblies shall be made by the secretary or by an assembly manager working under the secretary's supervision. Such committees as may be necessary to facilitate the planning for and operation of the assembly may be established by the secretary in consultation with the presiding bishop (ELCA 12.31.05.).

PART TWO: MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Assembly Voting Members

Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in the synod. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. The synod bishop, who is *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. Unless otherwise determined by the synod, the synod vice president shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod's voting members. The voting members elected by each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this Constitution.

In addition, each synod shall elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election and one additional voting member who is a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English …. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect (ELCA 12.41.11.).

The officers of the churchwide organization, the members of the Church Council, and the bishops of the synods shall serve as *ex officio* members of the Churchwide Assembly. Unless otherwise determined by a synod, the synod vice presidents shall also serve as *ex officio* members of the Churchwide Assembly. *Ex officio* members shall have voice and vote. (ELCA 12.41.16.).

The total allocated number of voting members at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly is 845.

Eligibility to Serve as Voting Member

Each voting member of the Churchwide Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this church. Any such voting member (except a rostered minister …) shall cease to be a member of the assembly if no longer a voting member of a congregation of this church within the synod from which elected (ELCA 12.41.13.).

Certification of Voting Members

The secretary of each synod shall submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly (ELCA 12.41.12.).

Seating of Alternate Voting Members

If a voting member elected by the Synod Assembly is unable to serve, the name of an eligible person chosen by the Synod Council shall be submitted by the secretary of the synod to the secretary of this church. If a vacancy occurs or exists within 30 days or less of the convening of the Churchwide Assembly or during the meeting of the Churchwide Assembly, the synod bishop may submit the name of an eligible person to the secretary of this church. The individual whose name is submitted to the secretary of this church shall be registered and seated by the Credentials Committee as a voting member from the synod (ELCA 12.41.12.).

Inclusive Representation

Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the appropriate office or unit of the churchwide organization, through the Church Council, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies… shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of these assemblies … shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies … shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English (ELCA 5.01.e.).

It is the goal of this church that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly … be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service (ELCA 5.01.E19.).

Persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English means African American, African Caribbean, African Descent, African National, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Latin(-o, -a, -é, -x), Hispanic, American Indian, Indigenous, and Alaska Native people, as well as multi- and bi-racial people. (ELCA 5.01.J24.a.).

For purposes of the representational principles set forth in 5.01.e. and f., the percentage of laypersons that is not allocated to women or men may be allocated to persons who identify as gender non-binary, gender fluid, genderqueer, transgender, women, men, or other gender identities. (ELCA 5.01.G24.).

Additional Voting Members Provided

The Church Council may allocate up to 10 additional voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members (ELCA 12.41.11.).

Additional voting members have been allocated by the Church Council as follows:

Synod	***Additional Members***
Alaska (1A)	**2**
Arkansas-Oklahoma (4C)	**2**

Slovak Zion (7G) 2
West Virginia-Western Maryland (8H) 2
Caribbean (9F) 2

Assembly Properly Constituted

Each assembly… of the churchwide organization … shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly… may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly …. (ELCA 5.01.j.).

Advisory Members

Executive directors of units of the churchwide organization, the executive for administration, and other persons from the churchwide organization designated by the presiding bishop shall serve as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly. The Church Council also may designate other persons as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly. Advisory members shall have voice but not vote (ELCA 12.41.17.).

Other Non-Voting Members

Other categories of non-voting members may be established by the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 12.41.18.).

Presidents of the colleges, universities, and seminaries of this church, unless elected as voting members of the assembly, shall have voice but not vote (ELCA 12.41.A89.).

A representative of the faculty of each seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be appointed by the president of each seminary to serve as a seminary faculty resource person …. In addition, a teaching theologian who is a member of a congregation of this church and who is teaching at a college or university of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be appointed by the steering committee of the Association of Teaching Theologians in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to serve as a faculty resource person. Faculty resource persons shall have voice, if so granted in the assembly's rules, but not vote in plenary sessions of the assembly (ELCA 12.41.B07.).

Continuation of* Ex Officio *Members

If the term of office of an *ex-officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly ends during a Churchwide Assembly, such person shall nevertheless remain an *ex-officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly, and shall not be replaced in that capacity, until the conclusion of the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 12.41.D24.).

An individual whose term of office as a bishop of a synod commences within one month of the assembly, unless elected as a voting member of the assembly, shall have the privilege of seat and voice, but not vote, during the assembly.

Resource Members

Resource members shall be persons recommended by the presiding bishop of this church or by the Church Council who, because of their position or expertise, can contribute to the work of the Churchwide Assembly. Resource members shall have voice only with respect to matters within their areas of expertise. Resource persons shall not have vote.

Congregation Observers

> Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may register with the secretary of this church one congregation observer for the Churchwide Assembly prior to May 31 in the year of a Churchwide Assembly…. Such observers shall have neither voice nor vote in plenary sessions of the assembly (ELCA 12.41.C25.).

Official Visitors

Official visitors shall be persons invited by the presiding bishop of this church or the Church Council to address the Churchwide Assembly. They shall not have vote.

Access to Seating

A person will be admitted to restricted seating areas only upon display of proper credentials.

Assembly Costs

> The churchwide organization shall be responsible for the costs of the Churchwide Assembly, including reasonable costs for travel, housing, and board for voting and advisory members (ELCA 12.31.06.).

PART THREE: QUORUM AND PROCEDURE

Quorum

> At least one-half of all persons elected as voting members must be present at a meeting to constitute a quorum for the legal conduct of business. If such a quorum is not present, those voting members present may adjourn the meeting to another time and place, provided that only those persons eligible to vote at the original meeting may vote at the adjourned meeting (ELCA 12.31.07.).

Absence of Members

Members shall not absent themselves from any session of the assembly without valid excuse, under penalty of forfeiture of the meal allowance for the day of absence and proportionate reimbursement of travel expenses.

Parliamentary Procedure

> The Churchwide Assembly shall use parliamentary procedures in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly (ELCA 12.31.09.).

Note: The 12th edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, is, therefore, the governing parliamentary law of this church, except as otherwise provided.

No motion shall be out of order because of conflict with federal, state, or local constitutions or laws.

Proxy and Absentee Voting Precluded

> Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted at a Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 12.31.08.).

Obtaining the Floor

In plenary sessions of the Churchwide Assembly, voting members, including *ex officio* members, have prior right to obtain the floor, unless the chair determines that it is in the best interests of the assembly to call upon an advisory member, a resource member, or another individual with voice.

Questions of Personal Privilege

Questions of personal privilege that are not urgent and do not relate to the assembly as a whole are out of order. (Questions of privilege that relate to the assembly as a whole include such concerns as problems with acoustics, voting devices, lighting, and emergencies.) Other requests for time in plenary for questions of personal privilege (e.g., personal announcements, comments on matters not on the agenda, reflections on the meaning of votes after they are taken) must be submitted electronically to the secretary's assistant. The chair may, at the chair's sole discretion, allow such matters to be addressed at a later time.

Speeches

Unless otherwise determined by a majority vote of the assembly, all speeches during discussion shall be limited to two minutes. A signal shall be given one minute before the speaker's time ends. A second signal shall be given one minute later, and the speaker shall then sit down.

After four people have spoken in a row on the same side of the motion before the assembly and if no one has risen to speak on the other side of the motion, debate will automatically be considered closed and the question will move to a vote.

Alternating Speeches

Insofar as is possible during discussion, a speaker on one side of the question shall be followed by a speaker on the other side.

To facilitate alternating speeches, assembly members seeking recognition at the floor microphones shall approach the appropriate microphone. If you wish to speak in favor of the pending motion, go to a microphone marked green. If you wish to speak against the pending motion, go to a microphone marked red.

Purpose and Use of "White Paper"

A white paper, provided in the registration packet of voting members, is to be used to identify a member who wishes to raise a Point of Order.

Motion

Except when authorized to interrupt a speaker by *Robert's Rules of Order*, voting members seeking to bring a motion or offer an amendment shall line up at any microphone and await recognition by the chair.

Motion to Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted at This Assembly

A two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting shall be required to rescind or to amend something previously adopted during this Churchwide Assembly. This rule does not apply to constitutional or bylaw amendments previously adopted by this assembly. (*See* PART FIFTEEN: Amendments to Governing Documents *below*.)

Suspending or Revising the Rules

After the adoption of the Rules of Organization and Procedure and any amendments thereto offered prior to the adoption of the Rules, any further amendment to, revision in, or suspension of the Rules shall always require a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting.

Moving the Previous Question

A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not call for a vote on the question(s).

A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion; a motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately pending question is not in order.

Applause

In the give-and-take of debate on issues before the Churchwide Assembly, members of the assembly and visitors shall refrain from applause.

Departing from Agenda

With the consent of a majority of the voting members, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order the chair considers most expedient for the conduct of the assembly's business.

A motion to alter the agenda shall require a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting.

Unfinished Business

Upon adjournment of the Churchwide Assembly, all remaining unfinished items of business shall be referred to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for disposition.

Audit of Credentials Report

At the request of the chair of the Credentials Committee or of the assembly, the chair may order an audit of the report of the Credentials Committee. When so ordered, the Credentials Committee will provide the bishop of each synod with a list of the registered voting members from such synod. Each bishop (or other voting member duly appointed by the bishop) shall then make appropriate corrections on such list and certify the accuracy of the list with such corrections as may be indicated. Each bishop (or other voting member duly appointed by the bishop) shall promptly return the certified list to the chair of the Credentials Committee. The accuracy of the list of voting members of the Church Council shall be certified by the vice president of the ELCA.

PART FOUR: COMMITTEES OF THE ASSEMBLY

Mandated Committees

The Churchwide Assembly shall have a Reference and Counsel Committee, a Memorials Committee, a Nominating Committee, and an Elections Committee (ELCA 12.51.).

Reference and Counsel Committee

A Reference and Counsel Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review all proposed changes or additions to the constitution and bylaws and other items submitted that are not germane to items contained in the stated agenda of the assembly (ELCA 12.51.01.).

Memorials Committee

A Memorials Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review memorials from synod assemblies and make appropriate recommendations for assembly action (ELCA 12.51.02.).

Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee, elected by the Churchwide Assembly, shall nominate at least one person for each position for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with Chapter 19 of this constitution (ELCA 12.51.03.).

The Church Council shall place in nomination the names of two persons for each position [on the Nominating Committee] (ELCA 19.11.01.).

Elections Committee

An Elections Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall be responsible for the conduct and supervision of elections. (ELCA 12.51.04.)

In the election of a presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary, the Elections Committee shall report the results of any balloting by announcing the number of votes received by each nominee and the names of those nominees qualified to remain on the next ballot or the name of the nominee who is elected.

The Elections Committee shall report the results of balloting in other elections by announcing the name of the person elected or by announcing the names of nominees qualified to remain on the ballot. Vote totals shall be reported to the secretary of this church and recorded in the minutes of the assembly. Based on the report of the Elections Committee, the chair shall declare elected those who received the required number of votes.

A report showing the results of a ballot shall be distributed to the voting members concurrently with, or as soon as practical after, the announced report of the Elections Committee.

Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee shall oversee the registration of voting members and shall report periodically to the Churchwide Assembly the number of voting members registered.

Churchwide Assembly Planning Committee

The Churchwide Assembly Planning Committee shall assist officers of this church in planning the agenda, program, worship, and arrangements at the Churchwide Assembly.

Other Committees

The Churchwide Assembly may authorize such other committees as it deems necessary (ELCA 12.51.).

Such committees as may be necessary to facilitate the planning for and operation of the assembly may be established by the secretary in consultation with the presiding bishop (ELCA 12.31.05.).

Ad Hoc *Committees*

Such committees as may be necessary to facilitate the organization and consideration of business before the assembly may be established by the presiding bishop in consultation with the secretary.

Additional Appointments

Additional officials or committees (e.g., sergeants-at-arms, parliamentarians, tellers, pages, etc.) of the Churchwide Assembly shall be appointed by the presiding bishop.

PART FIVE: VOTING PROCEDURES

Voting by Electronic Device

Voting generally shall occur through use of a wireless electronic device at each voting member's seat.

There will be a voting device at the place of each voting member. The device should remain there throughout the assembly when not being used for voting. Devices must not be removed from the table by voting members. Devices are to be left at the table at the end of the day for recharging and maintenance, and will be returned to the table prior to the next plenary session. A voting device must not be used by anyone except the voting member to whom it has been assigned.

Synod bishops (or their designees) will check at the end of every plenary session to ensure that all voting devices are in place.

Voting members must be seated at the table that contains their assigned voting device in order to cast a vote.

Voting by electronic device shall be in accordance with instructions from the chair or the Elections Committee. The chair will announce when voting is to begin.

Once the voting period has begun and voting members have registered their vote, confirmation will appear on the device's screen. If this message is not received, the synod bishop or a member of the Elections Committee should be notified immediately.

At any time prior to the announcement that the voting period has ended, voting members may change their minds and register a different vote. A second vote will cancel the first vote. Confirmation of the second vote will be sent.

Periodically during the assembly, a test vote may be taken to ensure that all devices are in working order.

If a voting device is inoperable or lost, or if a voting member for any reason cannot use the voting device, the voting member should notify the secretary's assistant (seated next to the podium) or a member of the Elections Committee (stationed around the plenary hall).

Various Other Methods of Voting

As directed by the chair, voting also may take place by voice, by show of hands using the green paper or red paper, by standing, or by written ballot. Each voting member's registration packet contains a green paper and a red paper to be used if the chair so directs.

Any member who because of physical limitation cannot raise a hand or stand to vote should contact the Elections Committee for assistance.

Division of the House

When a division of the house is ordered, the vote shall be by electronic device, by standing vote, or by written ballot as directed by the chair. No division of the house is in order when a vote has been taken by electronic device, by a counted standing vote, or by written ballot.

PART SIX: RELATION OF ASSEMBLY TO CHURCH COUNCIL AND CHURCHWIDE UNITS

Relationship to Church Council

The Church Council shall exercise interim legislative authority and shall serve as the board of directors of the churchwide organization (ELCA 14.11.).

"Interim legislative authority" is defined to mean that between meetings of the churchwide assemblies, the Church Council may exercise the authority of the Churchwide Assembly, including dealing with all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church, so long as:

a. the actions of the Church Council do not conflict with the actions of and policies established by the Churchwide Assembly; provided, however, that nothing in this constitution and bylaws precludes the Church Council from establishing policies concerning areas where the Churchwide Assembly has not acted; and
b. the Church Council is not precluded by the Articles of Incorporation or this constitution and bylaws from taking action on the matter (ELCA 14.13.).

Responsibilities of Church Council

The Church Council shall act on the policies proposed by churchwide units, when requested by the presiding bishop or the churchwide unit. The Church Council shall ensure

that the actions of the Churchwide Assembly are implemented by the applicable unit or office (ELCA 14.21.01.).

The Church Council shall review all recommendations from churchwide units for possible consideration by the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 14.21.03.).

The Church Council, upon recommendation of the presiding bishop, shall submit budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorize expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets (ELCA 14.21.05.).

The Church Council shall arrange the process for all elections as specified in this constitution and bylaws for churchwide units to assure conformity with established criteria (ELCA 14.21.22.).

The Church Council shall report its actions to the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 14.21.07.).

Status of Church Council Recommendations

The recommendation of the Church Council with respect to any proposal by a churchwide unit or any other matter shall be treated as a motion made and seconded, unless the Church Council shall otherwise determine.

Relationship to Churchwide Units

Each unit shall report to the Churchwide Assembly and will report to the Church Council in the interim. The policies, procedures, and operation of each unit shall be reviewed by the Church Council in order to assure conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and with Churchwide Assembly actions (ELCA 16.12. and 14.21.01.; see also 17.20.05., 17.20.A21.e., 17.30.03., 17.40.02. and 17.50.03.).

Relationship to the Board of Pensions (also known as Portico Benefit Services)

The Churchwide Assembly shall:

a. approve amendments to the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits that have been referred by the Church Council; and
b. refer any amendments to the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits initiated by the Churchwide Assembly to the Board of Pensions for recommendation before final action by the Church Council, assuring that no amendment shall abridge the rights of sponsored members in the ELCA Retirement Plan (ELCA 17.20.01.).

The Church Council shall … refer, as it deems appropriate, proposed amendments to the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits to the Churchwide Assembly for final action (ELCA 17.20.02.e.).

The Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—also known as Portico Benefit Services—shall … manage and operate the Pension and Other Benefits Program for this church and plans for other non-profit organizations having a formal affiliation with a church or a religious organization, and invest the assets according to fiduciary standards set forth in the plans and trusts (ELCA 17.20.A21.a.).

The Board of Pensions shall … report to the Churchwide Assembly through the Church Council, with the Church Council making comments on all board actions needing approval of the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 17.20.A21.f.).

PART SEVEN: RESOLUTIONS, MOTIONS, AND NOTICES

Submission of Resolutions and Motions

Substantive resolutions or motions, or amendments to either, must be presented using an electronic form to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant before the established deadline or, if applicable, immediately after being moved. Paper forms will be used only if the electronic form is not functional. The electronic form provided for this purpose is available in the

Churchwide Assembly Guide; if needed, paper forms will be available from the secretary's assistant. Other forms also are available in the Churchwide Assembly Guide. The method for electronically submitting resolutions and motions is described below. Questions about the process of submitting resolutions may be submitted to the parliamentarian or the secretary.

Nature of Resolutions and Motions

➤**Germane Resolutions and Motions**: A germane resolution or motion is one closely related to or having bearing on the matter before the assembly. A resolution or motion that is germane to the matter before the assembly may be offered when in order by any voting member from the floor by going to a microphone and being recognized by the chair. Nothing in this provision is intended to modify established deadlines. (*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*.)

➤**Non-Germane Resolutions and Motions**: Any resolution or motion not germane to the matter before the Churchwide Assembly or on the assembly agenda must be submitted to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) prior to the established deadline. (*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*.) Each resolution or motion must be supported by one other voting member. At least 24 hours must elapse before such resolution may be considered in plenary session. The secretary shall refer any such resolution to the Reference and Counsel Committee, which may:

(a) Recommend approval;
(b) Recommend referral to a unit or office of this church;
(c) Recommend a substitute motion to the assembly; or
(d) Recommend that the assembly decline to approve the resolution or motion.

➤**Same or Similar Subjects**: The Reference and Counsel Committee may group together in a single recommendation resolutions or motions on the same or similar subjects. A resolution or motion on the same subject as a recommendation already on the agenda of the assembly, such as a memorial, will not be submitted to the assembly for separate action by the Reference and Counsel Committee. The chair of the committee will inform the voting member of the committee's decision.

➤**Beyond Deadline for Submission**: Any resolution or motion not germane to the matter before the Churchwide Assembly or on the assembly agenda that a voting member submits because of circumstances that develop during the assembly and that cannot be submitted to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant prior to the established deadline (*see* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*) must be submitted to the secretary or the secretary's assistant electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) and be supported by one other voting member. The secretary shall refer such resolutions or motions to the Reference and Counsel Committee, which may:

(a) Decline to refer the resolution or motion to the assembly;
(b) Recommend approval;
(c) Recommend referral to a unit or office of this church;
(d) Recommend a substitute motion to the assembly; or
(e) Recommend that the assembly decline to approve the resolution or motion.

Consideration of a resolution or motion submitted beyond the deadline will require the assembly to suspend the rules prior to presentation of the matter to voting members by the Reference and Counsel Committee.

➤**On Societal Issues**: In its recommendation, the Reference and Counsel Committee, following consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, shall inform the Churchwide Assembly when a resolution or motion requires action on a societal issue for which this church does not have an established social policy. Should such resolution or motion be adopted by the

Churchwide Assembly, the matter shall be referred to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, which shall bring to the next regular meeting of the Church Council a plan for appropriate implementation.

➤**Budget Expectations**: Resolutions with budget expectations should follow the process referenced in PART FOURTEEN.

Substitute Motions

When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or rejected.

Electronic Submission

Whenever authorized by these rules, resolutions, motions, amendments, nominations, or notices may be submitted electronically through the Churchwide Assembly Guide by completing the applicable form located in the "Forms" tab, identifying the supporting voting member(s), as required, and transmitting it to the secretary's assistant by pressing the "Submit" button at the end of the form. An email response will be sent acknowledging receipt. If an electronic submission is improper or if additional information is necessary, the voting member will receive follow-up notification by email.

PART EIGHT: MEMORIALS FROM SYNOD ASSEMBLIES

Definition of Memorials

Memorials are proposals for action involving broad policy issues submitted by synod assemblies to the churchwide organization. Memorials from synod assemblies are reviewed by the Memorials Committee, which makes appropriate recommendations for assembly action. The committee's review of the memorial shall include information about the financial and personnel implications if adopted. The committee may consult with the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council when preparing its recommendations.

Status of Committee's Recommendations

When the Memorials Committee has recommended the passage of a memorial considered by the committee, the committee's recommendation and text of the memorial recommended for passage shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Memorials Committee has recommended the adoption of a substitute recommendation for the memorial on a subject, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Memorials Committee has recommended referral of a memorial, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Memorials Committee has recommended that the assembly decline a memorial without the committee making any other recommendation related to the same or closely related subject, the memorial, if then moved by a voting member from the synod originating the memorial and seconded, shall be the main motion, and the committee's recommendation shall be received as information.

En Bloc *Resolution in Response to Certain Memorials*

Responses to synod memorials, as recommended by the Memorials Committee in a report distributed to assembly members prior to, or at, the first business session of the assembly, may be approved by *en bloc*[1] resolutions when so proposed by the Memorials Committee.

Voting members who desire the assembly to discuss a synod memorial or the Memorials Committee's response that is proposed for *en bloc* consideration may request that it be removed from a proposed *en bloc* resolution, provided the member's request is supported by 10 other voting members. Such request shall be made in accordance with the following paragraph. The assembly then will consider and vote separately on the proposed response of the Memorials Committee. After such removals, *en bloc* resolutions shall be voted upon without amendments or debate.

➤**Separate Consideration**: To call for such separate consideration, a voting member must submit notification on the memorials form electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant prior to the established deadline (*see* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*). The form is available in the ELCA Churchwide Assembly Guide, and paper forms will be available, if needed, from the secretary's assistant.

Substitute Proposal

With respect to any recommendation made by the Memorials Committee in a report distributed to the assembly members prior to or at the first business session of the assembly, a voting member of the assembly may offer a substitute motion to the committee's recommendation only if such member has given notice electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) by the established deadline, provided the request is supported by 10 other voting members. For such notice, a voting member who desires to offer a substitute to the recommendation of the Memorials Committee must complete the memorials form and submit it to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant prior to the established deadline and provided the request is supported by 10 other voting members. (*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*.) In addition, the text of the proposed substitute shall be submitted on a Motion Form electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) to the secretary or the secretary's assistant.

Consultation with at least one of the co-chairs of the Memorials Committee is required when a substitute will be moved and is recommended when any other amendment will be proposed to the response recommended by the Memorials Committee.

Recommendation on Same Matter

A voting member's resolution or motion dealing with the same or similar matter as a subject being reported by the Memorials Committee cannot be considered prior to the Memorials Committee's recommendation and motion with respect to that matter. This rule does not apply to a resolution or motion that proposes an amendment to a constitutional provision, bylaw, or continuing resolution.

PART NINE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE

Status of Committee's Recommendations

When the Reference and Counsel Committee has recommended the approval of a resolution or motion considered by the committee, the committee's recommendation and text of the resolution or motion recommended for passage shall be the main motion before the assembly.

[1] Adoption of several motions by a single assembly resolution; sometimes known as a "consent calendar" or an "omnibus" bill or resolution.

When the Reference and Counsel Committee has recommended the adoption of a substitute recommendation for the resolution(s) or motion(s) on a subject, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Reference and Counsel Committee has recommended referral of a resolution or motion, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.

When the Reference and Counsel Committee has recommended that the assembly decline a proposed resolution or motion without the committee making any other recommendation related to the same or a closely related subject, the voting member's resolution or motion, if then moved by that voting member and seconded, shall be the main motion and the committee's recommendation shall be received as information.

PART TEN: VOTES ON AND AMENDMENTS TO SOCIAL STATEMENTS AND RELATED ACTIONS

Definition of Social Statements

Social statements are major documents addressing significant social issues. They meet the criteria of and are prepared in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns," adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in 1997 and amended by the Church Council most recently in 2018.

Deadline for Submission

Any amendment to a social statement, or to recommendations or resolutions concerning a social statement, must be submitted electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant prior to the established deadline. (*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*).

Voting members who submit amendments may be requested to meet with the staff of the unit that developed the statement.

If in the opinion of the chair of the assembly the amendments to a social statement, or to recommendations or resolutions concerning a social statement, are either too voluminous or too complex for the assembly to consider expeditiously, all amendments may be referred by the chair to either the Reference and Counsel Committee or to an *ad hoc* committee appointed by the chair for its recommendations for the consideration of the statement or recommendations or resolutions and the proposed amendments by the assembly.

If a voting member wishes to offer a substantive amendment that was not submitted prior to the deadline, the assembly, by a majority vote, may consent to the consideration of such an amendment.

Vote to Adopt Social Statements

> A social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be developed pursuant to a policy approved by the Church Council, following consultation with the Conference of Bishops. The text of a proposed social statement shall be reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and approved and recommended to the assembly by the Church Council. A proposed social statement shall require for adoption a vote of two-thirds of those voting members present and voting in a Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 12.12.01.).

A two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting in the Churchwide Assembly shall be required for adoption of a social statement.

Vote to Amend or Repeal

> Any matter for which adoption by a vote of two-thirds of those voting in a prior Churchwide Assembly was required by the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America shall require a two-thirds vote to be amended or repealed by a subsequent Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 12.12.).

Reconsideration of Social Statement

In accordance with the "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns," Churchwide Assemblies may reconsider previously adopted social statements. Such reconsideration may involve either a revision or removal of the statement. This may be done in two ways:

1. A Churchwide Assembly, by a two-thirds vote, may call for the reconsideration of a social statement at the next assembly. Subsequent to such a vote, the social statement shall be referred to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for re-study. The proposed change and the reasons for it shall be made available to this church with an official notice of such proposed action to be sent to the synods by the secretary of this church at least three months prior to the Churchwide Assembly at which it will be considered. A two-thirds vote of the assembly shall be required to revise or remove the social statement.
2. The Church Council, by a two-thirds vote of its voting members, may ask the Churchwide Assembly to reconsider a social statement. Such Church Council action must be taken no later than at the Church Council meeting in the autumn prior to the assembly. The proposed change and the reasons for it shall then be made available to this church with an official notice of such proposed action to be sent to the synods by the secretary of this church at least three months prior to the Churchwide Assembly. A two-thirds vote of the assembly shall be required to reconsider the statement and also to revise or remove it. Both actions may occur at the same assembly.

Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations or Resolutions from a Social Statement Task Force Requiring Amendment of Constitutional Provisions or Bylaws

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations or resolutions originating from or relating to the subject of a social statement task force report or amendments or substitute motions related to such recommendations or resolutions that require amendment of a constitutional provision or bylaw for implementation.

PART ELEVEN: VOTES ON PROPOSALS FOR CHURCH–TO–CHURCH AGREEMENTS

This church may establish official church-to-church relationships and agreements. Establishment of such official relationships and agreements shall require a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting in a Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 8.61.).

Each church body votes on a relationship of full communion using the same resolution. Amendments to a resolution establishing full communion, therefore, are not in order.

PART TWELVE: NOMINATIONS

Nominations Desk

Nominations from the floor at the Churchwide Assembly shall be made at the Nominations Desk, which shall be maintained under the supervision of the secretary of this church (ELCA 19.11.A24.a.).

A nomination from the floor shall be made by using the form provided by the secretary of this church. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Nominations Desk at times prescribed in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure (ELCA 19.11.A24.b.).

Nominations may be submitted electronically prior to the established deadline (*see* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*) or on a paper form to the Nominations Desk at the times described below if the electronic submission system is not functional.

Information and additional forms may be obtained from the Nominations Desk on Monday, July 28, from 1:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. and Tuesday, July 29, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The deadline for floor nominations is 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday, July 29.

Congregational Membership

> Each nominee for an elected position in the churchwide organization and each nominee for a position on the board of a separately incorporated ministry elected by the Churchwide Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation of this church, unless otherwise specified in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church (ELCA 19.04.).

Term Limit

> Elections shall be for one six-year term, without consecutive reelection, with approximately one-half of the members of the Church Council and of each board or committee elected each triennium, unless otherwise specified in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions (ELCA 19.03.).

Nominations Form

> The required form to be used in making nominations from the floor shall include the nominee's name, address, phone number, congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community membership, synod membership, information that enables compliance with the principles of organization as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution, and such other information as the secretary of this church shall require (ELCA 19.11.A24.c.).

The nomination form for the common ballot is available in the Churchwide Assembly Guide. Paper forms may be used if the electronic submission system is not functional and will be available, if needed, at the Nominations Desk at the times described above.

> For purposes of nomination procedures, "synod membership" is defined … as follows:
>
> a. A layperson shall be recorded in the synod that includes the congregation in which such a person holds voting membership, with the recognition that such a person shall reside within the territory of the synod or in an area immediately adjacent to the territory in the case of border areas.
> b. A rostered minister shall be recorded in the synod on whose roster such a minister's name is maintained. (ELCA 19.11.A24.d.; ELCA 19.04.02.).

Making Floor Nominations

> Floor nominations for the Church Council, the Nominating Committee, or other committee or board to be elected by the Churchwide Assembly require, in addition to the nominator, the documented support of at least 20 other voting members (ELCA 19.11.B21.a.).
>
> A nomination from the floor for any position (other than presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary) shall be made by filing the completed nomination form with the Nominations Desk at times prescribed in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure (ELCA 19.11.B21.b.).

Floor nominations for the board of trustees of each of the separately incorporated ministries identified in Chapter 17 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* require, in addition to the nominator, the written support of at least 20 other voting members.

Nominations from the floor for any position (other than presiding bishop, vice president, secretary) shall be made by filing the completed prescribed form electronically before the established deadline (*see* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*) or on a paper form with the Nominations Desk if the electronic submission system is not functional. The Nominations Desk is open on Monday, July 28 from 1:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. and Tuesday, July 29 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The deadline for floor nominations is 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday, July 29.

Nominations will be considered made in the order in which filed at the Nominations Desk (ELCA 19.11.B21.c.).

For Boards and Committees: Restrictions on Nominations

Except as otherwise provided, the Nominating Committee shall nominate two persons for each council or committee position … for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly. Nominations from the floor, where permitted in the nomination process, shall be presented in the specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor (ELCA 19.11.02.).

The Church Council shall endeavor to ensure that every synod has at least one person serving on the Church Council or churchwide boards, committees, task forces, or other groups. Among those persons elected by the assembly, excluding the officers, no more than two persons from any one synod shall serve on the Church Council or any one board, committee, task force, or other group (ELCA 19.11.05.).

Nominations from the floor for positions on boards or committees shall comply with criteria and restrictions established by the Nominating Committee and set forth in materials provided to each voting member of the assembly (ELCA 19.11.C21.a.).

See Section VIII—Report of the Nominating Committee—of the *Bulletin of Reports* for details on restrictions.

A former full-time or part-time employee shall not be eligible for three years subsequent to such employment for nomination or election to the board of a separately incorporated ministry or committee related to the churchwide unit or office in which the employee served (ELCA 19.06.A22.).

So long as the number of incumbent members from a given synod serving on a board or committee with terms not expiring plus the number of positions on the same board or committee to which individuals from the same synod already have been nominated (whether by the Nominating Committee or from the floor) total less than the maximum number of two individuals from the same synod who may serve on that board or committee, an individual from the same synod may be nominated for another position on that board or committee, provided other criteria and restrictions are met. Individuals from the same synod may be nominated for a position on a board or committee to which individuals from the same synod already have been nominated, provided other criteria and restrictions are met (ELCA 19.11.C21.b.).

For Church Council: Restrictions on Nominations

The members of the Church Council, except the chair of the Conference of Bishops and the treasurer of this church, shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly.

a. In preparation for the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council shall determine how this church's commitment to inclusive representation will affect the next election to the Church Council. For 32 of the council members, the Nominating Committee shall invite

each eligible synod to submit suggested nominees and shall then nominate persons who fulfill the categories assigned by the Church Council. With respect to the other nominees, the Church Council shall review its size and composition and take into consideration the experience and expertise of existing members and synod nominees as well as the needs of the council in seeking to fulfill its duties and responsibilities. Based upon this analysis, the Church Council shall instruct the Nominating Committee to provide nominations in specific categories for the remaining positions up to 13.

b. Excluding the churchwide officers and the chair of the Conference of Bishops, there shall not be more than two members of the Church Council from a synod. The Church Council shall have at least two members from each region.
c. No synod bishop, with the exception of the chair of the Conference of Bishops, shall serve as a voting member of the Church Council.
d. The terms of office of persons elected to regular terms on the Church Council by the Churchwide Assembly shall begin at the conclusion of the Churchwide Assembly at which such persons were elected (ELCA 19.02.).

Except as otherwise provided, the Nominating Committee shall nominate two persons for each council or committee position, according to the process described in continuing resolutions, for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly. Nominations from the floor, where permitted in the nomination process, shall be presented in the specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor (ELCA 19.11.02.).

Nominations for positions on the Church Council shall comply with criteria and restrictions established by the Church Council and Nominating Committee and set forth in materials provided to each voting member of the assembly (ELCA 19.11.D21.).

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—in the year preceding each regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly—shall solicit from eligible synods on a rotating basis the names of two persons in specified categories, in keeping with the principles of organization as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution, for possible election to the Church Council. Upon their nomination by the assemblies of the respective synods, the names of the two persons shall be presented to the Nominating Committee for submission to the Churchwide Assembly. In the event that any nominee withdraws or is disqualified from possible service, the Nominating Committee shall request that the nominee's synod provide a replacement name. In the event that the vacancy occurs subsequent to the preparation of the report of the Nominating Committee to the Churchwide Assembly, a floor nomination shall be provided from the same synod as the original nominee. Except as provided herein, no floor nominations for positions on the Church Council shall be permitted at the Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 19.02.A24.).

See Section VIII—Report of the Nominating Committee—of the *Bulletin of Reports* for details on restrictions.

For Nominating Committee: Restrictions on Nominations

The Church Council shall place in nomination the names of two persons for each position. The committee shall consist of at least one member but no more than three members from any region. Nominations from the floor shall also be permitted, but each floor nomination shall be presented in the specific category named by the Church Council and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Church Council shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor (ELCA 19.11.01.).

Nominations from the floor for positions on the Nominating Committee shall comply with criteria and restrictions established by the Church Council and set forth in materials provided to each voting member of the assembly (ELCA 19.11.E21.a.).

So long as the number of incumbent members from a given region serving on the Nominating Committee with terms not expiring plus the number of Nominating Committee positions to which individuals from the same region have already been nominated (whether by the Church Council or from the floor) total less than the maximum number of three individuals from the same region who may serve on the Nominating Committee, an individual from the same region may be nominated for another Nominating Committee position, provided other criteria and restrictions are met. Provided other criteria and restrictions are met, individuals may be nominated for a Nominating Committee position for which someone from the same region has already been nominated (ELCA 19.11.E21.b.).

PART THIRTEEN: ELECTION PROCEDURES

Election Procedures Utilizing the Common Ballot

The common ballot is used in those elections when the ecclesiastical or nominating ballot is not used (ELCA 19.11.F24.a.).

In each case in which there are floor nominations, there shall be a preliminary ballot that shall include the names of the nominees presented by the Nominating Committee or the Church Council, and the person or persons nominated from the floor, where permitted. The names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the final ballot (ELCA 19.11.04.).

Each ticket for which an election is held will be considered a separate ballot (ELCA 19.11.F24.b.).

A voting member may vote for only one nominee on each ticket (ELCA 19.11.F24.c.).

Failure to vote for a nominee for every ticket does not invalidate a ballot for the tickets for which a nominee is marked (ELCA 19.11.F24.d.).

Ballots must be marked in accordance with the instructions presented in plenary session (ELCA 19.11.F24.e.).

Unless otherwise ordered by the assembly, polls for the first common ballot close at the time designated in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure (ELCA 19.11.F24.f.).

(*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*.)

On the second ballot, the polls will remain open for a reasonable time, as determined by the chair, to permit members to record their votes (ELCA 19.11.F24.g.).

(*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*.)

On the second ballot, the first position on each ticket shall be given to the nominee who received the greatest number of votes on the first ballot. If two nominees are tied for the highest number of votes, their respective positions shall be in alphabetical order (ELCA 19.11.F24.h.).

Majority Required for Election

In all elections by the Churchwide Assembly, other than for the presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary, a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot shall be necessary for election. If an election does not occur on the first ballot, the names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the second ballot. On the second ballot, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election (ELCA 19.05.02.).

Breaking Ties

On the first common ballot, the blank ballots of the treasurer and vice president shall be held by the chair of the Elections Committee to be presented to the treasurer for vote only in those elections where a tie would otherwise exist, and to be presented to the vice president for vote only in those elections to break a tie remaining after the ballot of the treasurer has been counted (ELCA 19.11.G21.b.).

On the second common ballot, the marked ballot of the treasurer shall be held by the chair of the Elections Committee and shall be counted only where necessary to break a tie that would otherwise exist (ELCA 19.11.G21.c.).

PART FOURTEEN: BUDGET PROPOSALS

Budget Procedures

The presiding bishop shall … provide for the preparation of the budget for the churchwide organization (ELCA 13.21.f.).

At the direction of the presiding bishop, the executive for administration shall … develop the budget for the churchwide organization and report to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly through the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council with regard to the preparation of the budget (ELCA 15.12.A22.d.).

A Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The treasurer of this church shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer. The committee shall prepare and present a comprehensive budget to the Church Council for its consideration and presentation to the Churchwide Assembly. The committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Treasurer (ELCA 14.41.A15.).

The Church Council, upon recommendation of the presiding bishop, shall submit budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorize expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets (ELCA 14.21.05.).

The Churchwide Assembly shall … adopt a budget for the churchwide organization (ELCA 12.21.e.).

Each synod shall remit to the churchwide organization a percentage or amount of all donor-unrestricted receipts contributed to it by the congregations of the synod. The actual percentage or amount shall be determined through individual consultations with each synod. Consultations may recognize and include receipts other than unrestricted receipts in establishing and reporting the synod's remittance to the churchwide organization (ELCA 10.71.).

Proposed amendments to the budget must be submitted to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional)

prior to the established deadline. (*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*.) Each amendment must be supported by one other voting member. The secretary shall refer such proposed amendments to the Budget and Finance Committee. During the consideration of the budget by the assembly, the Budget and Finance Committee shall report on the implications of each proposed amendment.

Any amendment to the budget that increases a current program proposal of, or adds a current program proposal to, a churchwide unit must include a corresponding decrease in some other current program proposal of the same or another churchwide unit(s) and/or increase in revenues. Any amendment to the budget that proposes an increase in revenues shall require an affirmative vote by at least two-thirds of those present and voting.

The assembly may refer to the Church Council for final action any amendment to the budget that has been presented in accordance with these Rules of Organization and Procedure. Such referral shall not preclude the assembly from acting on other budget amendments or from adopting the budget.

Appropriations

When a motion calling for an appropriation comes before the Churchwide Assembly from any source other than the Church Council or a memorial from a synod, it shall be referred at once to the Reference and Counsel Committee. The Reference and Counsel Committee shall refer the proposed appropriation to the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council. The Budget and Finance Committee may consult with the churchwide unit(s) affected by the proposed appropriation. The Budget and Finance Committee may conclude that it cannot evaluate adequately the proposed appropriation prior to assembly adjournment and may request that the Church Council be designated to receive the evaluation later and to determine whether or not the proposed appropriation shall be authorized. The findings of the Budget and Finance Committee shall be forwarded to the Reference and Counsel Committee, which shall then make its recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly. If the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee is negative, a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting shall be required for adoption.

A proposed appropriation that originates with a synod through a memorial will be handled in the same way as in this preceding rule, except that reference shall be to the Memorials Committee rather than to the Reference and Counsel Committee.

New Studies or Research Proposals

Each proposal by a voting member for a study or research project shall be made as a main motion and shall be referred to the Reference and Counsel Committee. The Reference and Counsel Committee shall refer the proposal to the Office of the Secretary, which, in consultation with the churchwide unit to which the proposal is directed, will seek to determine the purpose, relationship to existing studies and research projects or current programs, potential value, overall costs including staff requirements, and availability of budget and staff. The Office of the Secretary may conclude that it cannot evaluate adequately the proposal prior to assembly adjournment and request that the Church Council be designated to receive the evaluation at a later time and determine whether or not the study or research project should be initiated. The findings of the Office of the Secretary shall be submitted to the Reference and Counsel Committee, which may make its recommendation to the assembly. If the recommendation calls for a new appropriation, the matter also shall be referred at once to the Budget and Finance Committee for consideration and report to the Reference and Counsel Committee. If the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee is negative, a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting shall be required for adoption.

A proposal that originates with a synod through a memorial shall be handled the same way, except that reference shall be to the Memorials Committee, rather than to the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Process for Initiation or Reconsideration of Social Statements

The process for initiating the preparation of a social statement or commencing a revision or removal of a social statement adopted at a prior Churchwide Assembly shall be governed by the document, "Policies and Procedures for Addressing Social Concerns," which was adopted by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly (CA97.05.21) and revised by the Church Council in 2006 (CC06.11.51), 2011 (CC11.04.28), and 2018 (CC18.11.23o).

PART FIFTEEN: AMENDMENTS TO GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Constitutional Amendments

> This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:
>
> a. The Church Council may propose an amendment, with an official notice to be sent to the synods at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. The adoption of such an amendment shall require a two-thirds vote of the members of the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting.
> b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next regular Churchwide Assembly (ELCA 22.11.).

A constitutional amendment may be proposed only by a main motion.

A proposed constitutional amendment must be submitted electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant prior to the established deadline. (*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*.)

Bylaw Amendments

> Bylaws not in conflict with this constitution may be adopted or amended at any regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly when presented in writing by the Church Council or by at least 15 members of the assembly. An amendment proposed by at least 15 members of the assembly shall immediately be submitted to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation. An amendment may not be placed before the assembly for action sooner than the day following its presentation to the assembly unless it has been presented in writing by the Church Council and sent with an official notice to the synods at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting shall be necessary for adoption (ELCA 22.21.).

A bylaw amendment may be proposed only by a main motion.

A proposed bylaw amendment must be submitted electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant prior to the established deadline. (*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*.) The secretary first shall report to the assembly any bylaw amendments so submitted and the amendments then shall be referred to the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Any floor amendment that is to be offered to a bylaw amendment proposed by the Church Council must be submitted in accordance with the requirement for bylaw amendments that are proposed by voting members.

Continuing Resolutions

> Continuing resolutions not in conflict with the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Churchwide Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. Such continuing resolutions become effective immediately upon adoption. Matters related to the administrative functions of the churchwide organization shall be set forth in the continuing resolutions (ELCA 22.31.).

Should the conference, committee, or board in question disagree with the action of the Church Council in amending a continuing resolution, it may appeal the decision to the Churchwide Assembly. (*See* ELCA 10.81.03.)

A continuing resolution amendment may be proposed only by a main motion.

A proposed continuing resolution amendment must be submitted electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant prior to the established deadline. (*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*.)

***Amendments to the* Constitution for Synods**

> The *Constitution for Synods* contains mandatory provisions that incorporate and record therein provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. Amendments shall be made in accordance with the required provisions in Chapter 18 of the *Constitution for Synods*. Non-mandatory provisions shall not be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church (ELCA 10.13.).

An amendment to the *Constitution for Synods* may be proposed only by a main motion.

A proposed amendment to the *Constitution for Synods* must be submitted electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant prior to the established deadline. (*See* PART EIGHTEEN: *Deadlines below*.)

***Amendments to the* Model Constitution for Congregations**

> A *Model Constitution for Congregations* shall be provided by this church. Amendments to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* shall be made in the same manner as prescribed in Chapter 22 for amendments of the bylaws of this church (ELCA 9.53.02.).

An amendment to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* may be proposed only by a main motion.

A proposed amendment to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* must be submitted electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant prior to the established deadline. (*See* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*.)

En Bloc *Resolution for Amendments to Governing Documents*

Amendments to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as recommended by the Church Council in a report distributed to assembly members prior to, or at, the first business session of the assembly, may be approved by *en bloc* resolutions when so proposed by the Church Council.

Voting members who desire the assembly to discuss a particular amendment that is included in the *en bloc* resolutions may request that the particular amendment be removed from the proposed *en bloc* resolutions, provided the member's request is supported by 10 other voting

members. Such request shall be made in accordance with the following paragraph. The assembly then will consider and vote separately on the particular proposed amendment. After removals, the *en bloc* resolutions shall be voted upon without amendment or debate.

To call for such separate consideration, a voting member, with the support of 10 other voting members, must submit notification electronically (or on a paper form if the electronic form is not functional) to the secretary of this church or the secretary's assistant prior to the established deadline (*see* PART EIGHTEEN: Deadlines *below*).

Notice shall be given by the secretary of this church to the assembly of which constitutional provisions or bylaw proposals have been removed from the *en bloc* resolutions by specific voting members.

Vote to Adopt Certain Recommendations from Reports

A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting shall be required to adopt recommendations from any report that requires amendment of a constitutional provision or bylaw of this church for implementation.

Reconsideration or Rescission Prohibited

After the adoption by the assembly of a constitutional or bylaw amendment, a motion for reconsideration or a motion to rescind or amend such action is not in order.

PART SIXTEEN: ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

Election Procedures

Set forth hereafter are the procedures for the elections of the presiding bishop, the vice president, and the secretary, whether or not there will be an election at this assembly for any of these positions. Elections are required because of completion of the specified term for a position or when a vacancy otherwise occurs.

Background Checks and Screening

Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as churchwide officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Church Council (ELCA 19.01.B09.).

The Protocol for Churchwide Officer Background Checks and Screening and the forms which the nominees need to complete, including a Biographical Information Form, a Disclosure Form, and a Background Check Disclosure and Release Information Form, are available.

Restrictions on Nominations for Officers

The officers shall be the presiding bishop, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Each officer shall be a voting member of a congregation of this church (ELCA 13.11.).

The presiding bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church (ELCA 13.21.).

The presiding bishop shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office (ELCA 13.22.).

The presiding bishop shall be a full-time, salaried position (ELCA 13.22.02.).

The vice president shall be a layperson (ELCA 13.31.).

The vice president shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office (ELCA 13.32.).

The vice president may perform such other tasks for the benefit of this church as the Church Council directs, and may be compensated as the Church Council determines (ELCA 13.32.02.).

The secretary shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office (ELCA 13.42.).

The secretary shall be a full-time, salaried position (ELCA 13.42.02.).

The secretary may be either a rostered minister or a lay person.

Ecclesiastical Ballot Defined

An "ecclesiastical ballot" for the election of officers (other than treasurer) of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is an election process:

a. in which on the first ballot the name of any eligible individual may be submitted for nomination by a voting member of the assembly;
b. through which the possibility of election to office exists on any ballot by achievement of the required number of votes cast by voting members of the assembly applicable to a particular ballot;
c. that precludes spoken floor nominations but allows nomination of persons not in attendance at the meeting;
d. in which those casting ballots have primary responsibility to nominate persons willing to serve if elected;
e. in which the first ballot is the nominating ballot if no election occurs on the first ballot;
f. in which the first ballot defines the total slate of nominees for possible election on a subsequent ballot, with no additional nominations;
g. in which each synod bishop will seek to inform nominees from that synod that they have been nominated and that they may withdraw if they do not seek election;
h. that allows, after the reporting of the first ballot, the persons nominated to withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot;
i. in which any name appearing on the second ballot may not be subsequently withdrawn;
j. that does not preclude an assembly's adoption of rules that permit, at a defined point in the election process and for a defined period of time, speeches to the assembly by nominees or their representatives and/or a question-and-answer forum in which the nominees or their representatives participate; and
k. in which the number of names that appear on any ballot subsequent to the second ballot shall be determined in accordance with provisions of the governing documents. (ELCA 19.01.C19.).

Election Procedures Utilizing the Ecclesiastical Ballot

a. The chair will announce what type of voting system is to be used for the election.
b. On the first ballot for each office being selected by ecclesiastical or nominating ballot, both the first and last names of a nominee should be used. Members should endeavor to use correct spelling and should provide any additional accurate information identifying the nominee, such as title, position, synod, congregation, or residence.
c. A member may vote for only one nominee on each ballot.
d. Ballots should not be marked prior to the time the chair advises the voting members to do so.
e. When the results of the first ballot are presented, the chair of the assembly will announce when and how persons nominated may withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot.
f. On the second and subsequent ballots, the first position on each ballot shall be given to the nominee who received the greatest number of votes on the immediately

preceding ballot, with the remaining positions assigned to the other nominees in descending order of the number of votes received on the immediately preceding ballot. If two or more nominees were tied with the same number of votes on the immediately preceding ballot, their respective positions shall be in alphabetical order.

g. On each ticket, the polls will remain open for a reasonable time, as determined by the chair, to permit voting members to record their votes (ELCA 19.01.D24.).

Election of the Presiding Bishop

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 per office 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 30 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members (ELCA 19.01.A24.).

The presiding bishop shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot for presiding bishop does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot, and 60 percent of the votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall elect (ELCA 19.01.02.).

Names pre-identified and posted on the assembly website or through the Churchwide Assembly Guide prior to the assembly shall be removed from the site and the application following the adoption of these rules. The biographical information shall be provided for the top seven nominees plus ties after the second ballot.

Those wishing to withdraw and not let their names go to the second ballot may do so in paper form to the Nominations/Elections desk in the registration area, electronically via email (nominations@elca.org), or by phone in the hearing of two members of the elections committee. The deadline for withdrawing is Tuesday, July 29, at 12:15 p.m.

If there is no election on the second ballot, the seven nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the second ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position) shall complete the Biographical Information Form, Disclosure Form, and Background Check Disclosure and Release Information Form approved by the Executive Committee of the Church Council. Nominees shall receive instructions on how to complete these forms.

Prior to the third ballot for presiding bishop, biographical data will be distributed for the seven nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the second ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position).

All nominees will be present for the following forums or be permitted to address the assembly by remote communication.

Prior to the third ballot for presiding bishop, the seven nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the second ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position) will be invited to

address the assembly, with each speech limited to four minutes. If any such person is not present at the assembly and is unable to address the assembly by remote communication, the bishop of the synod of such person's roster shall, in consultation with such person, if possible, designate an alternate to speak on behalf of such person.

Prior to the fourth ballot for presiding bishop, the three nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the third ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position) are invited to respond to questions. Voting members may submit questions electronically to the secretary of this church or to the secretary's assistant by the deadline of Tuesday, July 29 at 12:15 p.m. From the questions submitted, the Executive Committee of the Church Council, excluding the presiding bishop and nominees, shall select a sample of questions and determine the process to be followed. The question-and-answer period shall be moderated by an individual appointed by the Executive Committee of the Church Council. Each of the nominees shall be asked questions in rotating order, and each response shall be no longer than two minutes. Nominees are required to use their time to respond to the question asked and may not use their time to present on matters not related to the question.

Election of the Vice President

> The vice president shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot for vice president does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the second ballot and two-thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot and 60 percent of the votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot and a majority of votes cast shall elect (ELCA 19.01.03.).

Those wishing to withdraw and not let their names go to the second ballot may do so in paper form to the Nominations/Elections desk in the registration area, electronically via email (nominations@elca.org), or by phone in the hearing of two members of the elections committee.

If there is no election on the second ballot, the seven nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the second ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position) who received the greatest number of votes on the second ballot shall complete the Biographical Information Form, Disclosure Form, and Background Check Disclosure and Release Information Form approved by the Executive Committee of the Church Council. Nominees shall receive instructions on how to complete these forms.

Prior to the third ballot for vice president, biographical data will be distributed for the seven nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the second ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position).

All nominees will be present for the following forums or be permitted to address the assembly by remote communication.

Prior to the third ballot for vice president, the seven nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the second ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position) will be invited to address the assembly, with each speech limited to four minutes. If any such person is not present at the assembly and is unable to address the assembly by remote communication, the bishop of the

synod of such person's congregation membership shall, in consultation with such person, if possible, designate an alternate to speak on behalf of such person.

Prior to the fourth ballot for vice president, each of the three nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the third ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position) will be asked in rotating order to respond to three questions determined by the Executive Committee of the Church Council, excluding the vice president and nominees. Each nominee's response to each question shall be limited to two minutes. Nominees are required to use their time to respond to the question asked and may not use their time to present on matters not related to the question.

Election of the Secretary

> 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 per office 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 30 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members (ELCA 19.01.A24.).
>
> The secretary shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot for secretary does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the second ballot and two-thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot and 60 percent of the votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot and a majority of the votes cast shall elect (ELCA 19.01.04.).

Names pre-identified and posted on the assembly website or through the Churchwide Assembly Guide prior to the assembly shall be removed from the site and the application following the adoption of these rules. The biographical information shall be provided for the seven nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the second ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position).

Those wishing to withdraw and not let their names go to the second ballot may do so in paper form to the Nominations/Elections desk in the registration area, electronically via email (nominations@elca.org), or by phone in the hearing of two members of the elections committee. The deadline for withdrawing is Thursday, July 31, at 12:15 p.m.

If there is no election on the second ballot, the seven nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the second ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position) shall complete the Biographical Information Form, Disclosure Form, and Background Check Disclosure and Release Information Form approved by the Executive Committee of the Church Council. Nominees shall receive instructions on how to complete these forms.

Prior to the third ballot for secretary, biographical data will be distributed for the seven nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the second ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position).

All nominees will be present for the following forums or be permitted to address the assembly by remote communication.

Prior to the third ballot for secretary, the seven nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the second ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position) will be invited to address the assembly, with each speech limited to four minutes. If any such person is not present at the assembly and is unable to address the assembly by remote communication, the bishop of the synod of such person's congregation membership shall, in consultation with such person, if possible, designate an alternate to speak on behalf of such person.

Prior to the fourth ballot for secretary, each of the three nominees receiving the greatest numbers of votes on the third ballot (plus ties in the final qualifying position) will be asked in rotating order to respond to three questions determined by the Executive Committee of the Church Council, excluding the secretary and nominees. Each nominee's response to each question shall be limited to two minutes. Nominees are required to use their time to respond to the question asked and may not use their time to present on matters not related to the question.

Majority Required for Election

On the final ballot for the election of presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary of this church, when only two names appear on the ballot, a majority of the legal votes cast is necessary for election.

Breaking Ties

On the ballot for the election of the presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary, when only two names appear, the marked ballot of the treasurer shall be held by the chair of the Elections Committee and shall be counted only where necessary to break a tie that would otherwise exist (ELCA 19.11.G21.a.).

PART SEVENTEEN: STATUS OF REPORTS

Assembly Reports

At least 20 days prior to an assembly the secretary shall prepare and distribute to each congregation and to the voting members-elect a bulletin of reports. Distribution to congregations may be accomplished by posting the report on the website of this church (ELCA 12.31.03.).

Reports of the Presiding Bishop and Secretary of This Church

Following presentation, the presiding bishop's report and the secretary's report shall be referred to the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Status of Reports

All reports published in the bulletin of reports shall be treated as having been received by the assembly without formal vote.

Distribution of Materials

Materials may be distributed on the floor of the assembly only with the written consent of the secretary of this church. In cases where the secretary does not consent, appeal may be made to the Reference and Counsel Committee. That committee's decision shall be final.

PART EIGHTEEN: DEADLINES

Monday, July 28, 2025

9:15 p.m. Separate consideration (removal from *en bloc*) of responses to synod memorials
Substitute responses to synod memorials

Separate consideration (removal from *en bloc*) 2025 archival of certain social policy resolutions
Separate consideration (removal from *en bloc*) of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions
Proposed changes to the amendments to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions
Proposed amendments from the floor to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions

Tuesday, July 29, 2025

12:15 p.m. **Nominations from the floor**
Proposed amendments to the Recommended Proposed Social Statement on "Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All" and implementing resolutions
Withdrawal from ballot for presiding bishop
Questions for presiding bishop question-and-answer forum

6:15 p.m. Proposed amendments to 2026–2028 budget proposal

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

10:45 a.m. Non-germane resolutions
Proposed amendments to Recommended Proposed Edited Social Statement on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009)

1:45 p.m. First Common Ballot

Thursday, July 31, 2025

12:15 p.m. Withdrawal from ballot for secretary

PART NINETEEN: ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Use of computers and other electronic devices, such as cellphones (in texting mode only), smart phones, tablets, and other wireless electronic communication devices is allowed in the plenary hall during assembly sessions, provided that such devices are in a silent mode and do not disturb voting members. Speaking on any device is prohibited in the plenary hall during assembly sessions. Members and others are expected to be courteous and respectful and are encouraged to leave the hall if they intend to engage in communication activities that are not related to the work of the assembly. Use of computers and other electronic devices is precluded during worship.

Members and others using ELCA-issued electronic equipment shall ensure that such equipment is used for assembly purposes only and in a manner that is consistent with good stewardship and the mission and ministry of this church. Use of such equipment and related technology is contingent upon agreement to the terms and conditions of the use agreement.

PART TWENTY: OTHER MATTERS

College Corporation Meetings

The voting members of the Churchwide Assembly also constitute the voting members of certain college corporations that hold meetings as part of the agenda of the assembly. The assembly will recess to conduct the corporation meeting(s) and reconvene at the conclusion of the corporation meeting(s) or at the beginning of the next scheduled session of the assembly. Quorum requirements for college corporation meetings are specified in the governing documents of each college. The quorum requirement for the Churchwide Assembly does not apply to college corporation meetings.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion had passed and the Rules of Organization and Procedure were in force.

Consideration of a Motion to Amend the Rules of Organization and Procedure

The Rev. Erin E. Clausen [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] introduced a motion to amend the Rules of Organization and Procedure by insertion.

Moved; ***Two-thirds Vote Required***
Seconded: To amend the Rules of Organization and Procedure by insertion:

Moving the Previous Question

....

A motion to move the previous question shall be a debatable motion, in which no more than three people on each side may speak for no more than 60 seconds each on the merits of continuing or ending debate.

Presiding Bishop Eaton asked whether any voting members wished to speak to the motion and, there being none, called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED YES-543; NO-217***

CA25.01.02 To amend the Rules of Organization and Procedure by insertion:

Moving the Previous Question

. . . .

A motion to move the previous question shall be a debatable motion, in which no more than three people on each side may speak for no more than 60 seconds each on the merits of continuing or ending debate.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion had passed and the new rule would be considered part of the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the Seventeenth Churchwide Assembly.

Committees of the Assembly

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure*

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced the committees authorized to assist the assembly:

- The Nominating Committee, elected by the two previous assemblies.
- The Reference and Counsel Committee and the Memorials Committee, appointed by the Church Council as outlined in the bylaws.

The rules adopted for the assembly also provide for additional committees as needed for the work of the assembly. These committees were listed in the Roll of Assembly Members. The presiding bishop declared these committees authorized and constituted. She introduced a proposed *ad hoc* committee to consider amendments to the proposed social statement, "Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All." Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to the formation of the committee and, there being none, declared the *ad hoc* committee appointed.

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced a second proposed *ad hoc* committee to consider any additional revisions to the social statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust,* that might be

proposed during the assembly. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to the formation of the committee and, there being none, declared the *ad hoc* committee appointed.

Consideration of the Order of Business

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section 1:1, Order of Business*

Presiding Bishop Eaton directed voting members to the Order of Business provided in the electronic Churchwide Assembly Guide, noting that revised pages would be uploaded to the app as appropriate. She highlighted elements of the Order of Business and clarified that the rules recently adopted gave her, as chair, discretion to make adjustments to the Order of Business to facilitate the work of the assembly.

Presiding Bishop Eaton recognized Secretary Rothmeyer, who introduced a motion on behalf of the Church Council to adopt the Order of Business. The presiding bishop invited discussion of the motion and, there being none, called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***YES-771; NO-2***

CA25.01.03 **To approve the Order of Business as the agenda of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in keeping with the provisions of the Rules of Organization and Procedure for calling items of business before the assembly.**

The presiding bishop declared that the Order of Business was adopted.

Recess

The assembly recessed at 7:51 p.m. and reconvened at 8:01 p.m.

Introduction of the First Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop*

Presiding Bishop Eaton called the assembly back to order and introduced the first ballot for presiding bishop. Due to a delay compiling the Report of the Credentials Committee, the presiding bishop announced that the first ballot for presiding bishop would occur later in the plenary session.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VIII, Report of the Nominating Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Ms. Jessica Potts, chair of the Nominating Committee, to present the Report of the Nominating Committee, noting that this report did not address election of the presiding bishop and secretary. Ms. Potts highlighted changes to the nomination form completed by nominees and the addition of "historically underrepresented groups" as a representational category to be considered by voting members in voting to fill positions.

First Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop*

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced Mr. Paul K. Irwin, associate general counsel, to present the Report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. Irwin reported that, as of 8:40 p.m., there were 791

voting members. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to adopting the Report of the Credentials Committee and, there being none, declared the report adopted.

Following a hymn and prayer, Presiding Bishop Eaton asked the assembly to cast the first ballot for presiding bishop. When the voting was complete, the presiding bishop explained when results would be available and how persons nominated on the first ballot could withdraw their names from consideration.

Presentation: Transforming Patriarchy for the Life of the World

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced a time of public repentance for the sins of patriarchy and sexism in response to action taken by the Fifteenth Churchwide Assembly in 2019. The presiding bishop invited Ms. Tracey A. Beasley and Mr. Iván A. Pérez, co-chairs of an *ad hoc* committee established by the Church Council, to explain the service of repentance scheduled to take place on Friday, Aug. 1, 2025.

Announcements

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Secretary Rothmeyer for announcements.

Hymn and Prayer

Reference: Worship and Song

The plenary session ended with a hymn and prayer.

Extension of Deadlines

Ms. Leigh R. Ingram [Southwestern Texas Synod] introduced a motion to suspend the rules of the assembly to extend the posted deadlines for that evening by 20 minutes to 9:35 p.m.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED YES-623; NO-141***

CA25.01.04 **To suspend the Rules of Organization and Procedure to extend until 9:35 p.m. on Monday, July 28, 2025, the deadline for submission of:**

Separate consideration (removal from *en bloc*) of responses to synod memorials;

Substitute responses to synod memorials;

Separate consideration (removal from *en bloc*) of 2025 archival of certain social policy resolutions;

Separate consideration (removal from *en bloc*) of the proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions;*

Proposed changes to proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions;* and

Proposed amendments from the floor to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions*.

Adjournment

The first plenary session of the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Plenary Session Two

Tuesday, July 29, 2025
10:15 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened Tuesday, July 29, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 10:16 a.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated). The presiding bishop opened the plenary session by leading assembly members in singing "Happy Birthday" in recognition of all attendees celebrating birthdays during the week of the assembly.

Elections: Report of the First Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

The presiding bishop invited Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel and member of the Elections Committee, to present the report of the first ballot for presiding bishop. Mr. Cunniff reported that, of 682 ballots cast, 667 were legal ballots. He announced that none of the nominees received the 501 votes necessary for election and presented the results of the first ballot for presiding bishop.

Kevin Strickland	117	Ingrid Arneson Rasmussen	2	Constanze Hagmaier	1
Amy Current	100	Tiffany Chaney	2	Shauna Hannan	1
Yehiel Curry	83	Elizabeth Eaton	2	Kate Hines-Shah	1
Angela Shannon	40	Anne Edison-Albright	2	Phil Hirsch	1
Erik Gronberg	38	Tim Graham	2	Jeff Johnson	1
Craig Schweitzer	38	Louise Johnson	2	Laurie Jungling	1
Tracie Bartholomew	27	David Lose	2	Don Kreiss	1
Kevin Jones	25	Michael Lozano	2	Susan Langhauser	1
Bill Gohl	20	Patricia Lull	2	Wolfgang Laudert	1
Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt	15	Meggan Manlove	2	Rochelle Lewis	1
Emily Ebert	15	David Nagler	2	Joseph Liles	1
Deborah Hutterer	12	Imani Olear	2	Brian McClinton	1
Leila Ortíz	10	Tuhina Rasche	2	Phyllis Milton	1
Pedro Suárez	8	Angela Zimman	2	Jen Nagel	1
Khader El-Yateem	7	Gabi Aelabouni	1	Nelson Quinones	1
R. Guy Erwin	7	Lowell Almen	1	Manuel Retamoza	1
Lucille Mills	7	Ramie Bakken	1	Craig Satterlee	1
Brenda Bos	5	Marie Bonine	1	William Shaefer	1
Regina Hassanally	5	Sue Briner	1	Clint Schnekloth	1
Laura Barbins	4	Shelley Bryan Wee	1	Bryan Simmons	1
Felix Malpica	4	Wyvetta Bullock	1	Bill Tesch	1
Patricia Davenport	3	Carla Christopher Wilson	1	Kristina Weber	1
Brian Maas	3	Paul Egensteiner	1	Frederick Weidmann	1
Matthew Riegel	3	Michael Fonner	1	James Wilson	1
Michael Rinehart	3	Melanie Forrey	1		
Albert Starr	3	Daniel Garrietts	1		

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that there was no election for presiding bishop on the first ballot and reviewed the process by which persons nominated could have their names removed from the second ballot should they wish to do so.

Introduction: Recommended Proposed Social Statement "Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All"

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:7, Recommendation: Background and Resolutions for Recommended, Proposed Social Statement on Faith and Civic Life & Its Implementing Resolutions*

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced the Rev. Anthony M. Bateza and Ms. Phyllis Johnson, co-chairs of the Faith and Civic Life Task Force, along with the other members of the task force and the Rev. Roger A. Willer, program director for theological ethics, who facilitated the work of the task force. Pastor Bateza and Ms. Johnson introduced the work of the task force and provided an overview of the proposed social statement, highlighting key elements. The Rev. Douglas D. Barclay, a member of the task force, shared additional reflections on the work of the task force. The chairs invited voting members to introduce motions to amend the proposed social statement and outlined the process by which proposed amendments could be submitted and would be reviewed prior to plenary discussion.

College Corporation Meeting and Recognition of ELCA Higher Education Leaders

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section XIII, Report of Wartburg College*

Presiding Bishop Eaton expressed deep gratitude to the faculty, staff, and students of ELCA colleges and universities and thanked the many lay and rostered members of this church who serve as trustees or regents of the governing boards of these institutions. The presiding bishop introduced Mr. Paul C. Pribbenow, president of Augsburg University and president of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities (NECU).

President Pribbenow thanked Presiding Bishop Eaton for her leadership in the formation and ongoing support of NECU. He brought greetings from ELCA colleges and universities and provided an overview of the work of NECU and member institutions. Presiding Bishop Eaton thanked President Pribbenow and led the assembly in recognizing and thanking all of the presidents of ELCA colleges and universities present at the assembly.

The presiding bishop explained that, according to bylaw 8.22.02., any ELCA college or university may relate to this church through a corporation, with a majority of that corporation's voting members being the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly. She stated that Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa, has this governance relationship with the ELCA.

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared the Churchwide Assembly to be in recess at 10:55 a.m. The assembly immediately reconvened as the college corporation meeting for Wartburg College. Minutes for the meeting are maintained by the college. The presiding bishop called the second plenary session of the Churchwide Assembly back to order at 11:02 a.m.

The presiding bishop introduced the presidents of the seven ELCA seminaries and led the assembly in expressing appreciation for their service to this church.

Update: Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VI:8, Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery*

Presiding Bishop Eaton reminded assembly members that the 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery—a fifteenth-century doctrine that justified European colonialism and formed the basis for the dehumanization and oppression of the

Indigenous peoples of the Americas. The presiding bishop summarized actions already taken by this church to implement the promises made during the 2016 Assembly in association with this repudiation.

In 2021, a Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force was established, and it produced a declaration that included 21 pledges to Indigenous communities. Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced the Rev. Manuel Retamoza, co-chair of the task force, and the Rev. Amy J. Odgren, bishop of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod and member of the task force, who presented a report of the work of the task force as well as work being done across this church to continue the process of building bridges and righting relationships with Indigenous nations and peoples.

Bishop Odgren and Pastor Retamoza summarized injustices perpetrated against Indigenous peoples during the process of colonialism. They provided additional insight into the role of the Doctrine of Discovery in the process of colonization and ongoing repercussions of the doctrine. They highlighted ways the ELCA is working for the elimination of racism and white supremacy throughout society and in the governance, leadership, congregations, and membership of this church. They also identified ways this church is beginning to confess, repent, and make amends for the harm caused to Indigenous communities.

Pastor Retamoza and Bishop Odgren reported on things members of this church are doing to address the lasting consequences of colonization. They named additional actions congregations and individuals can take to participate in the work of undoing the harm caused by the Doctrine of Discovery and highlighted resources available from the churchwide organization to support this work. The presentation concluded by inviting all members of this church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to participate in intentional acts of truth-telling and to work for justice in relation to American Indian and Alaska Native peoples.

Announcement of Recommended Amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:4, Recommendation: Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Constitutions of the ELCA*

Presiding Bishop Eaton reminded the assembly that consideration of proposed amendments to the governing documents of this church would begin on Thursday, July 31, 2025. She invited Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, to the stage. Secretary Rothmeyer reported that voting members had requested removal of the following proposed amendments from the *en bloc* action for separate consideration:

- Constitutional provision 5.01.e.
- Bylaw 12.41.11.e.3.
- Constitutional provision 22.11.b.

Secretary Rothmeyer also announced certain new amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* that had been proposed by voting members.

Report of the Vice President and Church Council

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section II:2, Report of the Vice President; Section V, Recommendations of the Church Council; Section VI:1, Response of the Church Council to the Recommendations in the Report of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church and the Report of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church; Section XI, Report of the Church Council*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited to the stage Mr. Imran Siddiqui, vice president of the ELCA. Vice President Siddiqui provided the Report of the Vice President and the Report of the Church

Council in his capacity as chair of the council. He gave an overview of the role of the Church Council in the ELCA and asked the assembly to express its appreciation to council members for their service.

Vice President Siddiqui emphasized the importance of lay leadership within this church and celebrated the recent creation of a churchwide Association of Synod Vice Presidents to support synod vice presidents in their work. The assembly expressed its appreciation for synod vice presidents in attendance.

Vice President Siddiqui reviewed and provided clarifying commentary on the recommendations brought before the assembly by the Church Council. He directed assembly members to the Report of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC), as well as the Response of the Church Council to the CRLC recommendations. He summarized these documents and encouraged members, congregations, synods, and related institutions of this church to consult the CRLC report as an aid to discernment and engagement in God's mission in the world. The vice president concluded by thanking several people, particularly Presiding Bishop Eaton, Secretary Rothmeyer, and Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, for their service to this church, and his family for their support.

Recognition of Separately Incorporated Ministry Leaders

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section IV, Reports of the Separately Incorporated Ministries*

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced the leaders of the separately incorporated ministries (SIMs) that support this church in participating in God's mission for the life of the world. She asked the assembly to express appreciation to the leaders for their service and encouraged assembly members to visit the SIMs information booths to learn more about the ministries of these organizations.

Announcements

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Secretary Rothmeyer for announcements.

Adjournment

The second plenary session of the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned at 11:56 a.m., following a hymn and prayer.

Plenary Session Three

Tuesday, July 29, 2025
2:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened Tuesday, July 29, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 2:00 p.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated).

Elections: Introduction of the Second Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel, to the stage. Mr. Cunniff reported that there were 77 names on the first ballot for presiding bishop; of those, 43 names were withdrawn by the deadline, leaving 34 names on the second ballot. Due to technical difficulties, the second ballot for presiding bishop was postponed until after the report of the treasurer.

En Bloc Action on Social Policy Resolutions

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:5, Archiving of Certain Social Policy Resolutions*

Presiding Bishop Eaton provided an overview of ELCA policy for archiving of social policy resolutions. She announced that 28 social policy resolutions had been proposed for archiving *en bloc* and none had been removed from *en bloc* by voting members. The presiding bishop invited Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, to introduce the motion to archive the social policy resolutions on behalf of the Church Council.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***YES-773; NO-13***

CA25.02.05 **To archive the social policy resolutions identified in the 2025 Archiving of Certain Social Policy Resolutions document, in accordance with the "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (2018).**

Report of the Treasurer and Introduction of 2026–2028 Budget

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section II:4, Report of the Treasurer; Section V:6, 2026–2028 Budget Proposal*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, and the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration of the churchwide organization, to the stage. Treasurer Fedyk introduced her report by celebrating the abundance of gifts this church has received over the past triennium and the work that these gifts have made possible. She directed assembly members to her written report in the Bulletin of Reports for more detailed information regarding churchwide organization finances, including the audited financial statements for the 2022–2024 triennium.

Treasurer Fedyk provided an overview of churchwide organization finances from 2022–2024. During this time, churchwide revenues ranged from 92 percent to 96 percent of budget projections, while expenses ranged from 89 percent to 92 percent of budget projections. She

reported that excess revenue was used to fund a variety of initiatives, including work approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, additional support for new and innovative ministries of the ELCA, and a set-aside of funds to support potential work called for by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly and priorities of the new presiding bishop to be elected by this assembly.

Treasurer Fedyk provided a breakdown of churchwide organization revenue sources and expense types for the triennium. In 2024, the ELCA celebrated 50 years of working to address the root causes of hunger, during which time nearly $650 million had been raised and distributed. The treasurer reported that, during the past three years alone, nearly $64 million was raised and nearly $73 million was distributed by ELCA World Hunger. Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) brings hope, healing, and renewal in the midst of disaster and the recovery efforts that follow. The treasurer reported that LDR distributed more than $51 million in 62 countries in support of disaster response during the preceding triennium.

Treasurer Fedyk provided an overview of the proposed 2026–2028 churchwide organization and World Hunger budgets. Following the overview, she thanked Office of the Treasurer staff, members of the Church Council Budget and Finance Committee and Audit Committee, and the other ELCA officers. The treasurer then invited Pastor Bullock to present the proposed 2026–2028 budget.

Pastor Bullock gave a breakdown of projected revenues and expenses for the 2026–2028 triennium. To highlight the global outreach and partnership made possible by support for this church, she introduced Bishop Guadalupe Cortés of the Iglesia Luterana Salvadoreña (Salvadoran Lutheran Church), and Bishop Hilja Ndatala-Eenyofi Nghaangulwa of the Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, who brought greetings and reported on ministries conducted by their churches in partnership with the ELCA.

Pastor Bullock announced that the proposed budget for the 2026–2028 triennium would be brought before the assembly for action during the sixth plenary session.

Elections: Second Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop*

Presiding Bishop Eaton reminded voting members of the deadline to submit amendments to the proposed budget. She invited Mr. Jonathan H. Beyer, executive for IT and digital solutions for the churchwide organization and a member of the assembly's information technology team, to provide instruction on voting procedures for the second ballot for presiding bishop.

She then invited Mr. Paul K. Irwin, associate general counsel, to provide the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. Irwin reported that, as of 3:06 p.m., there were 800 eligible voting members present. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to adopting the Report of the Credentials Committee and, there being none, declared the report adopted. Once all technical issues were resolved, the presiding bishop called for the vote following a hymn and prayer.

Recess

The assembly recessed at 3:39 p.m. and reconvened at 3:53 p.m.

Presiding Bishop Eaton and the Rev. Khader El-Yateem, executive director for Service and Justice, presented gifts to Bishop Cortés and Bishop Ndatala-Eenyofi Nghaangulwa, expressing gratitude for their presence and for the partnerships between their churches and the ELCA.

Introduction: Recommended Proposed Edited Social Statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:8, Recommended, Proposed Edited Social Statement, Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited the Rev. Joel Benson and the Rev. Keats Miles-Wallace, representatives of the *Human Sexuality* Reconsiderations Task Force, to address the assembly. Pastor Miles-Wallace and Pastor Benson explained the work of the task force and introduced the proposed edits to the social statement on which voting members would be acting in the tenth plenary session. The assembly expressed its appreciation to members of the task force. Pastor Miles-Wallace then outlined the process by which voting members could propose additional amendments to the proposed edited social statement.

Report on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VI:1, Response of the Church Council to the Recommendations in the Report of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church and the Report of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited the Rev. Carla Christopher and Mr. Leon Schwartz, co-chairs of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC), to give an overview of the background, formation, and work of the commission. They highlighted key points of the CRLC's report, noting that it is a beginning, not an ending, of the reconsideration of the structures, organization, and priorities of this church. They pointed out recommendations within the report that call for further consideration. They invited members of the CRLC who were present to stand, and the assembly expressed its gratitude.

The presiding bishop thanked the co-chairs of the commission and then introduced Mr. Imran Siddiqui, vice president of the ELCA, and the Rev. Joanne E. Engquist, a member of the Church Council, who presented additional background information on the CRLC and discussed the relationship between the work of the commission and actions taken by the Church Council. Pastor Engquist and Mr. Siddiqui provided an overview of the process by which the members of the CRLC were chosen and the charge given to the commission in response to the action taken by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. They summarized actions taken by the Church Council in response to CRLC recommendations, particularly as it related to amending the governing documents of this church, creating task forces and work groups to continue the work of the commission, and implementing additional institutional support for members of historically marginalized communities.

Report of the Memorials Committee

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee and Supplemental Report of the Memorials Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced the Rev. Emily C. Hartner and Mr. Noah F. Roux, co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, who presented the report of the committee. They reported that synod assemblies had submitted 87 memorials during the 2023–2025 triennium. Memorials addressing the same or similar topics were grouped together by the Memorials Committee into 35 categories, and a single recommended response to each category of memorials was provided to assist the assembly in responding to the large number of memorials. The Memorials Committee had recommended that four responses to synod memorials be considered separately by the assembly and that the recommended responses to the remaining memorials be adopted *en bloc*. Mr. Roux and Pastor Hartner reported that voting members had removed two additional recommended responses to synod memorials from *en bloc* for separate consideration. On behalf

of the committee, the co-chairs introduced a motion to approve *en bloc* the recommended responses to synod memorials other than those removed from *en bloc* consideration.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***YES-729; NO-49***

CA25.02.06 **To approve *en bloc*, with the exception of those memorials considered separately, the following responses to 2023, 2024, and 2025 synod memorials printed in the Report of the Memorials Committee.**

Category A1: Immigration Detention
Category A2: Support of the Transgender Community
Category A4: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
Category A5: Youth Gathering DEIA
Category A6: Affirm People of God of All Gender Identities
Category A7: Restoration of Funding of USAID
Category A8: Decarbonization of the Energy Grid
Category B1: Accompaniment and Accountability of Bishops
Category B2: Increasing Continuing Education Commitments
Category B3: Limiting Insurance Costs for Rostered Ministers
Category B4: Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection
Category B5: Interpretation for ELCA Churchwide Assembly and Youth Gathering
Category B6: Legal Action in Support of ELCA Communities
Category B7: Congregation Constitutions
Category B8: Evaluating and Updating the Call Process
Category B9: Becoming a Global Refuge Denomination
Category B10: Abuse Prevention and Reporting
Category B11: Boundary, Racial Justice, and LGBTQIA+ Cultural Competency Training
Category B12: Remove Gendered and Binary Language
Category B13: Review of ELCA Investments and Procurement
Category B15: Consideration of Full Report of the CRLC
Category C1: Council of Nicaea 1700th Anniversary
Category C3: Social Statement on Vulnerable Youth
Category C4: Confession of Faith in Our Time
Category C5: Reconsideration of Social Message on End-of-Life Decisions
Category C6: Educational Materials Regarding the Word and Service Roster
Category C7: Reconsideration of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*
Category D2: Palestinian Destruction Response
Category D3: Public Discourse on Palestine-Israel

Category A1: Immigration Detention

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 8–9*

1. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2023]

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod Assembly memorialize the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to call for the end of the U.S. government practice of contracting management of U.S. immigration detention centers out to private for-profit companies, and that the ELCA urge the appropriate legislative authorities and agencies to cease this practice.

2. Pacifica Synod (2C) [2023]

WHEREAS, the Pacifica Synod in its May 2023 Assembly adopted the resolution entitled "Resolution Regarding Ending Private Immigration Detention Centers"; and

WHEREAS, the Pacifica Synod has a particular interest in seeing this change of policy for the immigration detention centers in our territory, yet there are some 200 immigration centers across the U.S., many of which are run by private for-profit companies, to which it is appropriate and needed for our national church to address this issue; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Pacifica Synod Assembly of 2023 memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), asking the ELCA to publicly call for an immediate end to the U.S. government practice of contracting management of U.S. immigration detention centers out to private for-profit companies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Pacifica Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to ask the appropriate officers of the ELCA to communicate this call to cease the use of private for-profit companies for immigration detention to all appropriate legislative authorities and federal and state agencies.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06a **To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Southwest California Synod and the Pacifica Synod on ceasing the use of private for-profit companies for immigration detention;**

To reaffirm this church's commitment to the AMMPARO strategy to accompany migrants and advocate for recognition and respect for their human dignity including through the protection of their human rights;

To affirm this church's ongoing screening out of private prison companies from social purpose funds and look for engagement opportunities with private prison companies;

To request that the Service and Justice unit identify and act on opportunities for this church to publicly call for an end to the U.S. government practice of contracting out the management of U.S. immigration detention centers to private for-profit companies; and

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

Category A2: Support of the Transgender Community

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 9–10*

1. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2023]

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorializes the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to publicly affirm that all people, including TGNCI (Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals), are made in the image of God and are worthy of dignity in church and society; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorializes the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to denounce Anti-Transgender legislation in a public statement; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorializes the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to direct the Churchwide Office of the ELCA to revise the governing documents so that TGNCI (Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals) may serve as voting members of assemblies or other committees for which participation has previously been defined by a male/female binary; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorializes the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to commit to reviewing ELCA policies and procedures for bias, especially in regard to TGNCI (Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals).

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06b **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Support of the Transgender Community" from the Southwest California Synod;**

To publicly affirm that all people, including Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals (TGNCI) are made in the image of God and are worthy of dignity in church and society;

To direct the Witness in Society Advocacy Team to support legislation that protects human rights of persons who are transgender and gender non-conforming;

To recognize the previous adoption of the continuing resolutions in Chapter 5 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* that addressed the inclusion of TGNCI serving as voting members of assemblies or other committees; and

To request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop (Human Resources in consultation with Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment) in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, review the ELCA policies and procedures for bias, especially in regard to TGNCI, and provide a report to the Church Council at its Fall 2027 meeting.

Category A4: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 26–33*

1. Alaska Synod (1A) [2025]

WHEREAS, in the United States, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women has reached devastating levels, with over 5,700 reported missing in 2016 according to FBI data, and approximately 4,200 missing and murdered cases remain unsolved according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native women face disproportionate rates of violence compared to non-Hispanic White women, being three times more likely to experience murder, twice as likely to experience rape, and five times more likely to experience physical violence by an interracial intimate partner, with over 96% of sexual violence perpetrated by non-Indigenous men; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native families seeking justice face a complex maze of jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, and tribal authorities, with this jurisdictional confusion often serving as justification for inadequate investigation of cases, insufficient data collection, and lack of accountability, particularly affecting Indigenous women in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed to addressing injustices against Indigenous peoples through its "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and "Declaration to

American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021), while also addressing gender-based violence through various Social Statements and Messages; and

WHEREAS, the Women of the ELCA have shown leadership through their work on human trafficking, child protection, and Truth and Healing Movement activities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) through the following actions:

- To strengthen education by requesting Augsburg Fortress, ELCA Hunger Appeal, and the ELCA communications and service and justice staff work together to:
  - Develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis
  - Commemorate MMIW Awareness Day annually on May 5
  - Promote the wearing of red and participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women
- To lament and repent by requesting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff work together to:
  - Provide prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synodical use
  - Plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing people
- To advance advocacy and partnership by requesting the ELCA service and justice, witnessing in society, and advocacy staff to:
  - Support legislation at state, local, and national levels addressing MMIW
  - 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.

2. Montana Synod (1F) [2025]

WHEREAS, in the United States, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women has reached devastating levels, with over 5,700 reported missing in 2016 according to FBI data, and approximately 4,200 missing and murdered cases remain unsolved according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native women face disproportionate rates of violence compared to non-Hispanic White women, being three times more likely to experience murder, twice as likely to experience rape, and five times more likely to experience physical violence by an interracial intimate partner, with over 96% of sexual violence perpetrated by non-Indigenous men; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native children and men also face disproportionate rates of violence and are reported missing or murdered at higher rates than non-Native children and men; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native families seeking justice face a complex maze of jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, and tribal authorities, with this jurisdictional confusion often serving as justification for inadequate investigation of cases, insufficient data collection, and lack of accountability, particularly affecting Indigenous women in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed to addressing injustices against Indigenous peoples through its “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery” (2016) and “Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People” (2021), while also addressing gender-based violence through various Social Statements and Messages; and

WHEREAS, the Women of the ELCA have shown leadership through their work on human trafficking, child protection, and Truth and Healing Movement activities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Montana Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People through the following actions:

- To strengthen education by requesting Augsburg Fortress, ELCA Hunger Appeal, and the ELCA communications and service and justice staff work together to:

- Develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis
- Commemorate MMIP Awareness Day annually on May 5
- Promoting the wearing of red and participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women, children and men

- To lament and repent by requesting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff work together to:
  - Provide prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synodical use
  - Plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing
- To advance advocacy and partnership by requesting the ELCA service and justice, witnessing in society, and advocacy staff to:
  - Support legislation at state, local, and national levels addressing MMIP
  - 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.

3. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2025]

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women; and be it further

RESOLVED, the ELCA will strengthen education by requesting Augsburg Fortress, ELCA Hunger Appeal, and the ELCA communications, and service and justice staff work together to develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis, commemorate MMIW Awareness Day annually on May 5, and promote the wearing of red and participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women; and be it further

RESOLVED, the ELCA will lament and repent by requesting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff work together to provide prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synodical use, plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing people; and be it further

RESOLVED, the ELCA will advance advocacy and partnership by requesting the ELCA service and justice, witnessing in society, and advocacy staff to support legislation at state, local, and national levels addressing MMIW and 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.

4. Pacifica Synod (2C) [2025]

RESOLVED, that the Pacifica Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2S implementing the following actions:

- In order to enhance educational initiatives, it is proposed that Augsburg Fortress, the ELCA Hunger Appeal, and the staff involved in communications, service, and justice within the ELCA collaborate on the following objectives:
  - To create educational resources that elucidate the prevalence and origins of this crisis.
  - To commemorate Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls Awareness Day on an annual basis, specifically on May 5.

- To advocate for the wearing of red and encourage engagement in educational and advocacy activities aimed at addressing the issues faced by missing and murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2S.

- To express lament and seek repentance by inviting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff to collaborate on:
  - Offering prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synodical use.
  - Organizing a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of Lament and Repentance that fosters further actions toward healing individuals.
- To promote advocacy and partnership through the engagement of the ELCA Service and Justice, while witnessing within society, the advocacy staff is requested to:
  - Support legislation at state, local, and national levels that addresses Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2S.
  - Collaborate with governmental, ecclesiastical, and non-profit organizations to enhance public search initiatives, and suitable outreach efforts.

5. Western North Dakota Synod (3A) [2025]

WHEREAS, in the United States, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women has reached devastating levels, with over 5,700 reported missing in 2016 according to FBI data, and approximately 4,200 missing and murdered cases remain unsolved according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native women face disproportionate rates of violence compared to non-Hispanic White women, being three times more likely to experience murder, twice as likely to experience rape, and five times more likely to experience physical violence by an interracial intimate partner, with over 96% of sexual violence perpetrated by non-Indigenous men; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native families seeking justice face a complex maze of jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, and tribal authorities, with this jurisdictional confusion often serving as justification for inadequate investigation of cases, insufficient data collection, and lack of accountability, particularly affecting Indigenous women in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed to addressing injustices against Indigenous peoples through its "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021), while also addressing gender-based violence through various Social Statements and Messages; and

WHEREAS, the Women of the ELCA have shown leadership through their work on human trafficking, child protection, and Truth and Healing Movement activities; and

WHEREAS, the Western North Dakota Synod Council, on April 8, 2025, unanimously approved sending this memorial to the 2025 Western North Dakota Synod Assembly for their affirmation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women through the following actions:

- To strengthen education by requesting Augsburg Fortress, ELCA Hunger Appeal, and the ELCA communications and service and justice staff work together to:
  - Develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis,
  - Commemorate MMIW Awareness Day annually on May 5,
  - Promote the wearing of red and participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women.
- To lament and repent by requesting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff work together to:
  - Provide prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synodical use,
  - Plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing people.

- To advance advocacy and partnership by requesting the ELCA service and justice, witnessing in society, and advocacy staff to:
  - Support legislation at state, local, and national levels addressing MMIW,
  - 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.

6. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [2025]

WHEREAS, in the United States, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women has reached devastating levels, with over 5,700 reported missing in 2016 according to FBI data, and approximately 4,200 missing and murdered cases remain unsolved according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native women face disproportionate rates of violence compared to non-Hispanic White women, being three times more likely to experience murder, twice as likely to experience rape, and five times more likely to experience physical violence by an interracial intimate partner, with over 96% of sexual violence perpetrated by non-Indigenous men; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native families seeking justice face a complex maze of jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, and tribal authorities, with this jurisdictional confusion often serving as justification for inadequate investigation of cases, insufficient data collection, and lack of accountability, particularly affecting Indigenous women in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed to addressing injustices against Indigenous peoples through its "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021), while also addressing gender-based violence through various Social Statements and Messages; and

WHEREAS, the Women of the ELCA have shown leadership through their work on human trafficking, child protection, and Truth and Healing Movement activities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) through the following actions:

- Strengthen education by requesting Augsburg Fortress, ELCA Hunger Appeal, and the ELCA communications and service and justice staff work together to:
  - Develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis;
  - Commemorate MMIW Awareness Day annually on May 5; and
  - Promote the wearing of red and participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women.
- Lament and repent by requesting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff work together to:
  - Provide prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synodical use; and
  - Plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing people.
- Advance advocacy and partnership by requesting the ELCA service and justice, witnessing in society, and advocacy staff to:
  - Support legislation at state, local, and national levels addressing MMIW; and
  - 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.

7. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2025]

WHEREAS, in the United States, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women has reached devastating levels, with over 5,700 reported missing in 2016 according to FBI data, and approximately 4,200 missing and murdered cases remain unsolved according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native women face disproportionate rates of violence compared to non-Hispanic White women, being three times more likely to experience murder, twice as likely to experience rape, and five times more likely to experience physical violence by an interracial intimate partner, with over 96% of sexual violence perpetrated by non-Indigenous men; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native families seeking justice face a complex maze of jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, and tribal authorities, with this jurisdictional confusion often serving as justification for inadequate investigation of cases, insufficient data collection, and lack of accountability, particularly affecting Indigenous women in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed to addressing injustices against Indigenous peoples through its "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021), while also addressing gender-based violence through various Social Statements and Messages; and

WHEREAS, the Women of the ELCA have shown leadership through their work on human trafficking, child protection, and Truth and Healing Movement activities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women ("MMIW") through the following actions:

- To strengthen education by requesting Augsburg Fortress, ELCA Hunger Appeal, and the ELCA communications and service and justice staff work together to:
  - Develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis;
  - Commemorate MMIW Awareness Day annually on May 5;
  - Promote the wearing of red and participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women.
- To lament and repent by requesting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff work together to:
  - Provide prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synod use;
  - Plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing people.
- To advance advocacy and partnership by requesting the ELCA service and justice, witnessing in society, and advocacy staff to:
  - Support legislation at state, local, and national levels addressing MMIW;
  - 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.

8. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2025]

WHEREAS, in the United States, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women has reached devastating levels, with over 5,700 reported missing in 2016 according to FBI data, and approximately 4,200 missing and murdered cases remain unsolved according to the Bureaus of Indian Affairs; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native women face disproportionate rates of violence compared to non-Hispanic White women, being three times more likely to experience murder, twice as likely to experience rape, and five times more likely to experience physical violence by an interracial intimate partner, with over 96% of sexual violence perpetrated by non-Indigenous men; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native families seeking justice face a complex maze of jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, and tribal authorities, with this jurisdictional confusion often

serving as justification for inadequate investigation of cases, insufficient data collection, and lack accountability, particularly affecting Indigenous women in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has committed to addressing injustices against Indigenous peoples through its "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021), while also addressing gender-based violence through various Social Statements and Messages; and

WHEREAS, the Women of the ELCA have shown leadership through their work on human trafficking, child protection, and Truth and Healing Movement activities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women through the following actions:

1. To strengthen education by requesting Augsburg Fortress, ELCA Hunger Appeal, Women of the ELCA, and the ELCA communications and service and justice staff work together to:
   a. Develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis
   b. Commemorate MMIW Awareness Day annually on May 5
   c. Promote the wearing of red and participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women
2. To lament and repent by requesting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff work together to:
   a. Provide prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synodical use
   b. Plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing
3. To advance advocacy and partnership by requesting the ELCA service and justice, witnessing in society, and advocacy staff to:
   a. Support legislation at local, state, and national levels addressing MMIW
   b. Communicate ways for ELCA congregations to support such legislation
   c. 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.

9. East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5I) [2025]

WHEREAS, in the United States, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women has reached devastating levels, with over 5,700 reported missing in 2016 according to FBI data, and approximately 4,200 missing and murdered cases remain unsolved according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native women face disproportionate rates of violence compared to non-Hispanic White women, being three times more likely to experience murder, twice as likely to experience rape, and five times more likely to experience physical violence by an interracial intimate partner, with over 96% of sexual violence perpetrated by non-Indigenous men; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native families seeking justice face a complex maze of jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, and tribal authorities, with this jurisdictional confusion often serving as justification for inadequate investigation of cases, insufficient data collection, and lack of accountability, particularly affecting Indigenous women in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed to addressing injustices against Indigenous peoples through its "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021), while also addressing gender-based violence through various Social Statements and Messages; and

WHEREAS, the Women of the ELCA have shown leadership through their work on human trafficking, child protection, and Truth and Healing Movement activities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the East Central Synod of Wisconsin memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the churchwide

organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) through the following actions:

- To strengthen education by requesting Augsburg Fortress, ELCA World Hunger, and the ELCA communications and service and justice staff work together to:
  - Develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis
  - Commemorate MMIW Awareness Day annually on May 5
  - Promote the wearing of red and participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women
- To lament and repent by requesting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff work together to:
  - Provide prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synodical use
  - Plan a public service at the 2028 Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing people
- To advance advocacy and partnership by requesting the ELCA service and justice, witnessing in society, and advocacy staff to:
  - Support legislation at state, local, and national levels addressing MMIW
  - 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.

10. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2025]

WHEREAS, in the United States, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women has reached devastating levels, with over 5,700 reported missing in 2016 according to FBI data, and approximately 4,200 missing and murdered cases remain unsolved according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native women face disproportionate rates of violence compared to non-Hispanic White women, being three times more likely to experience murder, twice as likely to experience rape, and five times more likely to experience physical violence by an interracial intimate partner, with over 96% of sexual violence perpetrated by non-Indigenous men; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native families seeking justice face a complex maze of jurisdictional barriers between federal, state, and tribal authorities, with this jurisdictional confusion often serving as justification for inadequate investigation of cases, insufficient data collection, and lack of accountability, particularly affecting Indigenous women in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has committed to addressing injustices against Indigenous peoples through its "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021), while also addressing gender-based violence through various Social Statements and Messages; and

WHEREAS, the Women of the ELCA have shown leadership through their work on human trafficking, child protection, and Truth and Healing Movement activities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to direct the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) through the following actions:

1. To strengthen education on this issue by requesting Augsburg Fortress, ELCA Hunger Appeal, and the ELCA communications and service and justice staff work together to:
   a. Develop educational resources about the prevalence and origins of this crisis.
   b. Commemorate MMIW Awareness Day annually on May 5.
   c. Promote the wearing of red and participation in educational opportunities and advocacy opportunities for missing and murdered Indigenous women.

2. To lament and repent by requesting Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA worship staff work together to:
   a. Provide prayers of repentance and intercession for congregational and synodical use.
   b. Plan a public service at the 2028 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of lament and repentance that leads to further actions toward healing people.
3. To advance advocacy and partnership by requesting the ELCA service and justice, witnessing in society, and advocacy staff to:
   a. Support legislation at state, local, and national levels addressing MMIW.
   b. 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.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06c **To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women" from the Alaska Synod, Montana Synod, Southwest California Synod, Pacifica Synod, Western North Dakota Synod, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Minneapolis Area Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; and**

To direct the churchwide organization to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) through the following actions:

- **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.**

Category A5: Youth Gathering DEIA

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 33–34.*

1. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2025]

WHEREAS, when asked about the greatest commandment Jesus responds, "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these (Mark 12:29-31)"; and,

WHEREAS, institutions embracing DEIA policies (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility) have come under attack from the federal government with funding reduced, staffing drastically cut, and vulnerable populations experiencing the greatest impact; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), with a membership that is approximately 96% white and 95% of the ELCA's clergy are white; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA adopted a social message on *Human Rights* in November 2017 and a social statement entitled *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* in 1993 and adopted, "HOW STRATEGIC AND AUTHENTIC IS OUR DIVERSITY: A Call for Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action" in 2019. This adopted work has outlined clear theological framing, strategic goals, and concrete recommendations that provide a roadmap for our continued work; and

WHEREAS, racial injustices in the Midwest resulted in the public murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, an incident that requires more healing and reconciliation; and

WHEREAS, ELCA Youth Gatherings have been reflective of our larger churchwide body as noted above and there have been reports each cycle of structural and systemic injustice and racial harm; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request that the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering Team work with the Minneapolis Area Synod as the synod creates a rapid response team to be available throughout the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering to increase cultural awareness and decrease harm during the event; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request that the ELCA Youth Gathering Team continue to expand and require all gathering staff, volunteers and participant leaders to participate in authentic diversity training prior to the start of 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering and future gathering cycles; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request that 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 our youth participants with nonwhite and intersecting identities.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06d **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Youth Gathering Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA)" from the Minneapolis Area Synod;**

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.

Category A6: Affirm People of God of All Gender Identities

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 34–37.*

1. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2025]

WHEREAS, in "A Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," we read: "this church must work toward greater understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity…" and "such individuals are disproportionately and negatively affected by patterns of stigma, discrimination, and abuse"; and

WHEREAS, in "A Social Message on Gender-based Violence," the ELCA stated that "Gender-based violence is sin. While it takes many forms, in all its variations gender-based violence attacks, violates and often destroys the good that God brings to life"; and

WHEREAS, the "Social Message on Human Rights" declares, "The ELCA will support domestic and international human rights institutions, foster deliberation, and engage in sustained action that seek rights for any neighbors—especially the vulnerable—who are not being treated with the dignity that is God's gift"; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Washington Synod, along with twenty-eight other synods and 1,093 congregations across the ELCA, are Reconciling in Christ partners with ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation that has advocated for the full welcome of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual/aromantic (LGBTQIA+) Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their Church, congregations, and community; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the ELCA be encouraged to speak out against harmful policies and language towards transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit, and genderqueer people perpetrated by government leaders and agencies, and wherever it is encountered; and be it further

RESOLVED that the ELCA, in partnership with long-time advocacy and education organization ReconcilingWorks, along with ecumenical and community partners, equip congregations, ministries, and rostered and lay leaders with information and theological background to empower us to public witness, as specified in the Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity; and be it further

RESOLVED that this church continually seek guidance from transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit, and genderqueer leaders both inside the Church (ReconcilingWorks, seminary scholars and students, synod staff, conference of Bishops, rostered leaders, lay leaders) and outside the Church for how to best advocate on their behalf.

2. New Jersey Synod (7A) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Judeo-Christian tradition teaches that "God created humankind in God's image" and "God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good"; and

WHEREAS, in Jesus Christ, we know that "God loves human life so much that 'the Word became Flesh' (John 1:14), and we know, therefore, that God's love embraces us totally, including our sexuality" and gender identity; and

WHEREAS, in "A Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," we read: "this church must work toward greater understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity. It must seek that which is positive and life-giving while protecting from all that is harmful and destructive," and "this church also will attend to the need for equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law, and just treatment for those with varied sexual orientation and gender identity. Such individuals are disproportionately and negatively affected by patterns of stigma, discrimination, and abuse. Likewise, it will attend to the particular needs of children and the families of those with actual or perceived differences in sexual orientation or gender identity because they are especially vulnerable to verbal, physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and sexual abuse"; and

WHEREAS, in "A Social Message on Gender-based Violence," the ELCA stated that "Gender-based violence is sin. While it takes many forms, in all its variations gender-based violence attacks, violates and often destroys the good that God brings to life"; and

WHEREAS, the Social Message on Human Rights declares, "The ELCA will support domestic and international human rights institutions, foster deliberation, and engage in sustained action that seek rights for any neighbors – especially the vulnerable – who are not being treated with the dignity that is God's gift"; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Synod, along with twenty-eight other synods and 1,093 congregations across the ELCA, are Reconciling in Christ partners with ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation that has advocated for the full welcome of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual/aromantic (LGBTQIA+) Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their Church, congregations, and community; and

WHEREAS, the current executive branch of the federal government has targeted transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit and genderqueer people with multiple executive orders and policies, and

WHEREAS, these executive orders and policies are harming the rights and lives of transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit and genderqueer people, especially children and youth, with regards to healthcare, mental health, employment, sports participation, social services, housing, and more; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to publicly affirm the divinely-created goodness and beauty in all transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit and genderqueer people of all ages, races, ethnicities, abilities, religions, and beliefs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to commit this church to speak out against the harmful policies and language towards transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit and genderqueer people perpetrated by government leaders and agencies wherever it is encountered; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to direct this church, in partnership with long-time advocacy and education organization ReconcilingWorks, along with ecumenical and community partners, to equip congregations, ministries, and rostered and lay leaders with information and theological background in order to empower us to public witness, as specified in the Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to direct this church continually to seek guidance from transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit and genderqueer leaders both inside the Church (ReconcilingWorks, seminary scholars and students, synod staff, Conference of Bishops, rostered leaders, lay leaders, and youth) and outside the Church for how to best advocate on their behalf in this time.

3. Southeastern Synod (9D) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Judeo-Christian tradition teaches that "God created humankind in God's image" and "God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good"; and

WHEREAS, in Jesus Christ, we know that "God loves human life so much that 'the Word became Flesh' (John 1:14), and we know, therefore, that God's love embraces us totally, including our sexuality" and gender identity; and

WHEREAS, in "A Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," we read: "this church must work toward greater understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity. It must seek that which is positive and life-giving while protecting from all that is harmful and destructive," and "this church also will attend to the need for equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law, and just treatment for those with varied sexual orientation and gender identity. Such individuals are disproportionately and negatively affected by patterns of stigma, discrimination, and abuse. Likewise, it will attend to the particular needs of children and the families of those with actual or perceived differences in

sexual orientation or gender identity because they are especially vulnerable to verbal, physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and sexual abuse"; and

WHEREAS, in "A Social Message on Gender-based Violence," the ELCA stated that "Gender-based violence is sin. While it takes many forms, in all its variations gender-based violence attacks, violates and often destroys the good that God brings to life"; and

WHEREAS, the Social Message on Human Rights declares, "The ELCA will support domestic and international human rights institutions, foster deliberation, and engage in sustained action that seek rights for any neighbors—especially the vulnerable—who are not being treated with the dignity that is God's gift"; and

WHEREAS, the Southeastern Synod, along with twenty-eight other synods and 1,093 congregations across the ELCA, are Reconciling in Christ partners with ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation that has advocated for the full welcome of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual/aromantic (LGBTQIA+) Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their Church, congregations, and community; and

WHEREAS, the current executive branch of the federal government has targeted transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit and genderqueer people with multiple executive orders and policies; and

WHEREAS, these executive orders and policies are harming the rights and lives of transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit and genderqueer people, especially children and youth, with regards to healthcare, mental health, employment, sports participation, social services, housing, and more; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this Church publicly affirms the divinely-created goodness and beauty in all transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit and genderqueer people of all ages, races, ethnicities, abilities, religions, and beliefs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Church speak out against the harmful policies and language towards transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit and genderqueer people perpetrated by government leaders and agencies wherever it is encountered; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Church, in partnership with long-time advocacy and education organization ReconcilingWorks, along with ecumenical and community partners, equip congregations, ministries, and rostered and lay leaders with information and theological background in order to empower us to public witness, as specified in the "Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity"; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Church continually seek guidance from transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit and genderqueer leaders both inside the Church (ReconcilingWorks, seminary scholars and students, synod staff, conference of Bishops, rostered leaders, lay leaders) and outside the Church for how to best advocate on their behalf in this time.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06e **To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Affirm Transgender, Nonbinary, Gender Expansive, Two-Spirit, and Genderqueer People of God" from the Northwest Washington Synod, New Jersey Synod, and Southeastern Synod;**

To affirm the intent to support this church to advance public discourse and advocacy grounded in information and theological background that supports persons who are transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive, two-spirit, and genderqueer in consultation with persons who so identify; and

To refer continuing collaboration between the ELCA churchwide organization and ReconcilingWorks to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the ELCA Church Council.

Category A7: Restoration of Funding of USAID

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 37–38.*

1. Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Trump administration's termination of foreign aid projects distributed through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has adversely affected between 200 and 300 million people; and

WHEREAS, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), these detrimental effects include

- the closure of clinics around the world that serve the nearly 36 million people in "acute" malnutrition and 10 million in "severe" malnutrition
- increasing global malnutrition
- over 10,000 food grants and contracts being dissolved by the Department of Government Efficiency and the Trump administration, negatively impacting the world's most destitute populations as well as farmers in the United States of America (USA) who sell their agricultural commodities to USAID;

and

WHEREAS, Nicolas Enrich, acting assistant administrator for global health at USAID has estimated that a year-long pause in lifesaving aid from this agency would cause between 71,000 and 166,000 additional malaria deaths (a nearly 40% increase), an increase of between 28% and 32% in tuberculosis cases worldwide, and up to 28,000 cases of emerging infectious diseases such as Ebola; and

WHEREAS, the FAO has stated that assistance from USAID is also used to care for those who have been abused, maimed, and enslaved, and that these foreign aid projects serve to establish trust between nations and continents; and

WHEREAS, deliberate and intentional withdrawing of food will cause mass starvation, which is paramount to genocide on a scale unparalleled in history; and

WHEREAS, we are commanded by Jesus to love our neighbor (Matthew 22:39, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27), it becomes morally incumbent upon the USA to restore its financial aid and humanitarian commitment to impoverished people globally in order to ease their suffering and provide them with hope; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to communicate to the President of the United States, the United States Congress, and other governmental offices and agencies, the ELCA's profound dissatisfaction with the termination of USAID's foreign aid projects, and the ELCA's commitment to financial and food assistance for our global neighbor; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA implore the President of the United States, the United States Congress, and other governmental offices and agencies, immediately to restore any and all foreign aid projects distributed through USAID.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06f **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Restoration of Funding of USAID" from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod;**

To reaffirm this church's commitment to advocacy in support of international humanitarian aid; and

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.

Category A8: Decarbonization of the Energy Grid

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 38–40.*

1. Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C) [2025]

WHEREAS, the climate crisis is an urgent threat to all of creation, disproportionately impacting low-income communities, Indigenous peoples, communities of color, and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has long affirmed our responsibility to care for creation and has adopted numerous social statements and resolutions calling for faithful stewardship of the Earth and action on climate change (e.g., *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice*, 1993); and

WHEREAS, the scientific consensus indicates that decarbonizing the electrical grid is one of the most immediate and impactful ways to mitigate global climate disruption; and

WHEREAS, our commitment to justice calls us not only to reduce emissions but to ensure that the transition to clean energy is rapid, equitable, and prioritizes those who have historically been marginalized or harmed by extractive industries; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has the moral authority, organizational reach, and theological grounding to act boldly in the face of environmental degradation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Arkansas Oklahoma Synod memorializes the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to take direct practical steps to support and push for the rapid, equitable decarbonization of the energy grid in the United States and globally; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide Organization create a plan to assess and publicly report the current carbon footprint of its own operations—including offices, events, and travel—and a goal of transitioning to carbon-free electricity, prioritizing community-based energy sources that do not perpetuate environmental injustice; and be it further

RESOLVED, that synods and congregations be encouraged and supported in pursuing similar carbon-reduction strategies, including but not limited to transitioning to renewable energy sources, engaging in local climate justice initiatives, advocating for public policies that support equitable grid decarbonization, and forming green teams or creation care ministries with measurable goals.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06g **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Decarbonization of the Energy Grid" from the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod;**

To reaffirm the work of Lutherans Restoring Creation and encourage congregations and ministries to connect with its network and explore its resources for sustainable living;

To recognize the current efforts of the churchwide organization to reduce its carbon footprint and to request the churchwide organization consider transitioning to carbon-free electricity in its buildings by prioritizing community-based energy sources that do not perpetuate environmental injustice; and

To urge all expressions of the ELCA to make and continue commitments to decarbonization through adopting sustainable practices, carbon reduction goals, and environmental policy advocacy.

Category B1: Accompaniment and Accountability of Bishops

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 40–41*

1. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2024]

WHEREAS, "this church . . . derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful." (ELCA Constitution and Bylaws, 3.03.); and

WHEREAS, this church shall, "call forth, equip, certify, set apart, and oversee a ministry of Word and Sacrament, a ministry of Word and Service, and such other forms of ministry that will enable this church to fulfill its mission." (ELCA Constitution and Bylaws, 4.03.c.); and

WHEREAS, responsibilities of synods of this church include "providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod" (ELCA Constitution and Bylaws, 10.21.01.) and "encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service" (ELCA Constitution and Bylaws, 10.21.01.b.4); and

WHEREAS, our bishops are ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament, gifted and flawed; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the ELCA, through its adoption of Future Directions 2025, has called for a "well-governed, connected, and sustainable church;" and

WHEREAS, there is currently no documentation or policy from the ELCA for our synods to accompany, care for, and hold our bishops accountable to their actions, self-care, and responsibilities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod in assembly memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the Church Council to create guidelines for Synod governing documents around the mutual accountability of Synod Council and bishop, specifically designed to manage and resolve conflict and promote the well-being of the bishop and the Synod Council; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Church Council recommend changes to our governing documents that allow greater oversight of the actions of our synod bishops by their respective Synod Councils and the ELCA Church Council.

2. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2024]

WHEREAS, "this church… derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful" (*Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* [ELCA], 3.03.); and

WHEREAS, this church shall "call forth, equip, certify, set apart, and oversee a ministry of Word and Sacrament, a ministry of Word and Service, and such other forms of ministry that will enable this church to fulfill its mission" (*ELCA Constitution and Bylaws*, 4.03.c.); and

WHEREAS, the responsibilities of synods of this church include "providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod" (*ELCA Constitution and Bylaws*, 10.21.01.) and "encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service" (*ELCA Constitution and Bylaws*, 10.21.01.b.4); and

WHEREAS, ELCA bishops are ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament, gifted and flawed; and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the ELCA, through its adoption of Future Directions 2025, has called for a "well-governed, connected, and sustainable church; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no documentation or policy from the ELCA for our synods to accompany, care for, and hold our bishops accountable for their actions, self-care, and the carrying out of their responsibilities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the Church Council to create guidelines for synod governing documents around the mutual accountability of Synod Council and

bishop, designed to manage and resolve conflict between and promote the well-being of the bishop and Synod Council; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Church Council recommend changes to our governing documents that allow greater oversight of the actions of our synod bishops by their respective Synod Councils and the ELCA Church Council.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06h **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Accompaniment and Accountability of Bishops" from the Saint Paul Area Synod and the Delaware-Maryland Synod;**

To refer the memorial to the Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose for matters concerning governance, with a report to the Church Council by Fall 2027;

To refer the memorial to the Committee on Appeals for matters concerning accountability and conflict resolution resources, with a report to the Church Council by Fall 2026; and

To encourage synods to make use of the existing consultation process, Mutual Ministry Committees, and conflict resolution training.

Category B2: Increasing Continuing Education Commitments

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 41–42*

1. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2024]

WHEREAS, the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly set expectations for congregations and agencies to budget $700 to $1,000 on continuing education annually per rostered minister; and

WHEREAS, these monetary commitments have not changed in over 25 years; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to increase the guidelines for financial commitments by congregations and agencies for continuing education, and to create a process for these guidelines to be regularly revised.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06i **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Increasing Continuing Education Commitments" from the Greater Milwaukee Synod;**

To encourage congregations and agencies to increase the guidelines for financial commitments for continuing education; and

To refer the memorial to the Church Council, in consultation with the Christian Community and Leadership unit, to create a process for these guidelines by establishing a "Continuing Education Advisory Committee" tasked with regular reviews of the guidelines and recommending appropriate increases for continuing education support.

Category B3: Limiting Insurance Costs for Rostered Ministers

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 42–44*

1. Allegheny Synod (8C) [2024]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ("ELCA") states that "to participate in God's mission, this church shall worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments" (4.02.d) and that to fulfill this purpose individuals are to oversee the ministries of Word and Sacrament, Word and Service, and such other forms (4.03.c); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA "is committed to the principle that 'healthy leaders enhance lives'" and that to implement this philosophy "the design and administration of [this church's] benefit programs should respond to changing societal and economic realities," and that benefits "should be administered efficiently in order to both enhance the well-being of rostered ministers and lay employees and capture value and savings where possible," (ELCA Philosophy of Benefits); and

WHEREAS, the overall price of health insurance is determined by the age and statistical health challenges of the individuals who are paying to pool their risk with the cost rising with age; and

WHEREAS, the average and median age of a minister in the ELCA is higher than that of the general population; and

WHEREAS, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) mandated health insurance plans to cover preexisting conditions; and

WHEREAS, the ACA created a federal health insurance marketplace and encouraged the establishment state level marketplaces (ACA marketplaces) with premium tax credits of up to four (4) times the federal poverty line for families and individuals based on their Modified Adjusted Gross Income; and

WHEREAS, individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangement (ICHRA) plans now exist to allow employers to provide tax free money to their employees to pay for a health insurance plan on the ACA marketplaces; and

WHEREAS, the current cost of insurance offered through Portico is a burden to many ELCA congregations by either preventing them from being able to call a rostered minister or eroding the congregation's financial resources; and

WHEREAS, health insurance plans comparable to Portico's Gold+ plan can frequently be found for lower prices on the ACA marketplaces before including the premium tax credit; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to request the Portico Benefit Services Board of Trustees to review and potentially update the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits after a review of the levels of consistency and support provided by health insurance plans in the ACA marketplaces; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to request Portico Benefit Services to provide to signatories of the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits a numeric and statistical comparison between Portico's offered health plans to those found on the ACA marketplaces factoring in expected premium tax credits; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to request the ELCA Office of the Secretary to provide signatories of the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits an estimation of ELCA congregations unable to call a rostered minister due to the price of Portico's health insurance plans; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to request Portico Benefit Services to evaluate its ability to offer ELCA ministries ICHRA plans alongside supplemental, vision, and dental insurance plans as add-ons; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to find a way for rostered ministers to have less expensive health insurance.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06j **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Limiting Insurance Costs for Rostered Ministers" from the Allegheny Synod;**

To acknowledge that the concerns raised in the memorial are part of a larger issue of affordability of and commitment to rostered ministers;

To affirm the comprehensive review of the ELCA Health Plan previously conducted by Portico Benefit Services through the Benefits reExamined process;

To recognize Portico's collective approach ensures sustainability, stability, and consistent care for all rostered ministers across their lifelong service yet prevents the ability to provide a numeric and statistical comparison with the Affordable Care Act exchange or to administer coverage through an Independent Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangement;

To recognize that neither the Office of the Secretary nor Portico Benefit Services obtain information from ELCA congregations regarding the specific cost of benefits;

To commend the Guiding Principles outlined in the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits for the health and wellness of this whole church and its leaders; and

To urge Portico to continue providing benefits that both address the needs of employers and plan members and recognizes the realities of the contexts of their ministries, and to encourage employers and plan members to choose a health insurance option that best meets their needs.

Category B4: Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 44–46*

1. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2025]

WHEREAS, one in four women and one in six men are sexually abused or assaulted by their 18th birthday, and there are survivors and perpetrators in our churches; and

WHEREAS, all people are created by God in the divine image, and human sexuality is a gracious gift of God. The family of God is called to stand firmly and pastorally against all forms of abuse. Sexual abuse and harassment betray God's creation, inflict grievous suffering on the victims, and rend the fabric of the whole community of the people of God; and

WHEREAS, sexual abuse and harassment in the church has been a matter of concern to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) since it formed in 1988. The first churchwide assembly in 1989 passed a resolution on making the church a safe place, free from sexual abuse and harassment. Synods, seminaries, congregations, colleges, social ministry organizations and the churchwide expression have struggled with these issues since our beginnings; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA's social message on gender-based violence states that "Christian churches and individuals too often have contributed to gender-based violence through denial, resistance and a lack of preparation…operating with inadequate policies and practices contribute to the problem"; and

WHEREAS, all forms of sexual abuse and harassment are unacceptable within the life of this church. This church should be a safe place where people can worship, learn, work, love and receive care in a manner that is free from sexual misconduct; and

WHEREAS, when sexual abuse and harassment occurs, not only the victim and their family suffer; but the entire congregation suffers emotionally, spiritually, and financially; and

WHEREAS, a written policy statement is an important first step toward preventing sexual abuse or harassment; and education and training are among the chief means of prevention; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct that all synods of the ELCA oversee the implementation and maintenance of policies and procedures in their congregations, including regular training and resources, which safeguard children and vulnerable adults; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to forward this memorial to the ELCA 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.

2. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2025]

WHEREAS, one in four women and one in six men are sexually abused or assaulted by their 18th birthday, and there are survivors and perpetrators in our churches; and

WHEREAS, all people are created by God in the divine image, and human sexuality is a gracious gift of God. The family of God is called to stand firmly and pastorally against all forms of abuse. Sexual abuse and harassment betray God's creation, inflict grievous suffering on the victims, and rend the fabric of the whole community of the people of God; and

WHEREAS, sexual abuse and harassment in the church has been a matter of concern to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) since it formed in 1988. The first churchwide assembly in 1989 passed a resolution on making the church a safe place, free from sexual abuse and harassment. Synods, seminaries, congregations, colleges, social ministry organizations and the churchwide expression have struggled with these issues since our beginnings; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA's social message on Gender-based Violence states that "Christian churches and individuals too often have contributed to gender-based violence through denial, resistance and a lack of preparation…operating with inadequate policies and practices contribute to the problem"; and

WHEREAS, all forms of sexual abuse and harassment are unacceptable within the life of the church. The church should be a safe place where people can worship, learn, work, love and receive care in a manner that is free from sexual misconduct; and

WHEREAS, when sexual abuse and harassment occurs, not only the victim and their family suffer; but the entire congregation suffers emotionally, spiritually, and financially; and

WHEREAS, a written policy statement is an important first step toward preventing sexual abuse or harassment; and education and training are among the chief means of prevention; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod (SPAS), in assembly, memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to urge all synods of the ELCA to provide for the implementation and maintenance of policies and procedures available to their congregations, which safeguard children and vulnerable adults; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2025 SPAS Assembly asks the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to refer support for synods in doing this work to the appropriate unit or office of the churchwide organization in accordance with the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA urge synods of the ELCA to require triennial training for all rostered leaders in their synod to protect children and vulnerable adults; that this training be open to members of congregations in their synods who work with children and vulnerable adults; and that synods urge their congregations to adopt policies requiring this training triennially for those who work with children and vulnerable adults.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06k **To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection" from the Minneapolis Area Synod and the Saint Paul Area Synod;**

To urge synods to apply the existing policies and implementing resolutions available in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* (2019) to ensure protections for vulnerable adults and for synods and congregations to provide for the implementation and maintenance of policies and procedures, including regular trainings and resources;

To refer the specific concerns addressed in the memorial regarding protection of children to the Theological Discernment Team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop for their continued work on strengthening the forthcoming social message on child protection; and

To urge synods to include the protection of children and vulnerable adults in their training for all rostered ministers and other leaders in their synods; that

such training be open to members of congregations and other ministries in their synods who work with children and vulnerable adults; and that synods urge their congregations and other ministries to adopt policies requiring training and other background checks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults.

Category B5: Interpretation for ELCA Churchwide Assembly and Youth Gathering

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 46–48*

1. Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D) [2025]

WHEREAS, the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, "...how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? … So faith comes from what is heard," (Romans 10:14, 17a); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA "Find a Congregation" directory lists 509 congregations with a Spanish language service and the ELCA Latino Ministries community contains approximately 147 communities; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA includes members, congregations, and pastors whose language is American Sign Language (ASL), and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Future Church project set a goal to engage "new, younger, and more diverse people"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Youth Gathering and ELCA Churchwide Assembly are two of the largest and most influential events of the ELCA; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request the churchwide organization provide all official print materials of the ELCA Youth Gathering and ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Spanish translation at all future ELCA Youth Gatherings and ELCA Churchwide Assemblies; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request the churchwide organization provide simultaneous interpreters for both Spanish and ASL at all Churchwide Assembly events and all Youth Gatherings; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request the churchwide organization provide the funding for translation and interpretation services at Churchwide Assembly events and ELCA Youth Gatherings.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06l **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Interpretation for ELCA Churchwide Assembly and Youth Gathering" from the Southeastern Iowa Synod;**

To acknowledge the importance of inclusivity through translation of official materials before, during, and after Churchwide Assemblies and Youth Gatherings;

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.

Category B6: Legal Action in Support of ELCA Communities

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 48–52*

1. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2025]

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2025, the United States of America's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a directive allowing immigration enforcement and police to conduct detainment and arrest actions in "sensitive areas" such as churches, schools, and healthcare facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is the view of numerous other religious bodies, organizations, and churches throughout the United States of America that this action constitutes a violation of First Amendment rights as it prevents the free expression and gathering of religious assembly by instigating fear among congregants and especially immigrant populations; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that twenty-seven Christian and Jewish denominations and religious organizations, including four out of six of the ELCA's Full Communion partners, filed a lawsuit on February 11, 2025, by the Georgetown Law Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection; and

WHEREAS, on February 14th, 2025, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton announced that the ELCA would not join this legal effort because "given the ELCA's denominational structure and polity, the churchwide organization would not be an appropriate plaintiff in these actions," and "congregations can demonstrate that they can be harmed by this decision, and they would have standing in this lawsuit"; and

WHEREAS, *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* calls for the three expressions of this Church to "function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent," and does not explicitly forbid the churchwide organization from entering into legal action on behalf of the denomination; and

WHEREAS, ELCA congregations and synodically-authorized ministries who are most at risk by the DHS directive are most likely to be mission developments and ethnic-specific ministries who may lack the resources to bring suit against the federal government on their own or are not willing to compromise their own safety risk with the exposure a federal lawsuit might bring, and would greatly benefit from care and solidarity from the interdependent relationship of the Church as specified throughout *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Northwest Washington Synod request the churchwide organization to develop educational and legal materials to help synods and congregations participate in national legal matters when needed; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Northwest Washington Synod request leadership of the churchwide organization, with prayerful discernment, to evaluate the constitutions of the three expressions of the ELCA, for the purpose of empowering faithful engagement in legal advocacy as a sign of solidarity with our most vulnerable congregations and ministries.

2. Sierra Pacific Synod (2A) [2025]

WHEREAS, at its 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA declared itself to be a sanctuary church body, committed to serving and supporting migrant children and families in communities across the country, and

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2025, the United States of America's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a directive allowing immigration enforcement and police to conduct detainment and arrest actions in "sensitive areas" such as churches, schools, and healthcare facilities, and

WHEREAS, twenty-seven Christian and Jewish denominations and national religious organizations (including four of the ELCA's six 'Full Communion' partners) became plaintiffs in a legal action which asserts that DHS's directive constitutes a violation of First Amendment rights as it prevents the free expression and gathering of religious assembly by instigating fear among congregants and especially immigrant populations; and

WHEREAS, on February 14th, 2025, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton announced that the ELCA would not join this legal effort because "given the ELCA's denominational structure and polity, the Churchwide Organization would not be an appropriate plaintiff in these actions," and "congregations can demonstrate that they can be harmed by this decision, and they would have standing in this lawsuit;" and

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA calls for the three expressions of this Church to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the Churchwide

Organization, all of which shall be interdependent, and does not explicitly forbid the Churchwide Organization from entering into legal action on behalf of the denomination; and

WHEREAS, ELCA congregations and synodically-authorized ministries who are most at risk by the DHS directive are most likely to be mission developments and ethnic-specific ministries who may lack the resources to bring suit against the federal government on their own or are not willing to compromise their own safety risk with the exposure a federal lawsuit might bring, and would greatly benefit from care and solidarity from the interdependent relationship of the Church as specified throughout the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, be it

RESOLVED, that the Sierra Pacific Synod requests that the churchwide organization, with immediacy and haste and if possible within 30 days of passage of this resolution, develop educational and legal materials to help synods and congregations participate in national legal matters when needed; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Sierra Pacific Synod requests that leadership of the churchwide organization, with prayerful discernment and urgency, evaluate the constitutions of the three expressions of the ELCA, for the purpose of empowering faithful engagement in legal advocacy as a sign of solidarity with our most vulnerable congregations and ministries and as a concrete expression of our shared commitment to becoming a sanctuary church body; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the leadership of the churchwide organization, which may comprise the Presiding Bishop, Vice President, Secretary, the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and legal staff, be fully authorized to represent the ELCA in national legal matters when needed; and be it further

RESOLVED, that said leadership of the churchwide organization, with prayerful discernment, may choose to engage the ELCA churchwide organization in national legal matters in the future, especially in partnership with ecumenical and interfaith religious organizations, as a sign of solidarity with our most vulnerable individuals, congregations and ministries.

3. New England Synod (7B) [2025]

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2025, the United States of America's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a directive allowing immigration enforcement and police to conduct detainment and arrest actions in "sensitive areas" such as churches, schools, and healthcare facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is the view of numerous other religious bodies, organizations, and churches throughout the United States of America that this action constitutes a violation of First Amendment rights as it prevents the free expression and gathering of religious assembly by instigating fear among congregants and especially immigrant populations; and

WHEREAS, leadership of the ELCA Churchwide Organization had the opportunity to confront this First Amendment violation by becoming a plaintiff in a lawsuit along with 27 Christian and Jewish denominations and religious organizations, including four out of six of the ELCA's Full Communion partners, submitted on February 11, 2025, by the Georgetown Law Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection; and

WHEREAS, in a video published online by the ELCA on February 14, 2025, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton announced that the ELCA would not join this legal effort because "given the ELCA's denominational structure and polity, the Churchwide organization would not be an appropriate plaintiff in these actions"; and

WHEREAS, Presiding Bishop Eaton stated in that video that "congregations can demonstrate that they can be harmed by this recission, and they would have standing in this lawsuit," putting the onus on individual congregations to undertake a lawsuit against the federal government; and

WHEREAS, *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* calls for the three expressions of this Church to "function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent"; and

WHEREAS, *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* does not explicitly forbid the Churchwide Organization from entering into legal action on behalf of the denomination; and

WHEREAS, *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* Chapter 4 calls this Church to

"serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs,"

and

"provide structures and decision-making processes for this church that foster mutuality and interdependence and that involve people in making decisions that affect them";

and

WHEREAS, the *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* Chapter 11 provides that the Churchwide Organization shall:

- Establish and reflect this church's ecumenical stance and its relationship to other churches, and direct this church's policy for relationship with persons of other faiths.
- Develop and administer policies for this church's relationship to social ministry organizations and cooperate with public and private agencies that enhance human dignity and justice.
- Determine and implement policy for this church's relationship to governments;

and

WHEREAS, the document approved by the Churchwide Assembly in 2019, *"How Strategic and Authentic is Our Diversity,"* calls the ELCA to investigate "ELCA policies, governance, related structures, agencies, and organizations, so that they might serve the goals and initiatives of an authentically diverse church in society"; and

WHEREAS, ELCA congregations and synodically-authorized ministries who are most at risk by the DHS directive are most likely to be mission developments and ethnic-specific ministries who may lack the resources to bring suit against the federal government on their own or are not willing to compromise their own safety risk with the exposure a federal lawsuit might bring, and would greatly benefit from care and solidarity from the interdependent relationship of the Church as specified throughout *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the leadership of the Churchwide Organization, which may comprise the Presiding Bishop, Vice President, Secretary, the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and legal staff, be fully authorized to represent the ELCA in national legal matters when needed; and be it further

RESOLVED, that said leadership of the Churchwide Organization, with prayerful discernment, may choose to engage the ELCA Churchwide Organization in national legal matters in the future, especially in partnership with ecumenical and interfaith religious organizations, as a sign of solidarity with our most vulnerable congregations and ministries.

4. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2025]

WHEREAS, on Jan. 20, 2025, the United States of America's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a directive allowing immigration enforcement and police to conduct detainment and arrest actions in "sensitive areas" such as churches, schools, and healthcare facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is the view of numerous other religious bodies, organizations, and churches throughout the United States of America that this action constitutes a violation of First Amendment rights as it prevents the free expression and gathering of religious assembly by instigating fear among congregants and especially immigrant populations; and

WHEREAS, leadership of the ELCA Churchwide Organization had the opportunity to confront this First Amendment violation by becoming a plaintiff in a lawsuit along with 27 Christian and Jewish denominations and religious organizations, including four out of six of the ELCA's Full Communion partners, submitted on Feb. 11, 2025, by the Georgetown Law Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection; and

WHEREAS, in a video published online by the ELCA on Feb. 14, 2025, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton announced that the ELCA would not join this legal effort because "given the ELCA's denominational structure and polity, the Churchwide organization would not be an appropriate plaintiff in these actions"; and

WHEREAS, Presiding Bishop Eaton stated in that video that "congregations can demonstrate that they can be harmed by this decision, and they would have standing in this lawsuit," putting the onus on individual congregations to undertake a lawsuit against the federal government; and

WHEREAS, *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* calls for the three expressions of this Church to "function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent"; and

WHEREAS, *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* does not explicitly forbid the Churchwide Organization from entering into legal action on behalf of the denomination; and

WHEREAS, *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* Chapter 4 calls this Church to "serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs," and "provide structures and decision-making processes for this church that foster mutuality and interdependence and that involve people in making decisions that affect them";

and

WHEREAS, the *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* Chapter 11 provides that the Churchwide Organization shall:

- Establish and reflect this church's ecumenical stance and its relationship to other churches, and direct this church's policy for relationship with persons of other faiths.
- Develop and administer policies for this church's relationship to social ministry organizations and cooperate with public and private agencies that enhance human dignity and justice.
- Determine and implement policy for this church's relationship to governments;

and

WHEREAS, the document approved by the Churchwide Assembly in 2019, *"How Strategic and Authentic is Our Diversity,"* calls the ELCA to investigate "ELCA policies, governance, related structures, agencies, and organizations, so that they might serve the goals and initiatives of an authentically diverse church in society"; and

WHEREAS, ELCA congregations and synodically-authorized ministries who are most at risk by the DHS directive are most likely to be mission developments and ethnic-specific ministries who may lack the resources to bring suit against the federal government on their own or are not willing to compromise their own safety risk with the exposure a federal lawsuit might bring, and would greatly benefit from care and solidarity from the interdependent relationship of the Church as specified throughout *Constitutions, Bylaws, And Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the leadership of the churchwide organization, which may comprise the presiding bishop and legal staff, be reminded of and encouraged to exercise their authority to represent the ELCA in national legal matters when needed; and be it further

RESOLVED, that said leadership of the churchwide organization, with prayerful discernment, be encouraged to engage the ELCA churchwide organization in national legal matters in the future, especially in partnership with ecumenical and interfaith religious organizations, as a sign of solidarity with our most vulnerable congregations and ministries.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06m **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Legal Action in Support of ELCA Communities" from the Northwest Washington Synod, Sierra Pacific Synod, New England Synod, and Delaware-Maryland Synod; and**

To refer it to the Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose to be addressed in its work.

Category B7: Congregation Constitutions

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 53–54*

1. Nebraska Synod (4A) [2025]

WHEREAS, the *Model Constitution for Congregations* contains numerous required provisions concerning Confession of Faith, Nature of the Church, Statement of Purpose, Powers of the Congregation, Church Affiliation, Property Ownership, Membership, Rostered Ministers, Discipline of Members and Adjudication, Amendments, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions; and

WHEREAS, it is reasonable and desirable that there be uniformity among congregations on most if not all of the subjects required; and

WHEREAS, the *Model Constitution for Congregations* is amended every three years at the Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, congregations are then tasked with updating their constitutions to conform with the *Model Constitution*, a task that is routinely followed in some congregations, deferred for a period of time in other congregations, and ignored entirely by other congregations; and

WHEREAS, leaders of congregations that do update their constitutions devote countless hours to the task, which could otherwise be devoted to carrying out the congregations' mission, and synod leaders devote considerable hours to the process of reviewing and approving congregation constitutions; and

WHEREAS, the church is best served when congregations have the freedom to organize themselves to best fulfill their mission; and

WHEREAS, this may be the time to consider a change in how the ELCA influences the content of the governing documents of its congregations depending on the recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to consider an alternative to the current practice of producing a *Model Constitution for Congregations* with numerous requirements, and instead, simply require of congregations that they include in their governing documents provisions that incorporate by reference to churchwide and/or synod governing documents language on those subjects where uniformity is desirable, such as the Confession of Faith, Nature of the Church, Statement of Purpose, Powers of the Congregation, Church Affiliation, Property Ownership, Membership, Rostered Ministers, Discipline of Members and Adjudication, Amendments, and other provisions, and that the Office of the Secretary would simply notify congregations when those provisions have been amended by a Churchwide Assembly, eliminating the need for constant revision of congregational constitutions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to consider producing a set of Model Governing Documents that would, if the above changes were to be implemented, simply list those subjects typically addressed in the bylaws of religious non-profit organizations, with few requirements, one requirement being a description of the subjects to be incorporated by reference to churchwide governing documents.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06n **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Congregation Constitutions" from Nebraska Synod; and**

To refer it to the Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose to be addressed in its work.

Category B8: Evaluating and Updating the Call Process

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 54–55*

1. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2025]

WHEREAS, research into non-profit organizations has shown that they, like other organizations, suffer negatively during extended leadership transitions, with the effects most pronounced in smaller organizations; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA call process routinely leaves congregations without settled pastors for over a year; and

WHEREAS, research is needed into the impact of the length of various types of vacancies (e.g. a long interim or a relatively short one); and

WHEREAS, the Holy Spirit always guides the call process but should not be expected to carry the work of discernment when we ourselves have not done all in our power to widely network and share information; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

1. Request the creation of a task force to evaluate and update the call process; and
2. That the task force would research the median length of pastoral vacancies in congregations, including congregations that have filled their vacancy(s) within the last 3 years and congregations that have not; and
3. That the task force use simple measures including, but not limited to, worship attendance, giving, and member involvement, to assess the correlation between length of settled pastoral vacancy and vitality of the congregation; and
4. That the task force initiate conversation with synodical bishops and staff, ecumenical partners, congregational call teams, interim ministry organizations, as well as businesses and nonprofits, to better discern what is and is not helpful for congregations, synodically authorized worshiping communities, and other ministry sites in the current call process; and
5. That based on the findings from the above work, the churchwide organization would revise the call process in a way that is equitable to all stakeholders (congregations/ministry sites/worshiping communities, rostered ministry candidates, and synodical leaders), maximizing creativity and flexibility for the sake of the Gospel; and
6. That the task force be empowered to make recommendations towards updating the Ministry Site Profile and Rostered Minister Profile based on the above research; and
7. That this work begin as soon as possible.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06o **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Evaluating and Updating the Call Process" from the Greater Milwaukee Synod;**

To affirm the importance of the call process in the relationship among congregations, synods, and candidates; and

To acknowledge work underway concerning substantial revision of the Rostered Minister Profile and the Ministry Site Profile.

Category B9: Becoming a Global Refuge Denomination

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 55–56*

1. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2025]

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to designate the ELCA as a global refuge denomination.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06p **To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Southwest California Synod on "Becoming a Global Refuge Denomination" but respectfully decline to be identified as a "Global Refuge denomination" as Global Refuge is already identified as an Independent Lutheran Organization through ELCA constitutional language;**

To reaffirm this church's commitment to the AMMPARO strategy to accompany migrants globally and advocate for recognition and respect for their human dignity including through the protection of their human rights; and

To request the Service and Justice unit to continue the ELCA's relationship with Global Refuge as an Independent Lutheran Organization and the work contemplated by the Memorandum of Understanding signed by both the ELCA and Global Refuge dated Feb. 10, 2025.

Category B10: Abuse Prevention and Reporting

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 56–58*

1. East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5I) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has faced challenges in addressing abuse by clergy, and currently lacks holistic systems and processes for reporting and addressing misconduct consistently and transparently as a national body, leading to failures in holding abusers accountable and protecting victims; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for a clear, consistent reporting system across all synods, including a path and requirements for reporting misconduct by synod-level leaders and the retention and transmission of disciplinary records, including a shared database accessible to all bishops and synod staff members that would help track patterns of behavior and improve the current system; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for mandatory reporting requirements for synod staff and churchwide employees to notify both churchwide officials and law enforcement when notified of physical, sexual, or domestic abuse; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to preserve and centrally maintain disciplinary records and ensure their submission to the churchwide organization; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the East Central Synod of Wisconsin Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request that the ELCA develop and implement a clear, consistent reporting system across all synods for reporting misconduct by current and former rostered leaders, along with appropriate supporting systems to drive accountability for abusive actors, transparency throughout the churchwide body, and provide compassion, support and healing for victims of abuse; and

That the ELCA establish requirements to preserve, maintain and report allegations of physical, sexual, or other instances of clergy abuse, to the churchwide office for inclusion in a central database. This would include victim statements, notes, supporting evidence/records, and applicable disciplinary committee records, findings and recommendations; and

That the ELCA establish an ombudsperson to lead efforts with reporting and compliance, including the creation of a shared database accessible to all bishops and synod staff members which documents all allegations to ensure that rostered leaders with a history of abuse, misconduct, or criminal activity are barred from seeking calls in other synods/districts; and research the possibility and potentially implement a process for disclosing that database with other denominations upon request; and

That the ELCA prioritize competent crisis response, consistent information-sharing about rostered leaders with concerning histories, and provide resources for people who have suffered abuse by clergy; and

That the ELCA offer training and resources to all synod staff regarding a trauma-informed approach to receiving reports of misconduct including the implementation of mandatory reporting requirements for allegations of abusive, exploitive, or illegal behavior to the churchwide organization and law enforcement.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06q **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Abuse Prevention and Reporting" from the East Central Synod of Wisconsin;**

To affirm the importance of abuse prevention and reporting;

To direct the Christian Community and Leadership unit and the Office of the Secretary to continue to identify resources, trainings, and other materials to assist synods in using best practices to document and share reports of abuse and misconduct comprehensively and transparently;

To direct the Christian Community and Leadership unit and the Office of the Secretary to include trauma-informed approaches to the trainings and resources provided to synods regarding misconduct; and

To direct the Christian Community and Leadership unit and the Office of the Secretary to report on the progress of these tasks to the Fall 2026 Church Council meeting.

Category B11: Boundary, Racial Justice, and LGBTQIA+ Cultural Competency Training

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 58–59*

1. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2025]

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to mandate all ELCA rostered leaders and synod authorized lay ministers complete boundary, racial justice, and LGBTQIA+ cultural competency trainings; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to establish all churchwide required trainings for ELCA rostered leaders and synod authorized lay ministers be completed at least every three years.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06r **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Boundary, Racial Justice, and LGBTQIA+ Cultural Competency Training" from the Lower Susquehanna Synod;**

To affirm the three-year training cycle that is being utilized by synods as well as the training resources developed for synods to use for their boundary,

racial justice, gender justice, and LGBTQIA+ cultural competency trainings by the Boundaries Education Working Group;

To encourage synods to use and adapt these resources for their specific contexts; and

To encourage all rostered ministers and other leaders to participate in a regular process of training in order to enhance their ministry skills.

Category B12: Remove Gendered and Binary Language

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, p. 59*

1. New Jersey Synod (7A) [2025]

WHEREAS, the ELCA strives to be a welcoming and inclusive church and the use of gender based language in our governing documents is not consistent with this aspiration, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod Assembly memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to review all of its governing documents including the *Constitution, By Laws, and Continuing Resolutions* to remove gendered and binary language so that all persons are seen and included.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06s **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Remove Gendered and Binary Language" from the New Jersey Synod; and**

To affirm the work of the Office of the Secretary to remove gendered binary language in the ELCA Constitution and to encourage synods to report to the Office of the Secretary any further improvements to the governing documents.

Category B13: Review of ELCA Investments and Procurement

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 59–60*

1. Indiana-Kentucky Synod (6C) [2025]

WHEREAS, Christ identifies his disciples as those who feed the hungry, satisfy the thirsty, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit the prisoner (Matthew 25:31-46); and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Services in America (LSA) and its affiliates, and Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service) are partners in ministry with the ELCA and its predecessor bodies; and

WHEREAS, public posts on X (formerly Twitter) in February, 2025 claimed that "Lutheran Family Services and affiliated organizations" are a "money laundering operation" that "must end"; and

WHEREAS, LSA, its affiliates, and Global Refuge as nonprofits are subject to oversight as required by law to maintain said status; and

WHEREAS, LSA, its affiliates, and Global Refuge have been given legitimate, congressionally appropriated grants and contracts for the work they do in the social service arena; and

WHEREAS, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton released a public statement "ELCA Responds to False Accusations on X" on February 7, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA's Office of Corporate Social Responsibility has an established "Social Criteria Investment Screen: Policies and Procedures" that "assist[s] this church in evaluating the types of investments it wishes to hold" as approved by the ELCA Church Council; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Corporate Social Responsibility's "Boycott Policy: Policies and Procedures" identifies issues and criteria as well as appropriate procedures for decisions related to boycotts; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Indiana-Kentucky Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly as follows:

- To instruct the Church Council to review its investments and their alignment with the screening and boycott polices of the ELCA in light of Bishop Eaton's rejection of the false public claims on X;
- To instruct the Church Council to report a summary of findings and proposed solutions, made available by video via the ELCA's social media channels as well as by written report, with links to both to be emailed to all ELCA email list subscribers no later than March 1, 2026.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06t **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Review of ELCA Investments and Procurement" from the Indiana-Kentucky Synod;**

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 screen; 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.

Category B15: Consideration of Full Report of CRLC

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 64–65*

1. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2025]

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, urging it to consider and debate the full text of the unedited report and recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as part of its agenda.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06u **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Consideration of Full Report of CRLC" from the Southwest California Synod; and**

To affirm the work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) and the response of the Church Council, and to respectfully decline to act on this memorial.

Category C1: Council of Nicaea 1700th Anniversary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 65–66*

1. Slovak Zion Synod (7G) [2023]

WHEREAS, the year 2025 will mark the 1700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council of the Church, commonly known as the Council of Nicaea; and,

WHEREAS, the sainted members of this council produced certain pronouncements of the faith that, being faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures and of Christian truth, became the rule and norm of the entire Christian Church, foremost among them the Nicene Creed; and,

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Confessions declare that we "unanimously hold and teach, in accordance with the decree of the council of Nicaea" (AC 1), and that we "pledge ourselves to [the ecumenical symbols]"

which were "accepted as the unanimous, catholic, Christian faith and confessions of the orthodox and true church" (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Rule and Norm, 3), etc.; and,

WHEREAS, the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America likewise states that this church accepts, teaches, and confesses the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this church (2.04); and,

WHEREAS, we believe the teaching of the ancient church has much to teach us about the meaning of Holy Scripture and the apostolic faith, and aids the increase in the unity of the Church; and,

WHEREAS, the Nicene Creed is the norm and rule of faith for the many Eastern, Oriental, and Western Christian Churches; and,

WHEREAS, this anniversary will be the first such centenary of the council since the wider reception of the modern ecumenical movement that has occurred in the last century; and,

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed to "manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives" (4.02.f) and "fostering Christian unity by participating in ecumenical activities, contributing its witness and work and cooperating with other churches which confess God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (4.03.e); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Slovak Zion Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to acknowledge and celebrate this anniversary with thanksgiving to Almighty God who gives the Church its unity; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council communicate to the Church Council the request that, in the interim, the Office of the Presiding Bishop arrange for the development of resources to assist congregations and synods in observing this anniversary, especially in ecumenical settings, and encourage study of the Nicene Creed and canons as an opportunity for deepening Lutheran identity and as an impetus to nourish ecumenical relationships between churches and congregations.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06v **To receive with gratitude the memorial on the "Council of Nicaea 1700th Anniversary" from the Slovak Zion Synod;**

To thank the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop for its proactive efforts in the development of resources to assist congregations and synods in observing this anniversary, especially in ecumenical settings; and

To acknowledge the proposed actions of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as the response of the Churchwide Assembly to the memorial.

Category C3: Social Statement on Vulnerable Youth

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 68–70*

1. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2024]

WHEREAS, there is currently an active debate in our society centered on children and vulnerable youth; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social statements and social messages contain little about the unique value and vulnerability of children, and are inadequate to speak to the current moment; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to authorize the development and adoption of a social statement on children and vulnerable youth.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06w **To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Greater Milwaukee Synod for development of a social statement on children and vulnerable youth; and**

To decline the request for a social statement in light of work underway on a social message on child protection that is intended for consideration by the ELCA Church Council in Fall 2025.

Category C4: Confession of Faith in Our Time

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 70–73*

1. Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) proclaims that Jesus Christ—not any nation, political party, race, or ruler—is Lord of all (Philippians 2:10–11), and confesses the Gospel as liberation for the oppressed and justice for the nations (Luke 4:18–19; Isaiah 1:17); and

WHEREAS, the global rise of authoritarianism, nationalism, oligarchy, and white Christian supremacy—often wrapped in religious language—threatens both the integrity of the Gospel and the dignity of God's beloved across borders; and

WHEREAS, movements rooted in Christian nationalism and political idolatry actively endanger migrants, LGBTQIA+ people, racial minorities, and democratic institutions; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA's Confession of Faith affirms the church's responsibility to speak publicly in society with theological clarity and prophetic courage, especially when religious language is used to bless oppression; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran legacy includes the *Barmen Declaration* (1934), which resisted the co-opting of the church by state ideology, and the courageous witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Confessing Church, who remind us that silence in the face of tyranny is itself a form of betrayal; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to:

1. Publicly declare that authoritarianism, political idolatry, and Christian nationalism represent grave theological errors and global threats to human dignity and democratic life;
2. Call upon the Presiding Bishop and synodical bishops to exercise a courageous and unifying public moral voice in defense of the marginalized and in opposition to the misuse of Christian faith for authoritarian ends;
3. Commission the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with global Lutheran partners and the Lutheran World Federation, to develop a theological and public statement naming the ELCA's opposition to authoritarianism, in continuity with the *Barmen Declaration* and consistent with Lutheran commitments to neighbor-love, pluralism, and resistance to unjust power;
4. Encourage ELCA congregations, pastors, and lay leaders to utilize theological tools, preaching resources, and ecumenical partnerships to publicly resist political violence, voter suppression, racial scapegoating, and any use of faith to justify autocracy;
5. Encourage ELCA bishops and synods to create spaces for discernment, lament, and repentance for the church's own complicity in systems of political idolatry, and to accompany congregations seeking to rediscover their prophetic vocation in this time.

2. South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5K) [2025]

WHEREAS, the promises and responsibilities of our baptismal liturgy and affirmation of baptism (or confirmation) ask if we promise to "proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace in all the earth"; and

WHEREAS, our profession of faith at baptism also asks us to "renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God"; and

WHEREAS, when we proclaim "Jesus is Lord", it is a Lord who said, "You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many" and "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another"; and

WHEREAS, decisions and actions in our country continue to affect negatively some of our most vulnerable neighbors and have the potential of worsening negative impacts on individuals, families, communities, and across the globe; and

WHEREAS, some of these policies are promoted by those who seek Christian dominion over politics—or use Christianity as a tool for their own gain—in a Christian Nationalism which conflates God and country while actually obscuring the person of Jesus Christ and his message and form of authority; and

WHEREAS, we have the historical precedent and witness of the "confessing church" movement through the 1934 Theological Declaration of Barmen, written and adopted by a group of pastors, lay leaders, and theologians from the German church with the purpose of providing a theological and creedal foundation for nonviolent resistance to the heretical teachings of the so-called "German Christians," for whom patriotism and faithfulness to the German nation displaced faithfulness to Christ; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that now is the time to publicly declare ourselves a "confessing church" by reaffirming our belief that the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth as found in the New Testament is the sole and inviolable foundation of the Church and the norm for its life and teaching, and we therefore must reject all forms of religion and government that misuse Christianity, create idols, and do harm to our neighbor; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Assembly of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin adopts "A Confession of Faith for Our Time" in the form submitted with and attached to this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Synod Assembly of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin strongly encourage our congregations to strive publicly and nonviolently to resist all governmental actions and policies that demean the God-given dignity of all human beings by committing to practices such as the following:

- nurture healthy forms of our faith and baptismal renewal, as well as citizenship, through prayer and study;
- support one another as witnesses to God's love in our interactions with others and in every dimension of our lives, as well as together in public witness;
- boldly offer support in welcoming refugees, caring for the vulnerable, creating inclusive communities, and seeking understanding, through conversations as well as through forms of financial or direct assistance, advocacy, and nonviolent resistance;
- prepare to counter public attitudes, behaviors, and policies that are hostile to love and that inflict unnecessary and undeserved suffering on many, especially the most vulnerable among us;
- review and discuss the ELCA Conference of Bishops' statement on the Need to Speak the Truth, as they identified needs "to condemn the hateful, deceptive, violent speech that has too readily found a place in our national discourse" and a "pledge to be vigilant guardians of truth, refusing to perpetuate lies or half-truths that further corrode the fabric of our society";
- study and discuss our theology and identity discerned in ELCA Social Statements such as Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective, Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All, For Peace in God's World, and the most recent Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action;
- utilize resources and networking from organizations such as synod ministry teams, the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin, ELCA AMMPARO, the Wisconsin Council of Churches, and Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice;

and be it finally

RESOLVED, that this Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to adopt "A Confession of Faith for Our Time" in the form submitted with and attached to this Resolution, or in a similar form acceptable to the Churchwide Assembly.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06x **To receive with gratitude the memorials on "A Confession of Faith for Our Time" from the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin and on "Theological Imagination and ELCA Public Witness" from the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod;**

To reaffirm the ELCA's official Confession of Faith as described in this church's constitution and the use of ELCA social teaching as speaking for the ELCA in its public witness, and as a guide to moral deliberation among members about societal issues and challenges;

To consider action taken by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly on the recommended proposed social statement, "Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All," as the response to these memorials, since it addresses many of the concerns it lifted up, such as authoritarianism, political idolatry, deceptive speech, and Christian Nationalism;

To request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop consider the concerns expressed in these memorials in future social writing processes and social teaching resources;

To refer the memorials' concerns to the Theological Discernment, Justice, and Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations teams in the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Witness in Society Team for assessment and a report to the Church Council by its Spring 2026 meeting;

To encourage ELCA congregations, rostered ministers, and lay leaders to utilize social teaching, preaching resources, and ecumenical and interreligious partnerships to publicly resist political violence, voter suppression, racial scapegoating, and any use of faith to justify autocracy; and

To encourage ELCA bishops and synods to create spaces for discernment, lament, and repentance for the church's complicity in systems of political idolatry, and to accompany congregations seeking to rediscover their prophetic vocation in this time.

Category C5: Reconsideration of Social Message on End-of-Life Decisions

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 73–75*

1. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2025]

WHEREAS, this church shall…study social issues and trends…and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace…." (ELCA Constitution and Bylaws, 4.03.l.); and

WHEREAS, the Florida-Bahamas Synod has already asked the ELCA Church Council to reconsider the ELCA's 1992 Social Message on End-of-Life ("the Message"). Specifically, this Synod cited as problematic, given the number of states in the U.S. that now allow by statute, "Medical Aid in Dying", the following statement in the Message: "We oppose the legalization of physician-assisted death, which would allow the private killing of one person by another…." *Message* pg. 4." In response, the ELCA Church Council "…defer[ed] the question of reconsidering the selected paragraph)." (ELCA Church Council, Nov. 9–12, 2023, Reconsideration of Message on End-of-Life Decisions, page 1 of 1); and

WHEREAS, the Message states that "hope and meaning in life are possible even in times of suffering and adversity…." It is reasonable to ask whether this takes into account, adequately, severe dementia, an increasingly common problem at the end of life, which makes difficult an expression of a person's hope and meaning in life and warrants more discussion. (*Message*, A Christian Perspective, item 6, pg. 2); and

WHEREAS, the Message makes a single mention of Hospice care which "…offers promise of more humane treatment at the end of life." It is reasonable to point out that since 1992 significant changes have occurred in medical technology, hospice and palliative care, including sedation, the use of advance directives and more – changes that warrant more discussion in the Message, especially as it aims to reduce pain and suffering at the end of life (Message, pg. 4); and

WHEREAS, the Message opposes the legalization of medical aid in dying (MAiD) due to concern for "the potential for abuse, especially of people who are most vulnerable…." It is critical to point out that MAiD have strict eligibility requirements to protect all patients and over a dozen safeguards to prevent abuse. Since 1992, MAiD is legal now in ten states and the District of Columbia; and another 18 states have introduced legislation to enable MAiD. (Message, pg. 4; Compassion & Choices Fact Sheet—https://www.compassionandchoices.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/fact-sheet-laws-are-safe-final-10-05-20-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=7f2dda9b_0; and

WHEREAS, "…communion with God, not life per se, is the greatest good, …[which] strengthens a Christian's willingness not to hold onto life at all costs, certain of our final resting place with God made possible by our Baptism."; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod in Assembly requests the Churchwide Assembly to authorize a reconsideration of the ELCA Message on End-of-Life Decisions (1992).

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06y **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.

Category C6: Educational Materials Regarding the Word and Service Roster

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 75–76*

1. Oregon Synod (1E) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has recognized the significant role of deacons in the ministry of Word and Service within the Church, serving as vital leaders and advocates in areas such as education, social justice, and pastoral care; and

WHEREAS, deacons are called to serve within a unique and important ministry that directly engages with both the church and the broader community, yet the role of the deacon is often not as widely understood or clearly communicated within the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, there is a lack of clear, comprehensive, and easily accessible materials—both in electronic and print formats—that communicate the roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for deacons within the ELCA. The absence of effective communication regarding the roster of Word and Service (deacon) results in confusion and a lack of awareness among the wider church community, including both current and prospective members of the deacon roster, as well as those in leadership positions within congregations and synods; and

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly ensures that all rostered leaders, including deacons, are recognized and supported in their ministries and that adequate resources are made available to promote

these ministries; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod Assembly requests the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA request the churchwide organization to create and disseminate comprehensive and user-friendly materials, both electronic and in-print, that outline the role, ministry, and responsibilities of the roster of Word and Service (deacon); and be it further

RESOLVED, that these materials should be designed to be accessible and understandable for all members of the ELCA, including congregations, synods, seminaries, and churchwide staff, to ensure that the role of the deacon is well understood and appreciated across the church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that these materials be made accessible and understandable in any applicable languages used within the ELCA, to ensure inclusivity for all members; and be it further

RESOLVED, that these resources be regularly updated and evaluated for effectiveness in meeting the needs of the church and be made available in a variety of formats to accommodate different learning preferences and technological access; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the funding for the implementation of this memorial will be derived from the regular staffing resources of the churchwide staff. Additionally, a printing and dissemination budget of $700 to $1,500 with a further translation budget of $500 per language translated would be requested of the churchwide annual budget; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this be addressed at the earliest opportunity and resolved by the next Churchwide Assembly, and that a report be made to the synods regarding its progress.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06z **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Educational Materials Regarding the Word and Service Roster" from the Oregon Synod;**

To direct the Christian Community and Leadership unit, Office of the Presiding Bishop, and Office of the Secretary to collaborate on the development of additional educational resources designed for congregations, synods, and other church settings that clearly communicate the roles and responsibilities of ministers of Word and Service in varied contexts; and

To provide an update to the Church Council on the status or completion of this work no later than the Spring 2027 meeting.

Category C7: Reconsideration of Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 76–79*

1. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2025]

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and the Taskforce for the Revision of "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" to preserve a category for relationships beyond legal marriage or validate the experience of those who wish not to have a legal marriage; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and the Taskforce for the Revision of "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" to direct Portico Benefits Services to establish a corresponding category for healthcare coverage for relationships beyond legal marriage including registered Domestic Partnerships and Significant Others; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and the Taskforce for the Revision of "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" to

adopt an inclusive definition for marriage to include same-gender and gender-non-conforming partnerships; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and the Taskforce for the Revision of "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" to direct the creation of education and pastoral care materials for people in relationships beyond legal marriage including polyamorous, non-monogamous, and care for singles; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and the Taskforce for the Revision of "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" to clarify that bound conscience can only apply to individual clergy who decide not to perform a marriage rite and not to ELCA churches who intend to preclude the safety of LGBTQIA+ individuals; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and the Taskforce for the Revision of "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" to clarify "grave public scandal" so that rostered leaders may know exactly what private behaviors are to be prohibited; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and the Taskforce for the Revision of "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" to clarify this church's unequivocal support for the well-being of transgender and gender expansive individuals, their families, and partners to live free of public torment and discrimination.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06aa **To receive with gratitude the memorial concerning a reconsideration of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009) and related issues from the Southwest California Synod;**

To acknowledge the reconsideration process currently underway by the "ELCA Taskforce for Reconsiderations of Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust";

To consider actions taken by this assembly on the Recommended, Proposed Edits of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* and on the "Affirm Transgender, Nonbinary, Gender Expansive, Two-spirit, and Genderqueer People of God" memorial as the response to this memorial's RESOLVED 7;

Given the process and timeline in place, to decline to direct the Office of the Secretary and the Christian Community and Leadership unit, in consultation with the ELCA Conference of Bishops, to take up the tasks of revisiting ministry policies at this time;

To refer this memorial's RESOLVED 4 to the ELCA Conference of Bishops to work on and develop education and pastoral care materials; and

To decline the request for an Archive Reconsideration of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* entailing the authorization of a new social statement on the topic.

Category D2: Palestinian Destruction Response

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 81–83*

1. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2025]

WHEREAS, the ceasefire in Gaza requires Christians to take urgent steps toward recovery and healing; and

WHEREAS, the church calls all disciples to be advocates for peacemaking that strives for human rights, political alternatives to war, social justice, control of the arms trade, and creative means of working for peace in God's world; and

WHEREAS, 2024 was the deadliest year on record for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and the displacement of millions of people in Gaza and Lebanon occurred even while the ELCA has called for an end to unconditional aid to the State of Israel; and

WHEREAS, some definitions of antisemitism equate opposition to policies of the State of Israel with antisemitism, target political criticism of Israel on college campuses, and enable false claims of antisemitism making it difficult to identify real incidents of antisemitism; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 2016 voted (with 90% in favor) to develop a human rights social criteria investment screen to apply to investments in the State of Israel, and voted (with 82% in favor) for the U.S. to link financial and military aid to Israel to Israel's compliance with internationally recognized human rights standards and other criteria; therefore, be it

RESOLVED**,** that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to direct the churchwide organization to increase awareness of the need for unity in a region that is home to Muslims, Jews and Christians, and use resources to support efforts that are needed to recover, rebuild, and unify by investing in humanitarian aid and rebuilding of Gaza and other impacted areas of occupied Palestine through support for established institutions and through gifts designated for "Middle East Crisis", and

- to amplify demand for the US to cease financial support for arms and related technologies to Israel as we rebuke oppression and the senseless deaths of innocents; and
- to reject definitions of antisemitism that do not distinguish between hatred of Jews and criticism of the State of Israel, and all Islamophobia and antisemitism which harms our Muslim and Jewish neighbors locally and globally; and
- to direct the churchwide organization, in accordance with the 2016 screening decision, to ask the ELCA and its congregations to review current and future investments that profit from Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06bb **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Palestinian Destruction Response" from the Minneapolis Area Synod;**

To reaffirm this church's commitment to advocacy that urges an end to unconditional financial support for arms and related technologies to Israel;

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

To reaffirm this church's commitments to reject antisemitism and anti-Muslim bigotry; to differentiate between criticism of the State of Israel's policies and hatred of the Jewish people; and to work with this church's ecumenical and inter-religious partners to address anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim, and other interlocking forms of hatred; and

To affirm continued dialogue with Portico Benefit Services around how the Human Rights Screen is implemented and encourage ELCA congregations to review its current and future investments.

Category D3: Public Discourse on Palestine-Israel

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 83–84*

1. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has deep, long-standing relationships with Lutheran churches around the world, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA relates to companion church bodies, including the ELCJHL, through accompaniment: i.e., walking together in a solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality; and

WHEREAS, accompaniment is lived out through listening to companion church bodies, seeking to build relationships across boundaries that exclude and divide, identifying and correcting imbalances of power; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is committed to accompaniment, advocacy, and awareness-raising through Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel; and

WHEREAS, Sumud Northland: For Justice in Palestine and Israel is a ministry of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, The Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, has challenged Christian church leaders and church bodies to use the language of apartheid and genocide in addressing the ongoing crisis in Palestine-Israel; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA, acting in assembly, memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to authorize the preparation of study/educational materials clarifying language used in public discourse regarding the ongoing crisis in Palestine-Israel and to make recommendations to the Churchwide organization and its affiliates regarding the use of language in public discourse and advocacy that reflects Palestinian reality.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***[EN BLOC]***

CA25.02.06cc **To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Public Discourse about Palestine-Israel" from the Northeastern Minnesota Synod;**

To reaffirm the ELCA's sense of urgency and action for ongoing advocacy, awareness, and accompaniment through the Sumud initiative and through the Office of the Presiding Bishop;

To reaffirm this church's partners' voices on the ground and their language of justice for their own people;

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.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion had passed and announced that the assembly would move to consideration of the remaining memorials, beginning with memorials in Category A3: Indian Boarding School Remembrance.

Category A3: Indian Boarding School Remembrance

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 11–26*

1. Alaska Synod (1A) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, 26 boarding schools and orphanages operated in the State of Alaska, and the Wrangell Institute remained in operation until its closing in 1975; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children, their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021), therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and

6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

2. Montana Synod (1F) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, Indian Boarding Schools and Day Schools operated in the United States, which: forcibly removed Native children from their families and communities, prohibited Native language and culture, and subjected them to harsh conditions as well as forced assimilation; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations, including predecessor bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), operated over half of these schools and contributed to a system that caused: physical and cultural genocide, generational trauma, cultural erasure, as well as physical, emotional, and psychological abuse; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to truth-seeking and justice through actions including the "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Montana Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Directing the Churchwide Office of the ELCA to prepare and distribute materials inviting and equipping all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Creating adult and children/youth educational programs and materials through the Churchwide Office and Publishing House and consistently publishing of articles in all of the church's publications in order to broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools.
3. Directing the Churchwide Organization of the ELCA to provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Directing the Churchwide Office of the ELCA to encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
5. In partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative and the ELCA Archives 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; recognizing that this information belongs to and is a source of healing for student survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Directing the Churchwide Organization of the ELCA to identify sources of funding to support a 20 hour per week position to research and organize efforts; including digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

3. Sierra Pacific Synod (2A) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, whereby Native children were forcibly taken from their families and

communities, prohibited any and all expressions of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a intention of "Kill[ing] the Indian in him, and sav[ing] the man"; and

WHEREAS, predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, as well as other boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students (which at one point included over 83% of all Native children) often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools by:

a) Actively inviting and equipping all expressions of our church to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
b) Facilitating awareness at all levels of our church of Christian and Lutheran involvement in Indian boarding schools; and actively working to recognize and understand the continued impact of boarding school and day school historic trauma on Native people, Native families, and within Native communities;
c) Recognizing and supporting the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian boarding schools in locating records which relate to the ELCA's predecessor bodies' involvement with Indian boarding and day schools;
d) Encouraging all members and expressions of our church to learn the truth of our shared involvement with Indian boarding schools;
e) Preserving all information in the ELCA's possession that was recorded about Indian boarding and day schools and those students who attended them, forcibly or otherwise, in the awareness that such information may be a source of healing for student survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations; and
f) Identifying sources of funding to sufficiently support research into and digitization of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

4. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2025]

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to address the legacy of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools by broadening and deepening awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to identify, secure, and maintain funding to support ongoing truth-seeking efforts by the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative and other initiatives that foster healing and reconciliation with Native communities, including but not limited: to the location, preservation, and digitization of archival records; the organization of, care of, and access to all information about Indian Boarding Schools and Day Schools by students survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod, in Assembly, memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to provide on-going support for and encouragement to congregations, synods, and ministries learning truth about Indian

Boarding Schools to responsibly creating paths to healing and repair, such as by commemorating the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually near September 30.

5. Pacifica Synod (2C) [2025]

RESOLVED, that the Pacifica Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools and requests the following actions:

1. Actively invite and prepare all congregations, synods, and affiliated ministries to observe the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools each year on or around September 30th.
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at the congregation, synod, and churchwide levels regarding Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools through the creation of educational programs and materials for adults and children/youth, as well as consistent publishing of articles in all church publications.
3. Provide ongoing recognition and support for the expanding network of lay people and clergy who volunteer their time in the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools). This initiative aims to locate all known records related to the involvement of the ELCA's predecessor bodies with Indian boarding and day schools and to educate others about these institutions.
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to understanding the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative, and to responsibly establish pathways for healing and repair.
5. Organize and care for all information in the ELCA's possession related to Indian boarding and day schools and the students who attended, both forcibly and otherwise. This work should be carried out in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative and the ELCA Archives. It is important to recognize that this information belongs to, and serves as a source of healing for, student survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations. Additionally, ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner.
6. Identify adequate funding sources to effectively support research and organizing efforts, as well as to ensure proper digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

6. Western North Dakota Synod (3A) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children, their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and,

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); and

WHEREAS, the Western North Dakota Synod Council, on April 8, 2025, unanimously approved sending this memorial to the 2025 Western North Dakota Synod Assembly for their affirmation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

7. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children,

their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

8. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenberg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children,

their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

9. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children,

their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

10. Northern Illinois Synod (5B) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children,

their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools, through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at the congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through the creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials, and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & TruthTelling 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing educational efforts, and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

11. Central/Southern Illinois Synod (5C) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children,

their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Central/Southern Illinois Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

12. Western Iowa Synod (5E) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children,

their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

13. Northeastern Iowa Synod (5F) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, numerous Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly separated from families, prohibited from using Native languages and practicing cultures, and compelled to perform manual labor, to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and the Norwegian Synod, a predecessor body of the ELCA, operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School (1884) in Wittenburg, WI, founded by Luther College alumni, supported by Northeastern Iowa area congregations, and the only Lutheran school contracting with the federal Indian Boarding School system; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people off their original homelands onto reservations so settlers and governments could claim the stolen land, undermining tribal sovereignty, and perpetrating harm in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse causing intergenerational trauma; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools, with nearly 1,000 deaths identified to date; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the churchwide organization to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Develop and distribute resources to all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Create and publish by adult and children/youth educational materials about Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, and commit to publishing at least quarterly articles in Living Lutheran and other ELCA publications;
3. Allocate staff time and resources to support the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) in their work to document the ELCA's predecessor bodies' involvement with Indian boarding and day schools;
4. Establish a process to help ELCA congregations and affiliated ministries to assess their historical involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative, and develop paths to healing and repair;
5. Direct the ELCA Archives to establish a comprehensive preservation plan for all records and artifacts related to Indian boarding and day schools, recognizing that this information belongs to student survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations, and ensure these records are accessible to them in a culturally appropriate manner;
6. Allocate specific funding in the churchwide budget to support the research, digitization, and proper labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records, with regular progress reports to the Church Council.

14. Northern Great Lakes Synod (5G) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children, their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northern Great Lakes Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and by regularly posting articles in the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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, whether they were forcibly removed or not; carry out this work in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

15. Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (5H) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children, their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to

commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;

2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

16. East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5I) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children, their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the East Central Synod Wisconsin Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools

annually on or near September 30th;

2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoarding Schools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records

17. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian Day Schools and over 520 Indian Boarding Schools operated in the United States, where Native American children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited from using their Native languages and expressing their cultures, and were subjected to manual labor and other disciplinary measures that forced their compliance and assimilation into the dominant White culture; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations and denominations, including predecessor bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), operated over half of these schools and contributed to a system that caused: sexual, emotional and psychological abuse; the death of many children through suicide or physical abuse; and subsequent multi-generational trauma in their tribal communities during and after the boarding school period; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to:

1. Request that it address the legacies of our Church's participation in Indian Boarding Schools by broadening and deepening our awareness at the congregational, synodical and churchwide levels, and explore our role as Lutheran Christians in this injustice; and
2. Identify, secure, and maintain funding to support the ongoing truth-seeking efforts by the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative and affiliate ministries that foster healing and reconciliation with Native communities—including, but not limited to: the location,

preservation, and digitization of archival records; the organization of, care of, and access to all information about Indian Boarding Schools and Day Schools by survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations; and

3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of truth-seeking and truth-telling about Indian Boarding Schools to responsibly creating paths to healing and repair, such as commemorating the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually near September 30th.

18. South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5K) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children, their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the ELCA South Central Synod of Wisconsin Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and

6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

19. Southeast Michigan Synod (6A) [2025]

WHEREAS, Indian Boarding Schools were institutions that forcibly took Native children from their families and communities, prohibited Native language and culture, subjected them to harsh conditions, forced labor, and abuse. They were part of a larger system of physical and cultural genocide; and

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, 520 Indian Boarding Schools operated in the United States, with over 1,000 additional institutions operated as day schools, orphanages, etc. Almost 19,000 children were forcibly enrolled, and enrollment comprised over 80% of all Native children at one point. In Michigan, there were five Indian Boarding Schools and over 30 similar institutions (with one possible Indian Day School being investigated within Synodical boundaries); and

WHEREAS, religious communities operated over 50% of these nationally institutions, and eight had Lutheran affiliation. A predecessor denomination of the ELCA (the Norwegian Synod) operated one from 1883 to 1933 as the Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, over 9,000 students died at over 50 Indian Boarding Schools, with more deaths still being discovered. Native Children also suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse at these institutions. This abuse traumatized the children, their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and

WHEREAS, previously, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly has committed to truth-seeking, anti-racism, and justice including the "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" in 2016. This work continued with the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" in 2021 and the launch of the Truth and Healing movement in 2023; and

WHEREAS, since 2007, racial reconciliation has been a priority for the Southeast Michigan Synod, such as Synod Council's "Covenant of Racial Reconciliation." The Synod further resolved to promote additional anti-racism work in 2017; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools by broadening and deepening awareness at congregational, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to identify, secure, and maintain funding to support ongoing truth-seeking efforts by the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative and other initiatives that foster healing and reconciliation with Native communities, including but not limited: to the location, preservation, and digitization of archival records; the organization of, care of, and access to all information about Indian Boarding Schools and Day Schools by students survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the ELCA to provide on-going support for and encouragement to congregations, synods, and ministries learning truth about Indian Boarding Schools to responsibly create paths to healing and repair, such as by commemorating the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually near September 30th.

20. North/West Lower Michigan Synod (6B) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless American Indian Day Schools and over 520 American Indian Boarding Schools operated in the United States; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations and denominations (including the predecessor bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) operated over half of these schools; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustice and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021), therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the 2025 North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to continue to address the legacies of our church's role in American Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in American Indian boarding schools, through the creation of adult, children, and youth educational programs and materials, and through consistent publishing of articles in the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on American Indian boarding schools to locate all known records related to the ELCA's predecessor bodies' involvement with American Indian boarding and day schools and to educate others about American Indian boarding schools;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
5. Organize and care for all information in the ELCA's possession that was recorded about American 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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to American Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organization efforts, and to sufficiently support the digitization and labeling of all ELCA American Indian boarding school archival records.

21. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, countless Indian day schools and over 520 Indian boarding schools operated in the United States, with 417 receiving federal support, where Native children were forcibly taken from their families and communities, prohibited all expression of Native language and culture, and required to perform manual labor, with a goal to "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man"; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations collaborated with the federal government in operating more than half of these federally-funded schools; and predecessor denominations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) operated Bethany Indian Mission Boarding School in Wittenburg, Wisconsin, and other non-federally funded boarding schools, day schools, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, these schools were part of a larger strategy of physical and cultural genocide that included forcing Indigenous people and Tribal Nations off of their original homelands and onto reservations so that settlers and governments could claim the stolen land for themselves, undermining sovereignty, and perpetrating extermination in multiple other ways; and

WHEREAS, boarding school students, which at one point included over 83% of all Native children, often suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse that caused deep trauma for the children, their families, their tribal communities, and subsequent generations; and an untold number of children died while at boarding schools (nearly 1,000 identified to date); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to work against injustices and toward healing as stated in "The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to address the legacies of our church's role in Indian Boarding Schools through the following actions:

1. Actively invite and equip all congregations, synods, and affiliate ministries to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Broaden and deepen awareness at congregation, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools, through creation of adult and children/youth educational programs and materials and through consistent publishing of articles in all of the church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and clergy volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools to 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;
4. Encourage ELCA affiliate ministries to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative; and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
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 & 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; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Identify sources of funding to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts; and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all ELCA Indian boarding school archival records.

22. Florida-Bahamas Synod (9E) [2025]

WHEREAS, from 1819 to 1969, Indian Boarding Schools and Day Schools operated in the United States, which: forcibly removed Native children from their families and communities, prohibited Native language and culture, and subjected them to harsh conditions as well as forced assimilation; and

WHEREAS, religious organizations, including predecessor bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), operated over half of these schools and contributed to a system that caused: physical and cultural genocide, generational trauma, cultural erasure, as well as physical, emotional, and psychological abuse; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to truth-seeking and justice through actions including the "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" (2016) and the "Declaration to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (2021); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Florida-Bahamas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the legacies of our church's

role in Indian Boarding Schools by broadening and deepening awareness at congregational, synod, and churchwide levels of Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA identify, secure, and maintain funding to support ongoing truth-seeking efforts by the ELCA Truth-Seeking & Truth-Telling Initiative and other initiatives that foster healing and reconciliation with Native communities, including but not limited to: the location, preservation, and digitization of archival records; the organization of, care of, and access to all information about Indian Boarding Schools and Day Schools by students, survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA provide on-going support for and encouragement to congregations, synods, and ministries learning truth about Indian Boarding Schools to responsibly create paths to healing and repair, such as by commemorating the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually near September 30th.

On behalf of the committee, Pastor Hartner moved the recommended response.

Moved;

[Seconded]: To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Indian Boarding School Remembrance" from Alaska Synod, Montana Synod, Sierra Pacific Synod, Southwest California Synod, Pacifica Synod, Western North Dakota Synod, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Saint Paul Area Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Northern Illinois Synod, Central/Southern Illinois Synod, Western Iowa Synod, Northeastern Iowa Synod, Northern Great Lakes Synod, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee Synod, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Southeast Michigan Synod, North/West Lower Michigan Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and the Florida-Bahamas Synod;

To address the legacies of this church's role in Indian boarding schools through the following actions:

1. Encourage and equip all congregations, synods, and ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA to observe the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
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, synods, and ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA; and to consistently publish articles in all of this church's publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and rostered ministers volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;
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;

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; recognize that this information belongs to and is a source of healing for student survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Direct the churchwide organization to 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 ELCA Archives.

Four voting members spoke in support of the motion. When no voting members spoke in opposition, in accord with the rules of the assembly, the presiding bishop called for the vote, following prayer.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***YES-779; NO-7***

CA25.02.07 **To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Indian Boarding School Remembrance" from Alaska Synod, Montana Synod, Sierra Pacific Synod, Southwest California Synod, Pacifica Synod, Western North Dakota Synod, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Saint Paul Area Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Northern Illinois Synod, Central/Southern Illinois Synod, Western Iowa Synod, Northeastern Iowa Synod, Northern Great Lakes Synod, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee Synod, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Southeast Michigan Synod, North/West Lower Michigan Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and the Florida-Bahamas Synod;**

To address the legacies of this church's role in Indian boarding schools through the following actions:

1. **Encourage and equip all congregations, synods, and ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA to observe the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;**
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, synods, and ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA; and to consistently publish articles in all of this church's publications;**
3. **Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and rostered ministers volunteering their**

time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to 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;

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;**
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; recognize that this information belongs to and is a source of healing for student survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations; and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and**
6. **Direct the churchwide organization to 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 ELCA Archives.**

The presiding bishop declared that the motion had passed and announced that the assembly would move to consideration of memorials categorized as B14: Consideration of Recommendation 1 of the CRLC.

Category B14: Consideration of Recommendation 1 of the CRLC

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee, pp. 60–64; Supplemental Report of the Memorials Committee*

1. Pacifica Synod (2C) [2025]

RESOLVED, that the Pacifica Synod Assembly adopt this memorial and submit it to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and request it to consider and debate the full text of Recommendation 1of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as part of its agenda; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Pacifica Synod Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly and request that the Churchwide Assembly adopt the CRLC's Recommendation 1 in full, including its call for the establishment of mutual accountability measures, compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA, and, if these measures are not implemented by 2028, the convening of a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the church's governing documents.

Recommendation 1

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church recommends that the ELCA Church Council immediately begin identifying and acting upon mutual accountability measures

and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination. These measures and incentives shall be guided by the recommendations outlined in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit and the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity.

To ensure timely action, all constitution and bylaw amendments needed for the development and implementation of these accountability measures and compliance incentives must be developed and advanced in time for consideration by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly. If by that time such measures and incentives have not been adequately identified or enacted, we recommend the ELCA Church Council call for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to evaluate and enact necessary constitutional revisions that will enable and advance the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism work.

2. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2025]

WHEREAS, the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) established the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) with the charge to "reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism"; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC undertook an extensive process of discernment, consultation, and listening across the ELCA, resulting in a final report in early 2025 that included Recommendation 1: Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC's Recommendation 1 states:

> The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church recommends that the ELCA Church Council immediately begin identifying and acting upon mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination. These measures and incentives shall be guided by the recommendations outlined in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit and the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity.
>
> To ensure timely action, all constitution and bylaw amendments needed for the development and implementation of these accountability measures and compliance incentives must be developed and advanced in time for consideration by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly. If by that time such measures and incentives have not been adequately identified or enacted, we recommend the ELCA Church Council call for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to evaluate and enact necessary constitutional revisions that will enable and advance the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism work;

and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the ELCA received the recommendation with appreciation and took action to encourage internal processes and reports, but did not adopt the full substance of Recommendation 1—including the mechanisms for mutual accountability, compliance incentives, or the provision for calling a special Churchwide Assembly in 2028 if progress stalls; and

WHEREAS, the failure to act on the full scope of Recommendation 1 limits the authority of the Churchwide Assembly to directly consider and vote on a proposal that speaks to the heart of the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism, and undermines the urgency and structural accountability called for by the CRLC; and

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly is the highest legislative authority of this church and must be able to deliberate on recommendations that concern the spiritual and institutional integrity of the ELCA in the face of systemic racism and exclusion; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod Assembly adopt this memorial and submit it to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, urging it to

consider and debate the full text of Recommendation 1 of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as part of its agenda; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to adopt the CRLC's Recommendation 1 in full, including its call for the establishment of mutual accountability measures, compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA, and, if these measures are not implemented by 2028, the convening of a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the church's governing documents; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod express its deep commitment to structural change in service of becoming an anti-racist church, and that the work of dismantling racism shall be pursued not only as a moral and spiritual imperative, but as a matter of ecclesial governance, institutional design, and gospel faithfulness.

3. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2025]

WHEREAS, the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) established the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) with the charge to "reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism"; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC undertook an extensive process of discernment, consultation, and listening across the ELCA, resulting in a final report in early 2025 that included Recommendation 1: Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC's Recommendation 1 states:

> The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church recommends that the ELCA Church Council immediately begin identifying and acting upon mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination. These measures and incentives shall be guided by the recommendations outlined in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit and the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity.
>
> To ensure timely action, all constitution and bylaw amendments needed for the development and implementation of these accountability measures and compliance incentives must be developed and advanced in time for consideration by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly. If by that time such measures and incentives have not been adequately identified or enacted, we recommend the ELCA Church Council call for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to evaluate and enact necessary constitutional revisions that will enable and advance the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism work;

and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the ELCA received the recommendation with appreciation and took action to encourage internal processes and reports, but did not adopt the full substance of Recommendation 1—including the mechanisms for mutual accountability, compliance incentives, or the provision for calling a special Churchwide Assembly in 2028 if progress stalls; and

WHEREAS, the failure to act on the full scope of Recommendation 1 limits the authority of the Churchwide Assembly to directly consider and vote on a proposal that speaks to the heart of the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism, and undermines the urgency and structural accountability called for by the CRLC; and

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly is the highest legislative authority of this church and must be able to deliberate on recommendations that concern the spiritual and institutional integrity of the ELCA in the face of systemic racism and exclusion; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly adopt this memorial and submit it to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, urging it to consider and debate the full text of Recommendation 1 of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as part of its agenda; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to adopt the CRLC's Recommendation 1 in full, including its call for the establishment of mutual accountability measures, compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA, and, if these measures are not implemented by 2028, the convening of a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the church's governing documents; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod express its deep commitment to structural change in service of becoming an anti-racist church, and that the work of dismantling racism shall be pursued not only as a moral and spiritual imperative, but as a matter of ecclesial governance, institutional design, and gospel faithfulness.

4. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2025]

WHEREAS, the 2022 Churchwide Assembly (CWA) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) established the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) with the charge to "reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism"; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC undertook an extensive process of discernment, consultation, and listening across the ELCA, resulting in a final report in early 2025 that included Recommendation 1: Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC's Recommendation 1 states:

> "The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church recommends that the ELCA Church Council immediately begin identifying and acting upon mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination. These measures and incentives shall be guided by the recommendations outlined in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit and the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity."
>
> "To ensure timely action, all constitution and bylaw amendments needed for the development and implementation of these accountability measures and compliance incentives must be developed and advanced in time for consideration by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly. If by that time such measures and incentives have not been adequately identified or enacted, we recommend the ELCA Church Council call for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to evaluate and enact necessary constitutional revisions that will enable and advance the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism work."

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council received the recommendation with appreciation and took action to encourage internal processes and reports, but did not adopt the full substance of Recommendation 1—including the mechanisms for mutual accountability, compliance incentives, or the provision for calling a special Churchwide Assembly in 2028 if progress stalls; and

WHEREAS, the failure to act on the full scope of Recommendation 1 limits the authority of the CWA to directly consider and vote on a proposal that speaks to the heart of the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism, and undermines the urgency and structural accountability called for by the CRLC; and

WHEREAS, the CWA is the highest legislative authority of this church and must be able to deliberate on recommendations that concern the spiritual and institutional integrity of the ELCA in the face of systemic racism and exclusion; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Assembly memorializes the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to consider and debate the full text of Recommendation 1 of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) as part of its agenda; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Assembly memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the CRLC's Recommendation 1 in full, including its call for the establishment of mutual accountability measures, compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA, and, if these measures are not implemented by 2028, the convening of a special

Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the church's governing documents; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Assembly expresses its deep commitment to structural change in service of becoming an anti-racist church and that the work of dismantling racism shall be pursued not only as a moral and spiritual imperative, but as a matter of ecclesial governance, institutional design, and faithfulness to the Gospel.

On behalf of the Memorials Committee, Mr. Roux moved the recommended response.

Moved:
[Seconded]: To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Consideration of Recommendation 1 of the CRLC" from the Pacifica Synod, Metropolitan New York Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod;

To acknowledge the importance of accountability in addressing racism within all structures of the ELCA;

To affirm the work of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity Advisory Team and request that the Church Council continue to work with the team to clarify the nature of mutual accountability as referenced in Recommendation 1 of the CRLC Report;

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.

Voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion. A voting member called the question; a voting member spoke in support of the motion to end debate.

Moved: ***Two-Thirds Vote Required***
Seconded; ***Yes-673; No-116***
Carried: **To end debate.**

The presiding bishop declared debate closed and called for the vote on the main motion.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***YES-646; NO-144***

CA25.02.08 **To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Consideration of Recommendation 1 of the CRLC" from the Pacifica Synod, Metropolitan New York Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod;**

To acknowledge the importance of accountability in addressing racism within all structures of the ELCA;

To affirm the work of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity Advisory Team and request that the Church Council continue to work with the team to clarify the nature of mutual accountability as referenced in Recommendation 1 of the CRLC Report;

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.

Elections: First Common Ballot

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VIII, Report of the Nominating Committee and Supplemental Report of the Nominating Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton thanked Pastor Hartner, Mr. Roux, and all members of the Memorials Committee for their work. She introduced the first common ballot and reminded voting members that the ballot would elect members of the Church Council; the Nominating Committee, Committee on Appeals, and Committee on Discipline; and board members of the separately incorporated ministries of the ELCA. The presiding bishop directed voting members to the Report of the Nominating Committee for background information, including biographical profiles of all nominees. She then invited Mr. Cunniff to provide additional information related to the voting process.

Elections: Report of the Second Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Mr. Cunniff to provide the report of the second ballot for presiding bishop. Mr. Cunniff reported that there were 791 legal ballots cast on the second ballot for presiding bishop and no illegal ballots. He announced that none of the nominees received the 594 votes required for election and presented the results of the second ballot for presiding bishop.

Amy Current	150	Emily Ebert	11	Kate Hines-Shah	1
Kevin Strickland	149	Manuel Retamoza	9	Wolfgang Laudert	1
Yehiel Curry	132	Ingrid Arneson Rasmussen	5	Brian McClinton	1
Tracie Bartholomew	66	Laura Barbins	5	Tuhina Rasche	1
Bill Gohl	55	Michael Lozano	4	Clint Schnekloth	1
Craig Schweitzer	44	Imani Olear	4	Bryan Simmons	1
Angela Shannon	44	Carla Christopher Wilson	3	Marie Bonine	0
R. Guy Erwin	26	Lucille Mills	3	Rochelle Lewis	0
Deborah Hutterer	23	Melanie Forrey	2	Joseph Liles	0
Pedro Suárez	17	Kristina Weber	2	James Wilson	0
Khader El-Yateem	16	Michael Fonner	1		
Albert Starr	13	Daniel Garrietts	1		

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that there was no election for presiding bishop on the second ballot and announced that the seven nominees receiving the most votes on the second ballot would address the assembly prior to the third ballot for presiding bishop.

Announcements

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Secretary Rothmeyer for announcements. A voting member spoke regarding the spiritual significance of wearing red in remembrance of missing and murdered indigenous women.

Adjournment

The third plenary session of the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned at 5:48 p.m., following a hymn and prayer.

Plenary Session Four

Wednesday, July 30, 2025
9:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened Wednesday, July 30, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 9:17 a.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated).

The presiding bishop announced a change to the order of business for the plenary session to continue the report of the Memorials Committee before addresses from the nominees for presiding bishop. She explained that, because one of the nominees was unable to attend the assembly in person, all the nominees would address the assembly electronically.

Report of the Memorials Committee *(cont.)*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee and Supplemental Report of the Memorials Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited the Rev. Emily C. Hartner and Mr. Noah F. Roux, co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, to continue the report of the committee. The co-chairs resumed the report with consideration of the response to memorials in Category D4: Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation for Palestine.

Category D4: Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine

1. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2025]

WHEREAS, there is currently a war in Palestine that is affecting our siblings in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and their neighbors; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA in its 2017 social message *On Human Rights* states that "concern for the wellbeing of others lies at the very heart of Christian faith (Matthew 22:36-40)"; and

WHEREAS, "in response to God's call to comfort God's people (Isaiah 40) … our church seeks to accompany those among our global partners who suffer human rights violations"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has committed to promote and defend human rights, support international organizations that work to safeguard human rights, advocate for ratification of international treaties and agreements that protect human rights, seek to understand and be sensitive to the needs of indigenous people, and provide resources to help deepen our understanding of and commitment to promoting human rights; and

WHEREAS, the United States occupies a pre-eminent position in the world but has failed to accept instruments of international human rights law or ratify many treaties and agreements of the United Nations, isolating itself and undermining the work of the international community; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations has declared Israel's military occupation is illegal according to international law; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage its members continue to advocate for the human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage the presiding bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy that would support the recognition of Palestine as a legitimate state in the United Nations as other United Nation member states have done; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage the presiding bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy that will support the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis by calling for an end of the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

2. Oregon Synod (1E) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2005 established the initiative, "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land," recently renamed "SUMUD: for Justice in Palestine and Israel"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA in its 2017 social message *On Human Rights* states that "concern for the well-being of others lies at the very heart of Christian faith (Matthew 22:36-40)"; and that "The United States occupies a pre-eminent position on the world stage, and its failure to accept instruments of international human rights law isolates the United States and undermines the work of the international community. The failure of the U.S. government to ratify many treaties and agreements of the United Nations calls for action on the part of U.S. citizens" (p. 10); and that "The ELCA as a church also supports human rights around the globe in its work with global partners. In response to God's call to comfort God's people (Isaiah 40) and through the strategy of accompaniment, our church seeks to accompany those among our global partners who suffer human rights violations" (p. 10); and

WHEREAS, the United Nations in its Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471 and 476 has already declared that the state of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank is illegal according to international law; and

WHEREAS, Israel's ongoing occupation of the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza continues to endanger the security and well-being of both Palestinians and Israelis and makes peace in the region an unattainable goal; and

WHEREAS, illegal military occupation has included the following activities that contravene international human rights:

- Restriction of the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories due to checkpoints, and restricted residency cards;
- Military incarceration without due process or a civil trial;
- Demolition of family homes;
- Restriction of the water usage that is administrated by the state of Israel;
- Restriction of electricity that is administered by the state of Israel;
- Appropriation of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem,
- Appropriation of Palestinian land by illegal Israeli settlements;

therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to urge the presiding bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy that would support the recognition of Palestine as a legitimate state in the United Nations as other United Nation member states have done; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to urge the Presiding Bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy that will support the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis by calling for an end of the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage its members to recommit to advocate for the human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis.

3. Rocky Mountain Synod (2E) [2025]

WHEREAS, the ELCA in its 2017 social message *On Human Rights* states that "concern for the well-being of others lies at the very heart of Christian faith (Matthew 22:36-40)"; and that "The ELCA as a church… supports human rights around the globe in its work with global partners" and "our church seeks to accompany those among our global partners who suffer human rights violations" (p. 10); and

WHEREAS, the United Nations in its Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471 and 476 has already declared that the state of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank is illegal according to international law; and

WHEREAS, Israel's ongoing occupation of the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza continues to endanger the security and well-being of both Palestinians and Israelis and makes peace in the region an unattainable goal; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2005 established the initiative, "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land" (recently renamed "SUMUD: for Justice in Palestine and Israel") and continues to call for equality, human dignity, safety, and security for all the Jews, Christians, and Muslims of the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its 1995 Social Statement "For Peace in God's World," states:

> "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." These words from the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) are consistent with our understanding of humans created in God's image. Human rights provide a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.
>
> We therefore will continue to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them. Our priorities are to:
>
> - oppose genocide and other grievous violations of human rights such as torture, religious and racial oppression, forced conscription (impressment), forced labor, and war crimes (including organized rape);
> - provide for the most basic necessities of the poor; and
> - defend the human rights of groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children;

and

WHEREAS, illegal military occupation has included the following activities that contravene these international human rights:

- Restriction of the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories due to checkpoints, and restrictive residency cards;
- Military incarceration without due process or a civil trial;
- Demolition of family homes;
- Restriction of electricity and water usage that is administrated by the state of Israel;
- Appropriation of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem;
- Appropriation of Palestinian land by illegal Israeli settlements;

and

WHEREAS, Israel's human rights violations against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are egregious and include war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, including

- Indiscriminate and disproportionate bombing resulting in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, including over 15,000 children since October 7, 2023, and the displacement of more than 1.9 million people;
- Deprivation of adequate access to safe drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity;
- Destruction of buildings—including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools—and the destruction of electricity, sewage and water infrastructure essential for survival;
- Expropriation of Palestinian land and the expansion of Israeli settlements;
- Settler violence and vandalism with the aim of instilling fear into Palestinian communities;

- Cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of prisoners;
- Sexual and gender-based violence, including public stripping and nudity, sexual harassment and sexual assault;
- Demolition of homes;
- Administrative detention (being held without trial, without charges, without the disclosure of alleged evidence for periods ranging from several months to several years);
- Restrictions on the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories leading to a life of constant uncertainty and obstructing the development of a stable economy;

therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Rocky Mountain Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate Churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring to an end the occupation and promote a peaceful resolution of the conflict; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Rocky Mountain Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to urge the presiding bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling on the U.S. government to

- recognize Palestine as a sovereign state and support Palestine's full membership in the United Nations;
- halt military assistance to Israel (especially bombs and equipment that have been used to devastate Gaza), investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law, and work to end the genocide against the Palestinians of Gaza;
- reject schemes to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and work to end the rampant settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Rocky Mountain Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage individuals and congregations of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis as they work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all in both communities, including specifically our sisters and brothers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI), as they bring comfort, support, accountability, and relief.

4. Nebraska Synod (4A) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Nebraska Synod has been enriched by the Nebraska Synod Holy Land Accompaniment (NSHLA) initiative led for many years by the late Rev. Dr. Mary Jensen, including traveling to Israel, Palestine and Jordan to meet and learn from our Lutheran World Federation partners, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, additional ecumenical and interfaith Israeli citizens and Palestinians under the decades-old occupation who have worked faithfully toward peaceful solutions and understanding; and

WHEREAS, the Nebraska Synod has recently renewed this invitation to learn and grow together through current NSHLA efforts of listening, accompanying, and advocating; and

WHEREAS, the Rev. Adam Miller-Stubbendick, originally from the Nebraska Synod, was serving with Global Mission as the Young Adults in Global Mission Coordinator alongside his wife, the Rev. Jordan Miller-Stubbendick, until the heinous attack on Israel by Hamas that escalated the war in Gaza in October, 2023, and will be touring the Nebraska Synod in June 2025 to tell their story; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2005 established the initiative, "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land," recently renamed "SUMUD: for Justice in Palestine and Israel"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA in its 2017 social message *On Human Rights* states that "concern for the well-being of others lies at the very heart of Christian faith (Matthew 22:36-40)"; and that "The United States occupies a pre-eminent position on the world stage, and its failure to accept instruments of international human rights law isolates the United States and undermines the work of the international community. The failure of the U.S. government to ratify many treaties and agreements of the United Nations calls for action on the part of U.S. citizens" (p. 10); and that "The ELCA as a church also supports human rights around the globe in its work with global partners. In response to God's call to comfort God's people (Isaiah 40) and through the strategy of accompaniment, our church seeks to accompany those among our global partners who suffer human rights violations" (p. 10); and that in this social message the ELCA has already committed itself to

- uphold and foster human rights as described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- support international organizations such the United Nations, including its Security Council and Human Rights Council, and the International Labor Organization in working to develop and safeguard human rights;
- advocate for the United States to ratify international treaties and agreements that protect human rights;
- be sensitive to the needs of indigenous peoples, whose understandings of ownership, culture and community may be at odds with corporate notions of ownership—corporations and governments do not possess the absolute right to ignore those perspectives,
- practice accompaniment in its advocacy on human rights, and
- provide members, congregations and other ELCA entities with the resources needed to deepen their understanding of and commitment to promoting human rights (p 13);

and

WHEREAS, the United Nations in its Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471 and 476 have already declared that the state of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank is illegal according to international law; and

WHEREAS, illegal military occupation has included the following activities that contravene international human rights:

- Restriction of the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories due to checkpoints, and restricted residency cards,
- Military incarceration without due process or a civil trial,
- Demolition of family homes,
- Restriction of the electricity and water usage that is administered by the state of Israel,
- Appropriation of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem,
- Appropriation of Palestinian land by illegal Israeli settlements;

therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage its members continue to advocate for the human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Chuchwide Assembly to urge the presiding bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy that would support the recognition of Palestine as a legitimate state in the United Nations as other United Nation member states have done; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to require the presiding bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy that will support the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis by calling for an end of the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod encourage congregations, synods, and appropriate Churchwide units of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis in the work to create a future of

justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all in both communities, including specifically our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) in bringing comfort, support, accountability, and relief.

5. Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C) [2025]

WHEREAS, as followers of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, we are called to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and work for justice and peace for all peoples (Isaiah 1:17, Matthew 5:9); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has long expressed concern for justice and human rights in the Holy Land, including through the 2005 *Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine*, and the 2016 memorials urging investment screens related to human rights violations; and

WHEREAS, Palestinian Christians, including our siblings in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), have issued urgent appeals to the global church to act in solidarity with those suffering under military occupation and systemic violence; and

WHEREAS, the State of Israel's ongoing military occupation, illegal settlement expansion, and recent military campaigns in Gaza have resulted in the mass killing of civilians, displacement of communities, and the destruction of hospitals, schools, and sacred places, acts increasingly recognized by international human rights organizations as war crimes and apartheid; and

WHEREAS, the United States annually provides billions of dollars in military aid to the State of Israel, funds which directly support actions that result in the killing of innocent Palestinians and the continued violation of international law; and

WHEREAS, boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) are recognized nonviolent tools historically used by churches and civil society to resist injustice, such as in the South African anti-apartheid movement, and are increasingly called for by Palestinian civil society and global partners as a means to pressure for justice, human rights, and peace; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Arkansas Oklahoma Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorializes the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call upon the ELCA Churchwide Organization to:

1. Publicly support the international BDS movement as a nonviolent tool for justice and human rights in Israel and Palestine;
2. Review and divest from corporations, investments, or institutions profiting from or complicit in the occupation, military action, or systemic discrimination against Palestinians;
3. Oppose and call for an end to U.S. military aid to Israel until such time as Israel complies with international law and human rights norms;
4. Advocate with elected officials, through ELCA Advocacy and partners such as Churches for Middle East Peace, for a just and lasting peace, an end to the occupation, and equal rights for all people in the region; and
5. Stand in solidarity with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and other ecumenical and interfaith partners who are working nonviolently for justice, reconciliation, and peace;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Arkansas Oklahoma Synod commit to study, prayer, and ongoing engagement with Palestinian voices, including resources such as the *Kairos Palestine* document, and to create space for education and respectful dialogue on the call to faithful action in the face of injustice.

6. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2025]

WHEREAS, the ELCA in its 2017 social message *On Human Rights* states that "concern for the well-being of others lies at the very heart of Christian faith (Matthew 22:36-40)"; and that "The ELCA as a church…

supports human rights around the globe in its work with global partners" and "our church seeks to accompany those among our global partners who suffer human rights violations" (p. 10); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly has since 2001 repeatedly expressed support for an end to the Israeli occupation and for the formation of an independent Palestinian state; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations in its Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471 and 476 has already declared that the state of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank is illegal according to international law; and

WHEREAS, Israel's ongoing occupation of the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza continues to endanger the security and well-being of both Palestinians and Israelis and makes peace in the region an unattainable goal; and

WHEREAS, by the pervasive power of sin violence breeds more violence, including the recent assassination of two young Israeli embassy staffers in Washington, DC; hatred produces the world-wide escalation of anti-Jewish, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim sentiment; and anger leads to a craving for vengeance with greater and greater indiscriminate and unspeakable acts of inhumanity in Gaza that mirror genocide—all of which incur God's judgment and call to repentance; and

WHEREAS, illegal military occupation has included the following activities that contravene international human rights and in some cases constitute ethnic cleansing:

- Restriction of the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories due to checkpoints, and restrictive residency cards;
- Military incarceration without due process or a civil trial;
- Demolition of family homes;
- Restriction of electricity and water usage that is administrated by the state of Israel;
- Appropriation of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem;
- Appropriation of Palestinian land by illegal Israeli settlements;

therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to urge the Presiding Bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take foreign policy actions that will support the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis by calling for an end to the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and by working toward the recognition of Palestine as a legitimate state in the United Nations, as other U.N. member states have done; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage individuals and congregations of the ELCA to pray ELCA members, congregations, synods, including specifically our sisters and brothers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI), as they bring comfort, support, accountability, and relief.

7. Southeast Michigan Synod (6A) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Southeast Michigan Synod is a companion synod with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Holy Land. The ELCA in 2005 established the initiative *Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land* recently renamed *SUMUD: for Justice in Palestine and Israel.* The name *sumud,* Arabic "steadfastness" was chosen at the suggestion of our Palestinian Lutheran companions. Receiving this word as a prophetic gift from our companions reminds us that God's steadfastness calls us to steadfastness; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA's 2017 social message *On Human Rights* states "The ELCA as a church supports human rights around the globe in its work with global partners. In response to God's call to comfort God's people (Isaiah 40) and through the strategy of accompaniment, our church seeks to accompany those among our global partners who suffer human rights violations"; and

WHEREAS, ELCA has committed itself to uphold and foster human rights as described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; support international organizations such as the United Nations, including its Security Council and Human Rights Council; be sensitive to the needs of indigenous peoples…practice accompaniment in its advocacy on human rights; and provide members, congregations, and other ELCA entities the resources needed to deepen their understanding of and commitment to promoting human rights; and

WHEREAS, United Nations Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471, and 476 have declared the state of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank is illegal. The occupation includes: restriction of freedom of movement; military incarceration without due process; demolition of homes; restriction of the water usage that is administered by the State of Israel; appropriation of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem; and appropriation of Palestinian land by illegal Israeli settlements; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod 2025 Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage its members to continue to pray, and advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod 2025 Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request the presiding bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy supporting the recognition of Palestine as a legitimate state in the United Nations, as other United Nations member states have done; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod 2025 Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to request the presiding bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy supporting the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis by calling for an end of the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

8. 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) in 2005 established the initiative, "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land," recently renamed "SUMUD: for Justice in Palestine and Israel"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA in its 2017 social message *On Human Rights* states that "concern for the well-being of others lies at the very heart of Christian faith (Matthew 22:36-40)"; and that "The United States occupies a pre-eminent position on the world stage, and its failure to accept instruments of international human rights law isolates the United States and undermines the work of the international community. The failure of the U.S. government to ratify many treaties and agreements of the United Nations calls for action on the part of U.S. citizens" (p. 10); and that "The ELCA as a church also supports human rights around the globe in its work with global partners. In response to God's call to comfort God's people (Isaiah 40) and through the strategy of accompaniment, our church seeks to accompany those among our global partners who suffer human rights violations" (p. 10); and that in this social message the ELCA has already committed itself to

- uphold and foster human rights as described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- support international organizations such the United Nations, including its Security Council and Human Rights Council, and the International Labor Organization in working to develop and safeguard human rights;
- advocate for the United States to ratify international treaties and agreements that protect human rights;
- be sensitive to the needs of indigenous peoples, whose understandings of ownership, culture and community may be at odds with corporate notions of ownership – corporations and governments do not possess the absolute right to ignore those perspectives;
- practice accompaniment in its advocacy on human rights; and

- provide members, congregations and other ELCA entities the resources needed to deepen their understanding of and commitment to promoting human rights (p 13);

and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its 1995 Social Statement "For Peace in God's World," states:

"Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." These words from the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) are consistent with our understanding of humans created in God's image. Human rights provide a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.

We therefore will continue to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them. Our priorities are to:

- oppose genocide and other grievous violations of human rights such as torture, religious and racial oppression, forced conscription (impressment), forced labor, and war crimes (including organized rape);
- provide for the most basic necessities of the poor; and
- defend the human rights of groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children;

and

WHEREAS, the United Nations in its Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471 and 476 have already declared that the state of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank is illegal according to international law; and

WHEREAS, illegal military occupation has included the following activities that contravene international human rights:

- restriction of the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories due to checkpoints, and restricted residency cards,
- military incarceration without due process or a civil trial,
- demolition of family homes,
- restriction of the water usage that is administered by the state of Israel,
- restriction of electricity that is administered by the state of Israel,
- appropriation of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem,
- appropriation of Palestinian land by illegal Israeli settlements;

therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage its members continue to advocate for the human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to require the presiding bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy that would support the recognition of Palestine as a legitimate state in the United Nations as other United Nation member states have done; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to require the presiding bishop to direct a letter to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, calling for the U.S. to take action in its foreign policy that will support the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis by calling for an end of the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

(ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief.

9. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2005 established the initiative, "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land" (recently renamed "SUMUD: for Justice in Palestine and Israel") and continues to call for equality, human dignity, safety, and security for all the Jews, Christians, and Muslims of the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its 1995 Social Statement "For Peace in God's World," states:

> "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. These words from the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) are consistent with our understanding of humans created in God's image. Human rights provide a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.
>
> We therefore will continue to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them. Our priorities are to:
>
> - oppose genocide and other grievous violations of human rights such as torture, religious and racial oppression, forced conscription (impressment), forced labor, and war crimes (including organized rape);
> - provide for the most basic necessities of the poor; and
> - defend the human rights of groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children;

and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans in 2016 already passed a substantive similar document, 2016: FOR PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND CA16.05.15

WHEREAS, the ELCA has been clear in its condemnation of the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack against Israelis and internationals in southern Israel, in its condemnation of the indiscriminate and disproportionate Israeli violence in response to the attack, and in its call for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire and for the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian political prisoners; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 war and UN Security Council Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471, and 476 established that the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis; and

WHEREAS, Israel's human rights violations against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rise to the level of international definition of war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, including

- Indiscriminate bombing resulting in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, including over 15,000 children just since Oct. 7, 2023, and the displacement of more than 1.9 million people;
- Deprivation of adequate access to safe drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity;
- Destruction of buildings—including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools—and the destruction of electricity, sewage and water infrastructure essential for survival;
- Expropriation of Palestinian land and the expansion of Israeli settlements;
- Settler violence and vandalism with the aim of instilling fear into Palestinian communities;
- Cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of prisoners;
- Sexual and gender-based violence, including public stripping and nudity, sexual harassment including threats of rape;
- Demolition of homes;

- Administrative detention (being held without trial, without charges, without the disclosure of alleged evidence for periods ranging from several months to several years);
- Restrictions on the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories leading to a life of constant uncertainty and obstructing the development of a stable economy;

and

WHEREAS, our partners in the ELCJHL have repeatedly asked us to use the word "genocide" so much as it matches the reality on the ground, which is the intentional displacement of people and the excessive death toll of non-combatants; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage ELCA members to advocate for the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to urge the presiding bishop to direct a letter 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

- halt military assistance to Israel to devastate Gaza
- investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law;
- work to end the genocide against the Palestinians of Gaza;
- reject plans to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem while addressing the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave,
- work to end the settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank; and
- recognize Palestine as a sovereign state and support Palestine's full membership in the United Nations;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Assembly to encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief.

10. Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2005 established the initiative, "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land" (recently renamed "SUMUD: for Justice in Palestine and Israel") and continues to call for equality, human dignity, safety, and security for all the Jews, Christians, and Muslims of the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, by the pervasive power of sin, violence breeds more violence, including the recent assassination of two young Israeli embassy staffers in Washington, DC. Hatred produces the worldwide escalation of anti-Jewish, anti-Arab, and anti-Muslim sentiment; and anger leads to a craving for vengeance with increasing indiscriminate and unspeakable acts of genocide—all of which incur God's judgement and call to repentance; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its 1995 Social Statement "For Peace in God's World," (p. 14) states:

> "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." These words from the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) are consistent with our understanding of humans created in God's image. Human rights provide a common universal standard of justice for

living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.

We therefore will continue to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them. Our priorities are to:

- oppose genocide and other grievous violations of human rights such as torture, religious and racial oppression, forced conscription (impressment), forced labor, and war crimes (including organized rape);
- provide for the most basic necessities of the poor; and
- defend the human rights of groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children;

and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has been clear in its condemnation of the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack against Israelis and internationals in southern Israel, in its condemnation of the indiscriminate and disproportionate Israeli violence in response to the attack, and in its call for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire and for the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian political prisoners; and

WHEREAS, United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 war and UN Security Council Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471 and 476 established that the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis; and

WHEREAS, Israel's human rights violations against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are egregious and include war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, including

- Indiscriminate bombing resulting in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, including over 15,000 children since October 7, 2023, and the displacement of more than 1.9 million people;
- Deprivation of adequate access to safe drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity;
- Destruction of buildings – including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools – and the destruction of electricity, sewage and water infrastructure essential for survival;
- Expropriation of Palestinian land and the expansion of Israeli settlements;
- Settler violence and vandalism with the aim of instilling fear into Palestinian communities;
- Cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of prisoners;
- Sexual and gender-based violence, including public stripping and nudity, sexual harassment and sexual assault;
- Demolition of homes;
- Administrative detention (being held without trial, without charges, without the disclosure of alleged evidence for periods ranging from several months to several years);
- Restrictions on the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories leading to a life of constant uncertainty and obstructing the development of a stable economy;

therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage ELCA members to advocate for the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA to direct a letter 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 condemning the human rights violations listed above and calling on the U.S. government to

- recognize Palestine as a sovereign state and support Palestine's full membership in the United Nations;

- halt military assistance to Israel used to devastate Gaza, investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law, and work to end the genocide against the Palestinians of Gaza;
- reject schemes to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and work to end the rampant settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank;

and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/ Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief.

11. Southeastern Synod (9D) [2025]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2005 established the initiative, "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land" (recently renamed "Sumud: for Justice in Palestine and Israel") and continues to call for equality, human dignity, safety, and security for all the Jews, Christians, and Muslims of the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its 1995 Social Statement "For Peace in God's World," states:

> "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." These words from the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) are consistent with our understanding of humans created in God's image. Human rights provide a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.
>
> We therefore will continue to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them. Our priorities are to:
>
> - oppose genocide and other grievous violations of human rights such as torture, religious and racial oppression, forced conscription (impressment), forced labor, and war crimes (including organized rape);
> - provide for the most basic necessities of the poor; and
> - defend the human rights of groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children;

and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has been clear in its condemnation of the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack against Israelis and internationals in southern Israel, in its condemnation of the indiscriminate and disproportionate Israeli violence in response to the attack, and in its call for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire and for the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian political prisoners; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 war and UN Security Council Resolutions 446, 452, 465, 471 and 476 established that the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis; and

WHEREAS, Israel's human rights violations against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are egregious and include war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, including

- Indiscriminate bombing resulting in tens of thousands of civilian deaths, including over 15,000

children since October 7, 2023, and the displacement of more than 1.9 million people;
- Deprivation of adequate access to safe drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity;
- Destruction of buildings—including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools—and the destruction of electricity, sewage and water infrastructure essential for survival;
- Expropriation of Palestinian land and the expansion of Israeli settlements;
- Settler violence and vandalism with the aim of instilling fear into Palestinian communities;
- Cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment of prisoners;
- Sexual and gender-based violence, including public stripping and nudity, sexual harassment, and sexual assault;
- Demolition of homes;
- Administrative detention (being held without trial, without charges, without the disclosure of alleged evidence for periods ranging from several months to several years);
- Restrictions on the freedom of movement within the Palestinian Territories leading to a life of constant uncertainty and obstructing the development of a stable economy;

therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage ELCA members to advocate for the human rights of all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge the Presiding Bishop to direct a letter 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 condemning the human rights violations listed above and calling on the U.S. government to

- recognize Palestine as a sovereign state and support Palestine's full membership in the United Nations;
- Halt military assistance to Israel used to devastate Gaza. Investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law, and work to end the genocide against the Palestinians of Gaza;
- reject schemes to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and work to end the rampant settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Synod memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief.

The Rev. Nathan D. Pipho, bishop of the New England Synod, submitted a substitute motion to replace the response proposed by the committee to memorials in this category. On behalf of the committee, Pastor Hartner moved the substitute motion.

Moved;

[Seconded]: To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine" from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod,

Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

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, sewage 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;

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the

urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Sumud initiative, and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

Voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion. The Rev. Laurie A. Larson Caesar, bishop of the Oregon Synod, introduced a motion to amend the substitute motion.

Moved;
Seconded; ***Yes-752; No-22***
Carried: ***To amend by insertion:***

To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine" from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

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, sewage 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;**

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative "Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel," ~~initiative,~~ and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

Debate on the motion as amended continued. The Rev. Blake A. Scalet [New Jersey Synod] introduced a motion to amend.

Moved;
Seconded:

To amend by insertion:

To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine" from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, while maintaining the right and sovereignty of the State of Israel to exist, and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

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, sewage 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;

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative "Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel," and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

Voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion to amend.

Moved;
Seconded; ***Yes-502; No-273***
Carried: ***To amend by insertion:***

To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine" from the Northwest Washington Synod,

Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, while maintaining the right and sovereignty of the State of Israel to exist, and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

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, sewage 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;**

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World

Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative "Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel," and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

The presiding bishop called for the orders of the day.

Announcement Regarding the First Common Ballot

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section X, First Common Ballot*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited to the stage Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel and member of the Elections Committee. Mr. Cunniff announced that there was an error in ticket 13 on the first common ballot. He instructed voting members not to vote ticket 13 on the first common ballot and announced that the election for ticket 13 would be conducted on the second common ballot.

Addresses by Nominees for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Biographical Information for Nominees for Presiding Bishop*

Presiding Bishop Eaton announced that the seven persons who received the most votes on the second ballot for presiding bishop would address the assembly electronically. In accordance with the rules of the assembly, the order in which nominees addressed the assembly was determined by random drawing.

The Rev. Yehiel Curry, bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, introduced himself to the assembly, emphasizing his experience in a variety of ministries within the ELCA. He explained that as synod bishop he has prioritized diversity, particularly within the synod office, and matching people's passions to the world's most pressing needs.

The Rev. Angela Shannon, a rostered minister in the Metropolitan New York Synod, introduced herself to the assembly, emphasizing the challenges that face women of color and "siblings of marginalized identities" in securing calls within this church. She discussed the complexity of the Metropolitan New York Synod, in which she has worked with congregations in call processes. She stressed the importance of upholding the radical inclusiveness of the gospel in our contemporary context.

The Rev. Kevin L. Strickland, bishop of the Southeastern Synod, shared the story of his grandmother, celebrating the inclusive hospitality of her table as a model of the reign of God and contrasting it with the limitations churches too often have placed on who is welcomed. He emphasized that if chosen to serve as presiding bishop, he would commit to deep listening to rostered ministers, congregations, and communities, and to centering justice, diversity, radical inclusivity, and active engagement in service to the gospel.

The Rev. Craig A. Schweitzer, bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod, began by saying that he was not raised in the ELCA but intentionally joined this church as a place in which God's Spirit is actively leading, reforming, and reimagining what it means to be God's people. He

emphasized that if chosen to serve as presiding bishop, he would focus on collaboration to free the structures and systems of this church to become both more nimble and more deeply rooted, always centering God's fierce love that drives out fear.

The Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew, bishop of the New Jersey Synod, emphasized that, while there is much that is unknown about what service as presiding bishop might be like for her, she was confident that there is nothing this church cannot do standing firm beneath the cross of the crucified and risen Savior. She acknowledged that this church may be in "a great unraveling," but stressed that this unraveling is potentially a prelude to "God's great re-knitting" to empower this church to live out the gospel for the life of the world in our current context.

The Rev. Amy L. Current, bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, emphasized that all people, even those whom we hate or disregard, are created in the image of God; we and they are loved by God despite the myriad ways we turn away from God. She called on this church to embrace the radical, forgiving love of God; strive for justice and peace; boldly "call a thing what it is;" and bear witness to God's love in a sinful world in desperate need of God's love.

The Rev. William J. Gohl, bishop of the Delaware-Maryland Synod, said that he sees a central part of his role as bishop as being present—not always to lead, but sometimes to stand in solidarity or to stand as a barrier in defense of the vulnerable against those who would inflict harm. He emphasized that the love of Christ compels this church to foster and support people and structures that prepare the way for ever fuller engagement of youth and members of marginalized communities with this church as beloved children of God.

Elections: Third Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Mr. Paul K. Irwin, associate general counsel, to provide the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. Irwin reported that, as of 10:00 a.m., there were 802 eligible voting members present. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to adopting the Report of the Credentials Committee and, there being none, declared the report adopted. She provided instructions on the voting process and called on the assembly to cast the third ballot for presiding bishop, following a hymn and prayer.

Elections: Report of the Third Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Mr. Cunniff to provide the report of the third ballot for presiding bishop. Mr. Cunniff reported that there were 801 legal ballots cast on the third ballot for presiding bishop. He announced that none of the nominees received the 534 votes required for election and presented the results of the third ballot for presiding bishop.

Yehiel Curry	332	Bill Gohl	79
Kevin Strickland	111	Amy Current	72
Tracie Bartholomew	106	Angela Shannon	13
Craig Schweitzer	88		

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that there was no election for presiding bishop on the third ballot and announced that the three nominees receiving the most votes on the third ballot would be invited to respond to three questions in a forum prior to the fourth ballot.

Announcements

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Secretary Rothmeyer for announcements.

Extension of Deadline for Completion of the First Common Ballot

Mr. Trey J. Hazard [New England Synod] introduced a motion to suspend the rules of the assembly to extend the deadline for completion of the First Common Ballot until 6:30 p.m.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED***

CA25.03.09 **To suspend the Rules of Organization and Procedure to extend the deadline for completion of the First Common Ballot until 6:30 p.m. on July 30, 2025.**

Adjournment

The fourth plenary session of the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned at 11:05 a.m., following prayer.

Plenary Session Five

Wednesday, July 30, 2025
2:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened Wednesday, July 30, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 2:02 p.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated).

Theological Presentation

Presiding Bishop Eaton thanked Mr. Willie Korboi, Deacon Clare Josef-Maier, and the Rev. Atahualpa Hernández Miranda, bishop president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Columbia, who led online Bible study sessions in the weeks prior to the assembly focused on the assembly theme, "For the Life of the World." She reminded members where recordings of the sessions could be found and welcomed to the stage the Rev. Chad Rimmer, rector and dean of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, who presented a culminating theological reflection on the theme "For the Life of the World."

Pastor Rimmer invited the assembly to remember in its discernment the global communion of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), with 77 million Lutherans in 150 countries, recalling that in the world today, the "average Lutheran" is an East African woman. Engagement with LWF as well as with this church's ecumenical partners can inspire and challenge this church as we consider how best to cooperate with the reconciling love of God through reform of institutional structures in the name of justice and inclusion. This is, he assured the assembly, a holy moment of moral imagination in which this church is freed by grace and empowered by God's Spirit to become what we are becoming.

Following the presentation, Presiding Bishop Eaton thanked Pastor Rimmer and presented him with a gift.

Presiding Bishop Nominee Question-and-Answer Forum

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Biographical Information for Nominees for Presiding Bishop*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited to the stage the three remaining nominees for presiding bishop: Bishop Tracie Bartholomew, Bishop Yehiel Curry, and Bishop Kevin Strickland. She provided an overview of the organization and structure of the question-and-answer forum, noting that the order in which nominees would respond to questions had been determined by random drawing.

Prompt 1: Give an example of how you would begin to implement the vision of the ELCA as it connects to the DEIA Audit, the "Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity," or "God's Love Made Real."

Response: Bishop Strickland

Bishop Strickland presented himself, a bishop of this church who "just happens to be gay," as an example of progress this church has made toward being more inclusive and welcoming. This work is ongoing as this church strives to be more inclusive by listening to marginalized voices to guide our paths forward, because "when we know better, we do better."

Response: Bishop Bartholomew

Noting that "*dei*" is Latin for "of God," Bishop Bartholomew emphasized that the work of DEI is of God: holy, expansive, and inclusive, implementing God's vision of wholeness that is the work of the Spirit through us. She provided examples of ways the New Jersey Synod has sought to build community around an inclusive vision of restorative justice including tangible structures to support leaders of color within the synod.

Response: Bishop Curry

Referencing Jesus' "Sermon on the Plain" from the Gospel of Luke, Bishop Curry noted that the documents referenced in the prompt call this church to more inclusive structures and attitudes. DEIA principles have found a place in this church but need to be brought to a larger audience, particularly by listening to our younger voices and creating spaces in which growth is rooted in mutual learning, not in shame.

Prompt 2: How would you encourage faithful, equitable, and inclusive leadership in this church among both lay and rostered leaders?

Response: Bishop Bartholomew

Bishop Bartholomew stated that this work would begin with the Lutheran understanding of vocation, according to which all Christians are ordained in baptism to serve the world in their various roles—lay callings being neither more nor less important and honorable than calls to service in rostered ministry. In worship, we gather to equip one another to go out to serve God and neighbor in the world.

Response: Bishop Curry

Bishop Curry stated that Metropolitan Chicago Synod leaders came to realize that there were many equipping events targeted to rostered ministers, but few events supporting lay leaders in the synod. In response, "Lay Day" was created for lay members to learn strategies and be inspired to more effectively utilize their gifts to lead in church and community.

Response: Bishop Strickland

Comparing this church to a choir in which all voices are needed, Bishop Strickland emphasized that neither lay nor rostered leaders can do the work of this church alone. He shared examples from the Southeastern Synod of ways both lay and rostered leaders within the synod are engaged to use their gifts to train others to more effectively use their own gifts in service to their congregations and communities. He challenged assembly members, lay and rostered, to share their gifts in their vocations as baptized children of God.

Prompt 3: As this church moves into a rapidly changing future, how will you assemble and lead a team to steward the people and resources of the churchwide organization into this future?

Response: Bishop Curry

Reminding assembly members of his commitment to employing a diverse staff and saying that this could serve as a model for the wider church, Bishop Curry stated that his synod employs a model of apprenticeship that raises up new leaders through active engagement in roles. This system results in learning and growth on the part of the "teacher" as well as the "learner," consistent with Jesus sending the disciples out in pairs, perhaps as a model of co-learning fostering mutual growth.

Response: Bishop Strickland

Noting that he served for five years in the churchwide organization, Bishop Strickland stressed that the churchwide organization is *your* churchwide organization, not some separate, alien structure. Stressing that this is work he would do in prayerful consultation with others, the bishop stated that he would review churchwide ministries, meaning that "everything is on the table," to ensure the churchwide organization serves and supports synods and congregations, and he would eliminate structures that no longer effectively serve the gospel.

Response: Bishop Bartholomew

Bishop Bartholomew responded that she would begin by prayerfully asking: How does the churchwide organization best serve the gospel for this time? She emphasized that the churchwide organization needs a diverse staff in which all members are conscious of the ways their roles serve the mission of this church, and she added that churchwide work on congregational vitality needs to be closer to congregations themselves. She concluded by saying that synod bishops have experience functioning as CEOs, making similar decisions at the synod level intended to amplify God's work in Christ for the sake of the world.

Elections: Fourth Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton led the assembly in thanking the nominees and announced the fourth ballot for presiding bishop.

The Rev. Lee M. Miller II, bishop of the Upstate New York Synod, introduced a motion to suspend the rules concerning the election process.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED YES-678; NO-120***

CA25.03.10 ***To suspend the rules of the assembly:***

Following the results of the fourth ballot [for presiding bishop], if there is no election, we ask the two remaining nominees to share a scripture story or verse or an aspect of Christ Jesus which shapes and sustains them, with a two-minute limit per speaker.

Presiding Bishop Eaton announced that the motion had passed and invited Mr. Paul K. Irwin, associate general counsel, to provide the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. Irwin announced that, as of 3:00 p.m., there were 803 eligible voting members present. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to adopting the Report of the Credentials Committee and, there being none, declared the report adopted.

The Rev. Douglas D. Barclay [Southwest California Synod] introduced a motion to suspend the rules of the assembly.

Moved; ***Two-thirds Vote Required***
Seconded; ***Yes-514; No-278***
Defeated: *To suspend the rules of the assembly:*

Prior to the fourth ballot for presiding bishop, to hear from the three remaining nominees on the same topic as the previous action mentioned.

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motion had failed. A voting member raised a point of order, saying that the preceding motion was a motion to suspend the order of business rather

than to suspend the rules and, as such, was debatable. The parliamentarian ruled that the motion was, in fact, a motion to suspend the rules and therefore not debatable.

Presiding Bishop Eaton provided instructions on the voting process and, following a hymn and prayer, called for the vote.

Elections: Report of the Fourth Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel and member of the Elections Committee, to provide the report of the fourth ballot for presiding bishop. Mr. Cunniff reported that there were 803 legal ballots cast on the fourth ballot for presiding bishop. He announced that none of the nominees received the 482 votes required for election and presented the results of the fourth ballot.

Yehiel Curry	436
Kevin Strickland	193
Tracie Bartholomew	174

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that there was no election on the fourth ballot and announced that the two nominees receiving the highest number of votes on the fourth ballot would proceed to the fifth ballot for presiding bishop after responding to the prompt approved by the assembly.

Prompt: Please share a scripture story or verse or aspect of Christ Jesus which shapes and sustains you.

Response: Bishop Strickland

Bishop Strickland referenced the twentieth chapter of the Gospel of John, pointing out that the Lord whose resurrection Mary Magdelene proclaimed was a brown-skinned, Palestinian, Jewish man living under Roman occupation who was crucified, but who also performed miracles and incarnated hope, showing that life is stronger than death. He said he sees the face of Christ each time he sees another child of God or partakes of the Eucharist, and each time this church commits to, and boldly proclaims itself to be committed to, diversity, equity, inclusion, and the least of these.

Response: Bishop Curry

Bishop Curry referenced Luke chapter four in which Christ presents himself as the proclaimer of good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed, a story that he reads as Jesus "finding his place." He shared the story of his first encounter with the ELCA through a synod-authorized worshiping community, saying that in that community he and his family found their place, and adding that finding our place in community, in worship, and in this church is the purpose of all those present.

Elections: Fifth Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton led the assembly in thanking the nominees. She provided instructions on the voting process and asked the assembly to cast the fifth ballot for presiding bishop following a hymn and prayer.

Elections: Report of the Fifth Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Mr. Cunniff to provide the report of the fifth ballot for presiding bishop. Mr. Cunniff reported that there were 799 legal ballots cast on the fifth ballot with 400 votes required for election. He presented the results of the fifth ballot for presiding bishop.

Yehiel Curry	562
Kevin Strickland	237

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that there was an election and announced the assembly action resulting from the ballot.

ASSEMBLY ACTION

CA25.03.11 To elect the Rev. Yehiel Curry to a six-year term as presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, commencing on the first day of the third month after election.

Address by the Presiding Bishop-elect

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Presiding Bishop-elect Curry to address the assembly. Presiding Bishop-elect Curry thanked his wife for her key role in his ministry. Referring to his original preparation for ordination through the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) track, he stated that he is what a return on Mission Support investment looks like. He tried various careers, none of which he found satisfying, before he found his place as a leader of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church. ELCA support for that ministry allowed him to find his true calling. He thanked assembly members and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod for their investment in the ministries of this church.

Recess

The assembly recessed at 3:46 p.m. and reconvened at 3:57 p.m.

Following the recess, Presiding Bishop Eaton recognized former ELCA officers in attendance who had not been not present during the first plenary session, including former presiding bishop the Rev. Mark Hanson, former vice president Ms. Kathy Magnus, and former treasurer the Rev. Linda Norman.

Report of the Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section II:3, Report of the Secretary*

Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, began her report by recalling her experience as a campus minister coming to more deeply understand Martin Luther's concept of vocation, and provided an overview of the vocation of the office of secretary in the ELCA, beginning with the description of the office in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. She summarized the responsibilities of the Office of the Secretary and identified the office staff primarily responsible for assisting the secretary in fulfilling each responsibility.

Secretary Rothmeyer thanked congregations that had submitted their annual Congregation Report, provided an overview of demographic trends in the ELCA, and referred voting members

to her written report for additional information. Acknowledging that the Office of the Secretary is often associated with rules and regulations, Secretary Rothmeyer emphasized that it has been her intention as secretary that the office also be known for its cultivation of relationships. She celebrated the relationships she has been blessed to enjoy with the bishops of this church as the only non-bishop member of the Conference of Bishops. She thanked the many members of this church with whom she has worked on committees, boards, task forces, and other bodies, including particularly the Church Council and churchwide officers, as well as colleagues on the Administrative Team and throughout the churchwide organization.

Secretary Rothmeyer led the assembly in thanking synod secretaries for their service and thanked her predecessors in the office, two of whom served as her supervisors prior to her election as secretary. She invited staff colleagues with whom she worked in the Office of the Secretary to the stage, thanking them for living out their vocations in fulfilling their roles in the office. Finally, she thanked the Churchwide Assembly for calling her as secretary and for all the experiences that role had brought her.

Recognition of the Secretary's Service

Presiding Bishop Eaton welcomed to the stage Mr. Imran Siddiqui, vice president of the ELCA, who presented to Secretary Rothmeyer the *Servus Dei* Award in recognition of her more than 30 years of service in the churchwide organization, including six years as secretary of the ELCA. The award was followed by presentation of a gift expressing the thanks of this church and a video retrospective commemorating Secretary Rothmeyer's service. Secretary Rothmeyer thanked assembly members for the opportunity to serve as secretary and for their prayers and support during her time in office.

First Ballot for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary*

Presiding Bishop Eaton announced the first ballot for secretary of the ELCA, an ecclesiastical ballot, calling attention to the duties of the secretary as defined by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. The presiding bishop invited Mr. Irwin to the stage to present the Report of the Credentials Committee. He reported that, as of 4:51 p.m., there were 803 voting members. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to adopting the Report of the Credentials Committee and, there being none, she declared the report adopted.

Following a hymn and prayer, Presiding Bishop Eaton asked the assembly to cast the first ballot for secretary. When the voting was complete, the presiding bishop explained when results would be available and reviewed how persons nominated on the first ballot could withdraw their names from consideration.

Greeting from Federal Chaplains

Presiding Bishop Eaton welcomed to the stage United States Navy Chaplain Christina Mauntel who greeted the assembly on behalf of all ELCA federal chaplains. She thanked the assembly for this church's support in providing a liturgical and sacramental presence to meet the spiritual needs of members serving in the military and their families. Following Chaplain Mauntel's address, Presiding Bishop Eaton led the assembly in recognizing all federal chaplains present.

Announcements

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Secretary Rothmeyer for announcements.

Adjournment

The fifth plenary session of the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned following a hymn and prayer at 5:18 p.m.

Plenary Session Six

Wednesday, July 30, 2025
7:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened Wednesday, July 30, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 7:00 p.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated).

Address: Bishop-elect Imad Haddad, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

Presiding Bishop Eaton provided an overview of the engagement of the ELCA with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and welcomed to the stage the Rev. Imad Haddad, bishop-elect of the ELCJHL.

Bishop-elect Haddad stated that the ELCJHL is not large, as Christians are a small minority in Palestine and Israel, but he emphasized that there have been Palestinian Christians since the time of the disciples, and the ELCJHL carries on this tradition with a mission supporting education, gender justice, and medical services in Palestine. He provided an overview of the suffering and injustice faced by Palestinians under Israeli occupation, including recent efforts to remove Palestinians from the region. Nevertheless, he stated, faith in God has upheld the community despite facing oppression, violence, and death under occupation. The persistent violence threatens the extinction of Christianity in Palestine, he warned, detailing Israeli attacks against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, yet Palestinian Christians continue *sumud*—steadfastness, endurance, resilience, and abiding that enables people to resist injustice not with violence, but with life, to resist by existing. *Sumud* is lived through the spiritual life, education, and service to those oppressed by an apartheid system.

Bishop-elect Haddad thanked this church for its prayers and support, but emphasized that more needs to be done to defend Christianity in Palestine by speaking clearly in defense of justice along with other Christian, Jewish, and Muslim voices in the Holy Land and around the world. He encouraged assembly members to listen to and amplify Palestinian voices calling for peace and to advocate for the right of Palestinians to live in the Holy Land free of oppression.

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited the Rev. Susan Johnson, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), to join her as they presented a gift to thank Bishop-elect Haddad for his presence, and they reiterated the commitment of the ELCIC and ELCA to continue to accompany Palestinian Christians.

Address: National Bishop Susan Johnson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced National Bishop Johnson, emphasizing the close relationship between this church and the ELCIC. National Bishop Johnson brought greetings from the ELCIC, noting current political challenges in the relationship between the United States and Canada, but emphasizing that this has not changed the commitment to accompaniment between the two churches. She expressed appreciation for the close personal relationship between herself and Presiding Bishop Eaton. She provided an overview of difficulties facing the ELCIC and detailed steps being taken to reform the ELCIC to ensure its continuation.

Presiding Bishop Eaton expressed her personal thanks and the thanks of this church to National Bishop Johnson for her faithful friendship, and presented the national bishop with a gift in commemoration of that relationship.

Consideration of 2026–2028 Budget

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:6, 2026–2028 Budget Proposal*

Presiding Bishop Eaton welcomed Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration, and Ms. Cherrish Holland, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council, to the stage. On behalf of the Church Council, Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, introduced a motion to approve the 2026–2028 ELCA churchwide organization budget proposal. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***YES-774; NO-10***

CA25.03.12 ***To approve the 2026–2028 budget proposals:***

<u>2026 Budget Proposal</u>

To approve a 2026 current fund spending authorization of $61,500,000;

To approve a 2026 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of $21,550,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to revise the spending authorizations after periodic review of revised income estimates.

<u>2027 Budget Proposal</u>

To approve a 2027 current fund income proposal of $56,915,000;

To approve a 2027 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of $21,300,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

<u>2028 Budget Proposal</u>

To approve a 2028 current fund income proposal of $56,320,000;

To approve a 2028 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of $21,050,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

The presiding bishop declared that the budget was approved.

Report of the Memorials Committee *(cont.)*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee and Supplemental Report of the Memorials Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited the Rev. Emily C. Hartner and Mr. Noah F. Roux, co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, to return to the stage to continue the report of the Memorials Committee. The co-chairs resumed the report with consideration of the memorials in Category

D4: Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation for Palestine. Debate on the pending motion resumed.

Moved;

Seconded: To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine" from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, while maintaining the right and sovereignty of the State of Israel to exist, and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

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, sewage 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;

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to

pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative "Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel," and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

A voting member spoke in support of the motion, and another voting member called the question; voting members spoke for and against the motion to end debate.

Moved; ***Two-thirds Vote Required***
Seconded; ***Yes-435; No-339***
Defeated: To end debate.

Debate on the main motion continued. The Rev. John Barton [Oregon Synod] introduced a motion to amend.

Moved;
Seconded: ***To amend by insertion:***

To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine" from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, while maintaining the right and sovereignty of the State of Israel to exist, and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To recognize the rights of the State of Israel and a sovereign State of Palestine to exist side by side, as per the ELCA's historic stated position, and per existing UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 2334;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and

the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

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, sewage 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;

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative "Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel," and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

Voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion to amend.

Moved;
Seconded; ***Yes-579; No-198***
Carried: ***To amend by insertion:***

To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine" from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, while maintaining the right and sovereignty of the State of Israel to exist, and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To recognize the rights of the State of Israel and a sovereign State of Palestine to exist side by side, as per the ELCA's historic stated position, and per existing UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 2334;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

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, sewage 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;**

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative "Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel," and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

Four voting members spoke in support of the motion as amended. When no voting members rose to speak in opposition, in accord with the rules of the assembly, the presiding bishop called for the vote, following prayer.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***YES-742; NO-38***

CA25.03.13 **To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine" from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;**

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, while maintaining the right and sovereignty of the State of Israel to exist, and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To recognize the rights of the State of Israel and a sovereign State of Palestine to exist side by side, as per the ELCA's historic stated position, and per existing UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 2334;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral

urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

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, sewage 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;**

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own

people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative "Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel," and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion had passed.

Elections: Report of the First Ballot for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

The presiding bishop invited Ms. Jennifer E. Trom, co-chair of the Elections Committee, to the stage to present the report of the first ballot for secretary. Ms. Trom reported that, of 646 ballots cast, 640 were legal ballots. She announced that 480 votes were necessary for election and presented the results of the first ballot for secretary.

Matthew Riegel	61	Robert Flynn	2	Peter Everton	1
Kevin Anderson	57	Richard Gates	2	Kerry Fearan	1
Lamont Wells	56	Erik Gronberg	2	Lori Fedyk	1
David Lenz	48	Keith Jones	2	Lisa Geiger	1
Daniel Kirschbaum	47	Laurie Jungling	2	Bill Gohl	1
Paul Erickson	45	Marie Leafblad	2	Brandon Graves	1
Josh Tatum	26	Kenneth Melber	2	Julie Grindle	1
Tracie Bartholomew	23	Lucille Mills	2	Paul Irwin	1
Peter Severson	22	Hierald Osoto	2	Louise Johnson	1
Tyler Rasmussen	21	Karl Richard	2	Tammy Jones West	1
Peter Asplin	19	Sue Rothmeyer	2	David Kenzie	1
Kevin Strickland	18	Michael Schmidt	2	Amy Kippen	1
Rob Rose	17	MaryAnn Schwabe	2	Kurt Kusserow	1
Regina Hassanally	11	Manda Truchinski	2	Jen Lau	1
Julie Monnard	9	Christopher Vergara	2	David Lento	1
Chelle Huth	8	Leslie Weber	2	Daniel Lenz	1
Rachel Line	8	John Weit	2	Dawn Lindberg	1
Jodi Slattery	7	Sara Anderson	1	Keats Miles-Wallace	1
Jonathon Vehar	6	Joel Benson	1	Darcy Mittelstaedt	1
Erin Clausen	5	Hardt Bergman	1	Yvette Newberry White	1
Tom Cunniff	5	Molly Berry	1	Keoni Newman	1
Adam DeHoek	5	Felicia Boone	1	Linda Norman	1
Roberto Lara Aranda	5	Carla Christopher Wilson	1	Alexander Ohman	1
Keith Fry	4	Debbie Clark	1	Matt Olsen	1
Blake Scalet	4	Lawrence Clark	1	Leila Ortíz	1
Emma Chaffe	3	Annemarie Cook	1	Tim Oslovich	1
Amy Current	3	Khala Currly	1	Cassie Overcash	1
Kelly Bayer Derrick	2	Yvonne Curtis	1	Mark Parker	1
Wyvetta Bullock	2	Paul Daniels	1	Jeff Pennington	1
Dan Eppley	2	Gwendolynn Edwards	1	Jennifer Place	1

Matthew Regal	1	Timothy Siburg	1	Chimezie Ukaonu	1
Robert Rivera	1	Lisa Solak	1	Rozella White	1
William Schaefer	1	Cheryl Stuart	1	Martha Whyte	1
Jodi Schuman	1	Aura Suárez	1	Andrea Young	1
Craig Schweitzer	1	Kaleb Sutherland	1		

Ms. Trom announced that members of the Elections Committee named on the first ballot would withdraw their names from the election. Presiding Bishop Eaton announced that there was no election for secretary on the first ballot and reviewed the process and deadline by which persons nominated could have their names removed from the second ballot.

Announcements

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Secretary Rothmeyer for announcements.

Adjournment

The sixth plenary session of the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned at 8:42 p.m., following a sung prayer.

Plenary Session Seven

Thursday, July 31, 2025
10:30 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened Thursday, July 31, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. Mr. Imran Siddiqui, vice president of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 10:30 a.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated).

Report: Presiding Bishop and Churchwide Organization

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section II:1, Report of the Presiding Bishop*

Vice President Siddiqui invited the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, to address the assembly. Presiding Bishop Eaton began by reviewing the four emphases with which she began her tenure as presiding bishop: We are church; we are Lutheran; we are church together; and we are church for the sake of the world. The presiding bishop stressed that Lutherans have a unique witness that we are responsible for bringing to the Church and the world, and she challenged voting members to witness in their communities and contexts in accord with Martin Luther's notion of the "priesthood of all the baptized."

Presiding Bishop Eaton addressed the threat of Christian Nationalism, noting that separation of Church and State does not preclude political engagement on the part of people of faith. She stressed that one need not be a white American to be Christian, reminding assembly members that the "average" Lutheran in the world today is a woman living in sub-Saharan Africa. The presiding bishop reflected on the proposed social statement, "Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All," and its important witness to the responsibilities of Christians and of government.

Presiding Bishop Eaton presented an overview of the *filioque* controversy in the early Church and introduced the "Common Statement on the *Filioque*," to be voted on later in the assembly. She celebrated the fact that this church has been able to reach agreement with the Orthodox Church regarding this issue that has been church-dividing for one thousand years. If the Holy Spirit has been able to accomplish this, she asked, how much more can the Spirit do to heal the smaller disagreements that divide Christians? The presiding bishop lifted up the God's Love Made Real initiative, emphasizing that the initiative supports "the church that is" (existing congregations), as well as "the church that is becoming" (new and emerging forms of Christian ministry and community to engage people who are not likely to become members of traditional congregations).

She celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of ELCA World Hunger as well as the work of Lutheran Disaster Response and the generosity of members of this church that make the work of these organizations possible. The presiding bishop also provided an overview of initiatives focused on racial justice in this church.

Emphasizing the challenges that face bishops and presiding bishops, she called on members of this church to be in prayer for the Rev. Yehiel Curry, presiding bishop-elect of the ELCA. She expressed appreciation for the grace shown her during her time as presiding bishop and encouraged members to extend the same grace to the presiding bishop-elect. She expressed deep appreciation for the work of churchwide organization staff, particularly staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

Presiding Bishop Eaton stated that the essential purpose of the Church and of this church is to proclaim the gospel in Word and Sacrament. All other things this church does derive from and

are empowered by that proclamation, as emphasized by Martin Luther in *On the Freedom of a Christian*. Noting that there are many justice-loving, compassionate atheists, the presiding bishop asked what makes this organization different, highlighting the focus on Christ and the gospel as the essential nature of this church. She celebrated the deep-rootedness of this church in the historical Christian creeds as a basis for unity across time and around the world, and concluded by reminding assembly members that, as Luther taught, this life is intended by God as a setting for growth in righteousness.

Recognition of the Presiding Bishop's Service

Vice President Siddiqui invited Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, to the stage to join him in presenting the *Servus Dei* Award to Presiding Bishop Eaton in recognition of 12 years of service as presiding bishop of the ELCA. Presentation of the award was preceded by a video retrospective commemorating Presiding Bishop Eaton's service and followed by presentation of a gift expressing the thanks of this church. Presiding Bishop Eaton thanked assembly members for the opportunity to serve as presiding bishop and her family members for their support during her time in office.

Following the presentation, Vice President Siddiqui returned the chair to Presiding Bishop Eaton.

Consideration: *En Bloc* Amendments to the *Restated Articles of Incorporation of the ELCA* and the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:4, Recommendation: Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Constitutions of the ELCA*

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced the *en bloc* action to approve amendments to the governing documents of this church, noting that voting members had removed the following proposed amendments from the *en bloc* action for separate consideration:

- Constitutional provision 5.01.e.
- A portion of bylaw 12.41.11.e.3.
- Constitutional provision 22.11.b.

On behalf of the Church Council, Secretary Rothmeyer introduced a motion to adopt *en bloc* amendments to the governing documents of this church.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED YES-753; NO-16***

CA25.04.14 **To adopt, *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, certain amendments recommended by the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church to the Articles of Incorporation and *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, and other amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and**

To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make appropriate changes in the *Constitution for Synods* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations* congruent with the ELCA Constitution as amended.

RESTATED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®

ARTICLE VII

The voting members of the Church Council shall consist of the four churchwide officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and at least ~~33~~ 32 and not more than 45 other persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly.

ARTICLE IX

For purposes of the laws of the State of Minnesota, only the Church's Constitution shall be treated as the bylaws of this corporation, and none of this corporation's governing documents other than these Articles of Incorporation and the Church's Constitution need be subject to the procedures specified by law or otherwise for the amendment of articles of incorporation or bylaws. The power to adopt, amend, or repeal the bylaws is vested in the Churchwide Assembly as set forth in the Church's Constitution.

CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®

Chapter 1.
NAME, INCORPORATION, SEAL, AND LOCATION

1.11.01. The seal of the churchwide organization is a black globe comprising four stylized quadrants with a cross in the center. The words "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" encircle the globe ~~cross with three united flames emanating from the base of the cross and three entwined circles beside the cross. The year of the constituting convention of this church is included at the base of the cross. The name of this church forms the circular outer edge of the seal~~.

Chapter 6.
MEMBERSHIP

6.03. **The synods of this church and the churchwide organization have no individual members except for those congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community members who serve as voting members of the synod corporations and churchwide corporation.**

6.04. **The voting members of the synods and churchwide organization shall be those congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community members serving as members of the synod assemblies and the Churchwide Assembly respectively.**

Membership in a congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community does not, in and of itself, confer voting rights in these corporations.

Chapter 7. MINISTRY

7.31.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

. . . .

8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

7.31.03. Preparation and Approval. Except as provided in 7.31.04., a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament shall have:

a. either

1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its ~~pastor and~~ congregation council and the pastoral leadership of the congregation, of the candidate with the candidacy committee; or

2) active participation in a Word and Sacrament ministry of this church and registration, by its governing body and the pastoral leadership of the ministry, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;

. . . .

c. completed the academic and practical preparation according to the criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; ~~satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological school in North America or completed a program of study for those accepted into the TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries), including practical preparation, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, such as internship and supervised clinical work;~~

~~d. completed the expectations and outcomes established for Lutheran learning and formation in a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, except when waived by the appropriate committee in consultation with the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;~~

~~e. been recommended for approval by the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or have received the waiver described in **7.31.03.d.**;~~

~~f~~d. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, ~~after consultation with~~ reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;

~~g~~e. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the

procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and

~~h~~f. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

7.31.04. **Approval ~~under Other Circumstances~~ when Ordained in Another Church Body.** Candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament who ~~by reason of~~ (a) ~~age and prior experience, (b) ordination~~ have been ordained in another Lutheran church body~~,~~ or (~~c~~b) ~~ordination~~ have been ordained in another Christian church body, whether in North America or abroad, shall be approved by the candidacy committee for ordination or reception according to criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In preparing such criteria, policies, and procedures, the appropriate churchwide unit shall consult with the seminaries of this church and, as appropriate, with other churchwide units

7.31.06. **Reinstatement.** A person seeking reinstatement as a minister of Word and Sacrament, whether having served previously in this church or in one of its predecessor bodies, shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a minister of Word and Sacrament in this church

7.31.07. **On Leave ~~from Call~~.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call and who requests a temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church~~, upon endorsement by the synod bishop,~~ by action of the Synod Council of the synod on whose roster the minister is listed ~~in the synod of which the minister of Word and Sacrament is a member~~, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such leave shall be reviewed annually and may be terminated by the Synod Council if it no longer meets the criteria under which it was granted.

a. Regular Leave ~~Normative Pattern~~: ~~By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, a~~ A minister of Word and Sacrament who is without a current letter of call and who has requested temporary leave from active ministry may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of ~~three~~ six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.

b. Study Leave: ~~By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synod bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit, a~~ A minister of Word and Sacrament engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word

and Sacrament, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.

c. Family Leave: A minister of Word and Sacrament ~~may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, such a minister of Word and Sacrament who is without a current letter of call and~~ who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the minister of Word and Sacrament or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church ~~—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council~~ for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.

d. ~~Exception~~ Extensions ~~to~~ of these time limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.

e. Ministers who have been granted on-leave status are expected to maintain membership in a congregation of this church. If a minister of Word and Sacrament who has been granted on-leave status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Sacrament to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.31.10. Synod-authorized Ministry. While it is preferable in most circumstances that Word and Sacrament ministry be provided by a minister of Word and Sacrament, when need exists, ~~When need exists to render Word and Sacrament ministry for a congregation or ministry of this church where it is not feasible to provide rostered ministers of Word and Sacrament,~~ the synod bishop—acting with the consent of the congregation or ministry, in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with standards and qualifications developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and ~~approved~~ adopted by the Church Council—may authorize a person who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer ~~this~~ Word and Sacrament ministry as a synod-authorized minister. Such an individual shall be supervised by a minister of Word and Sacrament appointed by the synod bishop; such service shall be rendered during its duration under the ~~sacramental~~ authority of the bishop ~~as the synod's pastor~~. Such an individual will be trained to fulfill this ministry for a specified period of time and in a given location only. Authorization, ~~remuneration,~~ direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the appropriate synod leadership according to churchwide standards and qualifications for this type of ministry. Authorization for such service shall be reviewed annually and renewed only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation.

7.31.12. No person who belongs to or takes actions in concert with a hate group shall be called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins, is discovered to be a member of, or takes actions in concert with a hate group.

7.41. Letters of Call. Letters of call to ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and ~~approved~~ adopted by the Church Council.

7.41.01. Service under Call. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a Synod Council, a Synod Assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.44.A24.

b. A pastor serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, a pastor shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.

~~c. Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in interim ministry appointed by the synod bishop may serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop.~~

7.41.02. Initial Call to Congregational Service. Because the responsibilities of the office of the ministry of Word and Sacrament are most clearly focused in the congregational pastorate, experience in which is deemed by this church to be invaluable for all other ministry of Word and Sacrament, initial service of at least three years shall be in a congregation of this church or, with the approval of the synod bishop, a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists. Exceptions to the three-year requirement may be granted under criteria and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

7.41.03. Calls to Interim Ministry. Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in interim ministry shall normally serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop. Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have retired status may be appointed by the synod bishop without a letter of call.

7.41.04. Calls to Supply Ministry. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, and upon recommendation of the synod bishop, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Sacrament for supply ministry. The minister of Word and Sacrament shall include a description of this ministry in the annual report to the synod bishop. A call to supply ministry is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it no longer fulfills the criteria under which it was issued.

7.41.~~03~~05. Calls to Non-Congregational Service. . . .

7.41.~~04~~06. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Sacrament for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. Care is to be exercised so that positions in the church and in the world that can be filled adequately and appropriately by the laity not be filled by ministers of Word and Sacrament for their convenience, status, or personal preference. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

7.41.~~05~~07. Calls to Serve in Unusual Circumstances. When it is deemed to be in the interests of this church in the care of the Gospel, ministers of Word and Sacrament may be called for a stated period of time, not to exceed three years, to minister on behalf of this church while employed in an occupation outside the traditional range of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such calls may be extended by a Synod Council or the Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops according to criteria and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. A call to serve in unusual circumstances is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council or Church Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

7.41.~~06~~08. Calls in Predecessor Church Bodies. . . .

7.41.~~07~~09. Retirement. . . .

7.41.~~08~~10. Disability. . . .

7.41.~~09~~11. Retention of Roster Records. . . .

7.42. Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be related to that synod:

. . . .

d. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary leader in consultation with the board, subject to approval by the synod bishop ~~and~~ in consultation with the Synod Council of each affected synod~~,~~. This roster assignment ~~to~~ should

promote proportionate representation of faculty and administration in ~~each~~ the synods of its region;

7.61.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

. . . .

c. speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

7.61.03. Preparation and Approval. Except as provided in 7.61.04., a candidate who is to be called and received onto the roster as a minister of Word and Service shall have:

a. either

1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its ~~pastor and~~ congregation council and the pastoral leadership of the congregation, of the candidate with the candidacy committee; or

2) active participation in a Word and Sacrament ministry of this church and registration, by its governing body and the pastoral leadership of the ministry, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;

. . . .

c. completed the academic and practical preparation according to criteria and procedures ~~established~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, ~~after consultation with~~ reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;

d. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, ~~after consultation with~~ reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;

e. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod in which the candidate is being considered for first call in accordance with the procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and

f. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

~~**7.61.04. Approval under Other Circumstances.** A candidate may, for reasons of age or prior experience, be granted approval under criteria and procedures which permit certain equivalencies as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.~~

7.61.~~05~~04. No person who belongs to any organization such as a lodge . . . .

7.61.~~06~~05. Roster status in more than one church body is precluded . . . .

7.61.~~07~~06. Reinstatement. A person seeking reinstatement as a minister of Word and Service shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate

churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a minister of Word and Service in this church.

7.61.~~0~~807. On Leave ~~from Call.~~ A minister of Word and Service of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call and who requests a temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church~~, upon endorsement by the synod bishop,~~ by action of the Synod Council of the synod on whose roster the minister is listed ~~in the synod of which the minister of Word and Service is a member~~, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such leave shall be reviewed annually and may be terminated by the Synod Council if it no longer meets the criteria under which it was granted.

a. ~~Normative Pattern~~ Regular Leave: ~~By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, a~~ A minister of Word and Service who is without a current letter of call and who has requested temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of ~~three~~ six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.

b. Study Leave: ~~By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synod bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit a~~ A minister of Word and Service engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Service in this church, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.

c. Family Leave: A minister of Word and Service ~~may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, such a minister of Word and Service who is without a current letter of call and~~ who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the minister of Word and Service or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church~~—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council~~ for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.

d. ~~Exception to~~ Extensions of these time limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.

e. If a minister of Word and Service who has been granted on-leave status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Service to hold membership in a

congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.61.08. **Invitation to Service.** In accord with bylaw 8.63.01. and following, a minister of Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and with which this church has agreed regarding the exchangeability of ministers of Word and Service, may serve contractually in a ministry setting of this church under a "Letter of Invitation to Extended Service" upon the authorization of the bishop of the synod in which such service occurs.

7.61.09. No person who belongs to or takes actions in concert with a hate group shall be called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins, is discovered to be a member of, or takes actions in concert with a hate group.

7.71. **Letters of Call. Letters of call to ministers of Word and Service of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Service shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and ~~approved~~ adopted by the Church Council.**

7.71.01. **Service under Call.** A minister of Word and Service of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a synod council, a synod assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.74.A21.

7.71.02. **Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call.** When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Service for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

Chapter 8.
RELATIONSHIPS

8.20. RELATIONSHIP WITH INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND MINISTRIES ~~AGENCIES~~

8.21.07. The seminaries shall receive churchwide and synod financial support. The amount of such support shall be determined through a consultation process involving seminaries, synods, and the appropriate churchwide unit. To implement financial support by this church, synods shall be assigned to specific seminaries in such manner as to attain equitable distribution of synods. Normally, all synods in a given region will be assigned to one seminary. Churchwide funds shall be distributed according to a formula developed by the appropriate churchwide unit and ~~approved~~ adopted by the Church Council. Seminaries shall provide for their remaining financial requirements through tuition, fees, endowment income, and fundraising programs. Fundraising in the congregations of supporting synods, however, shall be conducted only upon approval of the synods.

8.23. Institutions, Organizations, and Ministries ~~Agencies~~. This church shall seek to meet human needs through encouragement of its people to individual and corporate action, and through establishing, developing, recognizing, and supporting institutions, organizations, and ministries ~~agencies~~ that minister to people in their spiritual and temporal needs.

8.23.01. Related institutions, ~~Social ministry~~ organizations, and ministries may affiliate with this church through criteria and policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit ~~and through membership in Lutheran Services in America~~.

8.41. This church may establish relationships with independent Lutheran organizations, institutions, or agencies whose purposes are compatible with its mission and ministry. Policies and procedures to create and implement these relationships shall be adopted by the Church Council.

8.62. Policies and procedures to implement church-to-church relationships of full communion established by action of a Churchwide Assembly may be ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate officer or churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

8.63. The provisions governing ecumenical availability and service of ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service shall be set forth in the bylaws.

8.63.02. A minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be authorized by the synod bishop to serve in a congregation or employing entity of this church. For ministers of Word and Service, such service is only permissible if their church body has reached agreement with this church on the exchangeability of ministers of Word and Service. Such service shall be rendered under a contract between the congregation or employing entity and the minister ~~of Word and Sacrament~~ in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by the congregation or employing entity. Any such service shall be in accord with churchwide policies developed at the direction of the presiding bishop and secretary, reviewed by the Conference of

Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

8.63.03. Whenever a rostered minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to serve or is serving in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly, or whenever a minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been so declared and established is to serve or is serving in this church, a full sharing of relevant information concerning such rostered minister's experience and fitness for ministry is expected between the synod bishop (or other appropriate office or entity) of this church and the appropriate person, office, or entity in the other church. Relevant information related to fitness for ministry shall include, but is not limited to, any information concerning disciplinary proceedings or allegations that could result, or could have resulted, in disciplinary proceedings.

8.63.04. A minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be granted the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation or ministry setting of this church, in accord with bylaw 8.63.02.

8.63.05. The availability of a minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to serve in this church pursuant to bylaw 8.63.02. shall be understood normally in three categories: availability to serve in an occasional situation; availability to meet an extended need, including service in "yoked parish" settings; and availability for a transfer of roster status.

a. *Occasional service for ministers of Word and Sacrament:* An occasional situation is defined as one in which a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in a congregation of this church on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synod bishop.

b. *Extended service for ministers of Word and Sacrament:* A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be invited to serve as the pastor of a congregation of this church for an extended period of time, yet remain a minister of Word and Sacrament of the minister's present church body. Such a person would be expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in a congregation of this church in a manner that is consistent with the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to live in a manner consistent with the ministerial policy of this church. Such service shall be rendered only as authorized by the synod bishop in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of this church in a given situation.

c. *Transfer for ministers of Word and Sacrament:* A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists who seeks to serve indefinitely within the ministry of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may apply for admission to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and be approved through the candidacy process for admission to the roster. Such a

minister would then become a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church upon receipt and acceptance of a regular call and installation in a congregation or other setting in this church, at which point the minister would no longer be serving under the exchangeability provisions of full communion.

d. *Occasional service for ministers of Word and Service:* An occasional situation is defined as one in which a minister of Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists and with which agreement has been reached on the exchangeability of ministers of Word and Service may be asked to serve in a congregation or ministry setting of this church on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synod bishop.

e. *Extended service for ministers of Word and Service:* A minister of Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists and with which agreement has been reached on the exchangeability of ministers of Word and Service may be invited to serve as a deacon of a congregation or ministry setting of this church for an extended period of time, yet remain a minister of Word and Service of the minister's present church body. Such a person would be expected to serve in a congregation or ministry setting of this church in a manner that is consistent with the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to live in a manner consistent with the ministerial policy of this church. Such service shall be rendered only as authorized by the synod bishop in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of this church in a given situation.

f. *Transfer for ministers of Word and Service*: A minister of Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists who seeks to serve indefinitely within the ministry of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may apply for admission to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and be approved through the candidacy process for admission to the roster. Such a minister would then become a minister of Word and Service of this church upon receipt and acceptance of a regular call and installation in a congregation or other setting in this church, at which point the minister would no longer be serving under the exchangeability provisions of full communion.

8.63.06. Rostered ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, while serving in an ecumenical setting, remain subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists is understood by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the church body in which the minister is rostered or holds ministerial membership. Such a minister, while serving in a congregation or other ministry of this church, is expected to abide by the standards and policies of this church related to ministers ~~of Word and Sacrament~~.

8.63.07. When a minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America completes a contract for extended service, the synod file on that minister shall be sent to and retained by the Office of the Secretary.

Chapter 9.
CONGREGATIONS

9.21.01. Approval of the synod bishop, as required in 9.21.d., involves the bishop's attesting that a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church has been approved, in conformity with the governing documents and policies of this church, through the synod candidacy process for first call as a seminary graduate or for call in this church through approval for reception into this church from another Lutheran church body or another Christian church body. Consultation with the synod bishop in accordance with the call procedures and governing documents of this church and the synod is required for the calling of pastoral leadership from among:

a. persons on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or

b. persons who are candidates for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have been recommended for a congregation by the synod bishop ~~persons on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or persons who are approved as eligible candidates for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church~~.

9.26. Recognition and reception of additional congregations into this church is based upon the judgment of the synod that the congregations satisfy the criteria in 9.21. and 9.25. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations. ~~of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~

a. Recognition and reception of congregations newly formed by this church is accomplished by action of the Synod Council.

b. Recognition and reception of transferring or independent congregations is accomplished ~~based on the judgment of the synod and action~~ by the ~~synod through~~ action of ~~the Synod Council and~~ the Synod Assembly upon the recommendation of the Synod Council~~. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.~~

1)~~a.~~ If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.

2)~~b.~~ The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

9.53.03. Each congregation shall provide a copy of its governing documents to the synod. If a congregation wishes to amend any portion of its governing documents, 9.52. and the following provisions shall apply:

a. The congregation shall follow the process for amending its governing documents set forth in its governing documents;

b. The congregation shall submit ~~A~~all proposed changes ~~in the~~ to its governing documents, including changes to its constitution, bylaws, and continuing

resolutions, ~~constitution or incorporation documents of a congregation shall be referred~~ to the synod with which the congregation is affiliated for review.;

c. The synod shall ~~notify the congregation of its decision to~~ approve or disapprove ~~the~~ proposed changes to the congregation's constitution which do not conform to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* and notify the congregation of its decisions; such ~~the~~ changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.; and

d. The synod shall recognize that congregations may organize themselves in a manner which they deem most appropriate, consistent with this chapter.

Chapter 10.
SYNODS

10.01. **The territory of this church shall be divided into geographic synods, except the Slovak Zion Synod, the names and boundaries of which shall be determined by the Churchwide Assembly ~~and~~ except as provided in the bylaws. The names and boundaries of the synods shall be included in the bylaws.**

10.01.01. **Names and Boundaries.** The names and boundaries of the synods shall be:

. . . .

Synod 3.A—Western North Dakota. The counties of Adams, Billings, Bottineau, Bowman, Burke, Burleigh, Divide, Dunn, Emmons, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, Kidder, Logan, McHenry, McIntosh, McKenzie, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Mountrail, Oliver, Pierce, Renville, Sheridan, Sioux, Slope, Stark, Ward, Wells, Williams in the state of NORTH DAKOTA; the congregation Leeds Evangelical, Benson County in the state of NORTH DAKOTA; the congregation Lemmon, Perkins County, and the congregation Ralph, Harding County in the state of SOUTH DAKOTA; the congregation Trinity, Wibaux County, and the congregation Immanuel, Sheridan County, in the state of MONTANA.

10.01.03. Any congregation in a border area desiring to change its synod relationship may do so upon approval of the synod assemblies of the synods concerned.~~,~~ The synods concerned shall notify the secretary of this church of any change. Such change shall be introduced into this constitution by the secretary and ~~which~~ shall be reported ~~any such change~~ to the Churchwide Assembly through the Office of the Secretary.

10.01.04. Within the territory of each geographic synod, the synod—in keeping with criteria, policies, and procedures proposed by the secretary of this church, after consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or units, and approved by the Church Council—may acknowledge certain authorized worshiping communities and authorized outreach ministries ~~such as developing ministries, preaching points, or chapels~~ as related to the synod and part of the synod's life and mission. Such worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod, ~~authorized worshiping communities of the synod~~ shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

10.12. **Each synod shall have a constitution, which shall become effective upon ratification by the Church Council. Each synod constitution shall include all mandatory provisions of the *Constitution for Synods*. ~~Amendments~~ Each synod may amend its constitution in accordance with the required provisions in Chapter 18 of the**

Constitution for Synods. ~~thereto~~ **Such amendments shall be subject to like ratification, provided, however, that an amendment which is identical to a provision of the** *Constitution for Synods* **shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption and the Church Council shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.**

10.13. ~~**The** *Constitution for Synods* **contains mandatory provisions that incorporate and record therein provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church.**~~ **A** *Constitution for Synods* **shall be provided by this church.** ~~**Amendments shall be made in accordance with the required provisions in Chapter 18 of the** *Constitution for Synods*.~~ **Amendments to the** *Constitution for Synods* **shall be made in the same manner as prescribed in Chapter 22 for amendments of the bylaws of this church. No**~~**n mandatory**~~ **provision**~~**s**~~ **of the** *Constitution for Synods* ~~**shall not**~~ **may be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.**

10.21.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical and global companions, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

. . . .

b. fostering organizations for ~~youth, women, and men,~~ persons of all ages and gender identities and organizations for language or ethnic communities;

10.31.07. Each officer shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of the synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of the synod at the time of election.

10.41. **Each synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall meet at least triennially. Special meetings may be called as needed. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of synods other than their synod of residence, each member of the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council, a board, committee, or other organizational unit of the synod shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of the synod.**

10.41.04. Synods may establish processes that permit representatives of worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod ~~synod-authorized worshiping communities~~, under bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

10.52. **The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of the synod and~~,~~ 10 to 24 other members, at least one young adult~~,~~ and with a goal of at least one youth, all elected by the Synod Assembly. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of the synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of the synod who reside outside the territory of the synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise specified herein shall be determined by each synod. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America from the synod, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod**

Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.

Chapter 12.
CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.31.01. The time and place of the Churchwide Assembly shall be determined by the Church Council. The date, time, and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced at the preceding assembly.

12.31.02. The secretary shall give notice of the date, time, and place of each regular assembly by publication thereof at least ~~60~~ 30 days in advance on this church's website ~~and in this church's periodical~~. The secretary shall give written notice of a special assembly to the bishop of each synod upon the issuance of a call thereof and shall publish the same on this church's website ~~and in this church's periodical~~ at least 30 days in advance of the special assembly. Notice shall be provided to all voting members or voting members-elect not more than 30 days or less than 10 days in advance of any meeting. Notice may be provided electronically for voting members or voting members-elect who have provided email addresses, unless the voting member or voting member-elect has requested that written notice be mailed.

12.31.03. At least 20 days prior to an assembly the secretary shall prepare and distribute to each congregation and synod-authorized worshiping community, and to the voting members-elect a bulletin of reports. Distribution to congregations and synod-authorized worshiping communities may be accomplished by posting the report on the website of this church. Distribution to voting members-elect may be accomplished electronically to those who have provided email addresses. A written copy of the bulletin of reports will be mailed to any voting member-elect who does not provide an email address and to any congregation or voting member-elect who requests a written copy.

12.41.11. In electing voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution, subject to the following requirements:

a. Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in the synod.

b. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations and synod-authorized worshiping communities in the synod.

c. The synod bishop shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and ~~The synod bishop, who is *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall~~ be included in the number of the synod's voting members so determined.

d. Unless otherwise determined by the synod, the synod vice president shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod's voting members.

e. If the synod has elected or identified voting members in accordance with a. through d. of this bylaw, then:

1. The synod may elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election.

2. The synod may elect one additional voting member who is a person of color and/or a person whose primary language is other than English.

~~In addition, each synod shall elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election and one additional voting member who is a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English.~~ The Church Council may allocate up to 10 additional voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect.

12.41.12. The secretary of each synod shall submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly. If a voting member elected by the Synod Assembly is unable to serve~~,~~ or the Synod Assembly fails to elect its full allocation of voting members at least nine months prior to the start of the Churchwide Assembly, the name~~s~~ of ~~an~~ eligible person~~s~~ chosen by the Synod Council shall be submitted by the secretary of the synod to the secretary of this church. If a vacancy occurs or exists within 30 days ~~or less~~ of the convening of the Churchwide Assembly or during the meeting of the Churchwide Assembly, the synod bishop may submit the name of an eligible person to the secretary of this church. The individual whose name is submitted to the secretary of this church shall be registered and seated by the Credentials Committee as a voting member from the synod.

12.41.13. Each voting member of the Churchwide Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church. Any such voting member (except a rostered minister described in 7.42. or 7.72.) shall cease to be a member of the assembly if no longer a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church within the synod from which elected.

Chapter 13.
OFFICERS

13.10. OFFICERS

13.11. The officers shall be the presiding bishop, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Each officer shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church.

Chapter 14.
CHURCH COUNCIL

14.15. The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may remove for cause a voting member of the Church Council, other than ~~an officer~~ the presiding bishop, secretary, vice president, or ~~the~~ chair of the Conference of Bishops, at a duly held regular meeting by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members of the Church Council, provided that at least 30 days written notice shall be given to each voting member of the Church Council that removal of a specific member of the Church Council will be on the agenda for such a meeting. The Church Council may remove an advisory member for cause, provided notice has been given as specified in this provision, by a majority vote of the voting members of the council.

14.32. **With the exception of the officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and youth members, Church Council members shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to one six-year term and shall not be eligible for consecutive re-election. Youth members of the Church Council shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to one three-year term.**

14.32.03. Any Church Council member~~s~~ appointed to fill a vacancy of less than ~~three years~~ half a term in a Church Council position not restricted to a specific synod shall not be deemed to have served a term and ~~are~~ is eligible for election to a full term if ~~they~~ the member otherwise ~~satisfy~~ satisfies the criteria for election.

Chapter 15.
CHURCHWIDE ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICES

15.21. **The churchwide organization shall employ staff according to churchwide policies. Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff there will be a balance of women and men, persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English, members of historically underrepresented groups, laypersons, and persons on the rosters of this church. This balance is to be evident in the selection of staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.**

Chapter 16.
UNITS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

16.11. **A unit of the churchwide organization is assigned leadership responsibility for major, identified portions of the mission and ministry of this church.**

~~**16.11.01.** In conformity with this church's commitment to inclusive practice, churchwide units and offices will assure that staff include a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and rostered ministers.~~

Chapter 17.
SEPARATELY INCORPORATED MINISTRIES

17.11. **Each member of the board of directors of a separately incorporated ministry described in this chapter shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church, unless otherwise specified in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.**

17.50.04. This organization shall have a board of 15 members elected by the assembly of this organization for one three-year term with eligibility for one consecutive re-election. At least 10 percent of the members of this board shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. No more than one elected board member shall be from any one synod. Board members are to serve with the perspective of the interdependence of all units of this church. In the event of a vacancy, the board shall elect a member to serve the balance of the term. The

Conference of Bishops shall select one bishop to serve as an advisory member of the board of this organization with voice but not vote.

Chapter 19.
NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION PROCESS

19.01.02. The presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot ~~for presiding bishop~~ does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons ~~(plus ties)~~ receiving the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be required for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons ~~(plus ties)~~ receiving the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to the two persons ~~(plus ties)~~ receiving the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot, and a majority of the legal votes cast shall elect.

~~**19.01.03.** The vice president shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot for vice president does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot, and 60 percent of the votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall elect.~~

~~**19.01.04.** The secretary shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot for secretary does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot, and 60 percent of the votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots,~~

~~voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall elect.~~

19.03.01 Persons appointed to fill vacancies of less than half of a term may be subsequently elected to full terms provided that they are otherwise eligible for the positions to which they are elected.

19.03.02~~1~~. The terms of office of persons elected to regular terms . . . .

19.04. Each nominee for an elected position in the churchwide organization and each nominee for a position on the board of a separately incorporated ministry elected by the Churchwide Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church, unless otherwise specified in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.

19.04.01. Each voting member of the Church Council, board, or committee of the churchwide organization shall cease to be a member of the Church Council, board, or committee if no longer a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church.

19.05.04. Except for the full-time salaried officers, n~~N~~o employee of the churchwide organization of this church or~~,~~ its regions, or its separately incorporated ministries, nor any individual under contract to any unit of the churchwide organization ~~or,~~ a region, or a separately incorporated ministry shall be eligible for nomination or election to ~~or membership~~ voting or advisory membership on the Church Council, an advisory committee, a board of a separately incorporated ministry, the Committee on Appeals, the Committee on Discipline, the Committee of Hearing Officers, or the churchwide Nominating Committee during the period of employment or service under contract~~, except the full-time salaried officers as specified in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*~~. (For purposes of this provision only, "employee 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. The phrase "under contract" shall not mean short-term contracts for specific, limited purposes, usually not to exceed six months.)

19.05.06. A member of a committee, a board of a separately incorporated ministry, or an at-large member of the Church Council who has served less than half a term is not deemed to have served a regular term and is eligible for election to a full term if the member otherwise satisfies the criteria for election.

Chapter 20.
CONSULTATION, DISCIPLINE, APPEALS, AND ADJUDICATION

20.22.04. When there are indications that a cause for discipline may exist the bishop of the synod may request, and the general counsel of this church shall make available,

resources for investigation into the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct that gives rise to the potential cause for discipline. Such resources may include, but are not limited to, contracting for investigatory expertise in matters of alleged sexual abuse, forensic accounting in matters of alleged fiscal misconduct, or other specialized professional services. The cost of such investigation shall generally be borne one-half by the churchwide organization and one-half by the synod of the bishop requesting such investigation. Procedural details relating to such investigations shall be set forth in the Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings. ~~and~~ ~~b~~Before charges are made, efforts shall be made by the bishop of the synod to resolve the situation by consultation; for assistance in these efforts, the bishop may utilize either a consultation panel or an advisory panel as herein provided:

. . . .

b. When requested by the synod bishop, an advisory panel consisting of five persons (three rostered ministers and two laypersons) appointed by the synod bishop shall assist the synod bishop in efforts to resolve a situation by consultation. Up to two members of the advisory panel appointed by the synod bishop may be members of church bodies with which this church is in a relationship of full communion.

20.51.01. The recall or dismissal of the presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary of this church and the vacating of office may be effected:

. . . .

b. for such ~~physical or mental~~ disability or incapacity as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; or

Chapter 22.
AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

a. The Church Council may propose an amendment, with an official notice to be sent to the synods at least six months prior to the next ~~regular~~ meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. The adoption of such an amendment shall require a two-thirds vote of the members of the next ~~regular~~ meeting of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting.

22.21. Bylaws not in conflict with this constitution may be adopted or amended at any ~~regular~~ meeting of the Churchwide Assembly when presented in writing by the Church Council or by at least 15 members of the assembly. An amendment proposed by at least 15 members of the assembly shall immediately be submitted to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation. An amendment may not be placed before the assembly for action sooner than the day following its presentation to the assembly unless it has been presented in writing by the Church Council and sent with an official notice to the synods at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting shall be necessary for adoption.

CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS

Chapter 1.
NAME AND INCORPORATION

~~‡~~**S1.21.** The seal of this synod is *(describe)*.

Chapter 6.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

†S6.04.02. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be members of historically underrepresented groups, in addition to the 10 percent representation of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English in †S6.04. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

Chapter 7.
SYNOD ASSEMBLY

†S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

. . . .

b. Lay voting members shall be elected by each congregation or its council as follows: A minimum of one lay member elected ~~by~~ from each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected ~~by~~ from each congregation with 175 or more baptized members ~~related to this synod~~, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman~~, shall be voting members~~. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.

†S7.21.02. If a special Synod Assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation ~~through the Congregation Council~~ or its council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next regular Synod Assembly.

†S7.25. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,* each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod.

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit persons currently serving as synod-authorized ministers and/or lay representatives of authorized worshiping communities and/or outreach ministries of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.

Chapter 8.
OFFICERS

†S8.21. The vice president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice president shall be a layperson. The vice president shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The vice president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

†S8.31. The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The secretary shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The secretary may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

†S8.41. The treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

†S8.51. The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be as follows:

. . . .

c. The treasurer of this synod shall be [elected] [appointed] [elected or appointed] to a term of _____ years and may be [re-elected] [reappointed] [re-elected or reappointed]. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.

†S8.52. The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of [*(name of month)*][the *(ordinal number)* month] following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.

†S8.53. Each officer shall be a voting member in a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of this synod at the time of election.

Chapter 9.
NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

~~†~~S9.02. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who received the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot.

Chapter 10.
SYNOD COUNCIL

†S10.01. The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod~~,~~ and 10 to 24 other members, ~~and~~ at least one young adult ~~youth~~ and with a goal of at least one ~~young adult~~ youth, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.

a. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.

S10.05. ~~No e~~Elected members of the Synod Council shall not receive compensation solely for ~~such~~ their service as council members.

S10.06. No person related to a synod staff member shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Synod Council [or the following synod committees:]. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

S10.~~06~~07. If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet . . . .

S10.~~07~~08. The composition of the Synod Council . . . .

S10.~~08~~09. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern . . . .

†S10.~~08~~09.01. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held through electronic means such as the Internet or by telephone, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. ~~electronically or by telephone conference, and~~ To the extent permitted by state law, ~~N~~notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 11.
COMMITTEES
(names of other organizational units)

~~†~~S11.04. ~~The~~ A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop.

†S11.11. This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod.

Chapter 13.
CONGREGATIONS

†S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the roster of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod that is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

. . . .

c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception of additional congregations into this church ~~of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~ is based upon the judgment of the synod that the congregations satisfy the criteria of 9.21. and 9.25. ~~is based on the judgment of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly.~~ The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.

1) Recognition and reception of congregations newly formed by this church is accomplished by action of the Synod Council.
2) Recognition and reception of transferring or independent congregations is accomplished by the action of the Synod Assembly upon the recommendation of the Synod Council.
   a. If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.
   b. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S13.40. **Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities and Outreach Ministries**

S13.41. ~~Authorized worshiping~~ Worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod and acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

Chapter 14.
ROSTERED MINISTERS

†S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

. . . .

8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

†S14.18. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregation shall be as follows:

. . . .

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. In the bishop's sole discretion, the bishop's committee may also present, as may be appropriate, either a report or report summary to the pastor and to the congregation together with the recommendations. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

†S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

. . . .

c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

Chapter 17.
CONSULTATION AND ADJUDICATION

†S17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers ~~of this church~~, congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When a concern relates directly to the synod bishop, the synod vice president will lead the Executive Committee's efforts at resolving the matter. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, applicable procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of a rostered minister ~~of this church~~ shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

Chapter 18.
AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

†S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended any non-required provision of the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.

†S18.13. Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures:

a. Introduced with the support of at least _____ voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

MODEL CONSTITUTION for CONGREGATIONS of the
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®

Chapter 1.
NAME AND INCORPORATION

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws [and continuing resolutions], the congregation of *(insert full legal name)* is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

Chapter 5.
POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

***C5.04.** This congregation or the Congregation Council shall elect from among ~~its~~ the voting members of the congregation laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected ~~by this congregation~~ and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the *(insert name of synod)* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Chapter 7.
PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

***C7.03.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to relate ~~transfer~~ to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this

congregation takes action to ~~transfer~~ relate to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the *(insert name of synod)*.

Chapter 9.
ROSTERED MINISTER

***C9.02.** This congregation may call as a pastor only ~~Only~~:

a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or

b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

~~may be called as a pastor of this congregation.~~

***C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

. . . .

8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

***C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor ~~shall~~ may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

***C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.

***C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

. . . .

c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

Chapter 10.
CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the [senior] pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president[1] of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of ~~[number]~~____ ~~[~~percent~~]~~ of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call

a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

[[1] *If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting*.]

Chapter 15.
DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15–17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary:

a~~)~~. private counsel and admonition by the pastor,
b~~)~~. censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses,
c~~)~~. written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and
d~~)~~. written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod.

If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by ~~paragraphs~~ a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

***C15.11.** When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president [vice president] of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in ~~†S14.18~~*C9.05.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 16.
AMENDMENTS

***C16.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:

a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
b. be ratified ~~without change~~ unchanged at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

Chapter 20.
PARISH AUTHORIZATION
[Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish]*

***C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in ~~†S14.18~~*C9.05.d.~~ of the synod constitution of the synod named in *C6.01.~~ In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.05.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in ~~†S14.43~~*C9.25.d.~~ of the synod constitution of the synod named in *C6.01.~~ In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

The presiding bishop declared that the *en bloc* action was approved.

Consideration of Amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* Removed from *En Bloc*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:4, Recommendation: Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Constitutions of the ELCA; Section IX, Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton referred voting members to Section IX of the *Bulletin of Reports*, the Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee, and invited to the stage the Rev. Gwendolyn S. King and Mr. Mitchell S. McCartney, co-chairs of the Reference and Counsel Committee, to present the report of the committee. The report began with consideration of a motion related to amendment of provision 5.01.e.

Consideration of Motion A:

The Church Council had recommended amendment of provision 5.01.e. because the wording recommended for removal was moved to provision 15.21., where it more logically belongs. Addition of the language to 15.21. was approved *en bloc* by the assembly in the previous action.

5.01. **The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church. This church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this church by congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization shall be carried out under his rule and authority in accordance with the following principles:**

. . . .

e. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the appropriate office or unit of the churchwide organization, through the Church Council, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be persons of color and/or

persons whose primary language is other than English. ~~**Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff there will be a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and persons on the rosters of this church. This balance is to be evident in the selection of staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.**~~

The Rev. Susan S. Salomone [Upstate New York Synod] requested separate consideration of the recommended amendment of 5.01.e. and recommended additional amendment of this provision as well as provisions with similar wording in the *ELCA Constitution*, the *Constitution for Synods*, and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. The proposed amendments were codified as Motion A.

Motion A:

That 5.01.e. be removed from en bloc *for separate consideration by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly. And that in the ELCA Constitution and all model constitutions, wherever the wording, "shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" appears, add, "shall be all person(s) who are/is a member of a historically underrepresented group."*

On behalf of the committee, Pastor King introduced a motion to refer consideration of Motion A to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council for further reflection and clarification.

Moved;

[Seconded]: To refer Motion A, the proposal to amend 5.01.e. in the *ELCA Constitution* and its parallels in the *Constitution for Synods* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council.

Two voting members spoke in opposition to the motion to refer. Mr. McCartney provided additional clarification regarding the motion. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited additional discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***YES-637; NO-141***

CA25.04.15 **To refer Motion A, the proposal to amend 5.01.e. in the *ELCA Constitution* and its parallels in the *Constitution for Synods* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council.**

The chair declared that the motion to refer had passed.

Consideration of Motion B:

In addition to the proposed amendment of 5.01.e., the Church Council had recommended amendment of bylaw 12.41.11.e.3.:

12.41.11. In electing voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution, subject to the following requirements:

. . . .

e. If the synod has elected or identified voting members in accordance with a. through d. of this bylaw, then:
   1. The synod may elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election.
   2. The synod may elect one additional voting member who is a person of color and/or a person whose primary language is other than English.
   3. The synod may elect one additional voting member who is a member of a historically underrepresented group.

The Rev. Pablo J. Quiñones-Berberena [Caribbean Synod] requested separate consideration of the recommended amendment of provision 5.01.e. and bylaw 12.41.11.e.3., recommended additional amendment by insertion of provision 5.01.e., and recommended amendment by insertion of parallel language to bylaw 12.41.11.e.3. The proposed amendments were codified as Motion B.

Motion B:

To amend 5.01.e. and 12.41.11.e.3., both removed from en bloc*. To add "members of historically underrepresented groups as established in 5.01.I24." to constitutional provision 5.01.e. and to add "from groups 2 through 5 as established in 5.01.I24. This additional member may be a person of color and/or a person whose primary language is other than English" to bylaw 12.41.11.e.3.*

On behalf of the committee, Mr. McCartney introduced a motion to refer consideration of Motion B to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council for further reflection and clarification.

Moved;
[Seconded]: To refer Motion B, proposed amendments for both 5.01.e. and 12.41.11.e.3., to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council.

Two voting members spoke in opposition to the motion. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited additional discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY ACTION ***YES-492; NO-279***

CA25.04.16 **To refer Motion B, proposed amendments for both 5.01.e. and 12.41.11.e.3., to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council.**

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motion to refer had passed.

Consideration of Motion C:

The Church Council had recommended adoption of the following amendments initially proposed by the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church.

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

. . . .

b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved

by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly.

The Rev. Matthew L. Riegel, bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod, requested separate consideration of the recommended amendment of provision 22.11.b. and proposed that the final clause, "or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly," be removed. This proposed revision of the amendment was codified as Motion C.

Motion C:

That provision 22.11.b. be removed from en bloc *for separate consideration by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly. And to amend 22.11.b. by striking "or a subsequent two-thirds of the members of the Church Council…[through the end of the paragraph]."*

On behalf of the committee, Pastor King introduced a motion to amend provision 22.11.b. as recommended by the Church Council, declining Motion C.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*

[Seconded]: *To amend provision 22.11.b. as recommended by the Church Council:*

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

. . . .

b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly.

Bishop Riegel proposed an amendment to the recommended amendment to provision 22.11.b.

Moved;

Seconded: *To amend the recommended amendment to provision 22.11.b. by deletion:*

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

. . . .

b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly ~~or a subsequent two-thirds~~

~~vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly~~.

Voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion. Presiding Bishop Eaton called for the orders of the day.

Announcements

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Secretary Rothmeyer for announcements.

Adjournment

The seventh plenary session of the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned at 12:00 p.m., following a hymn and prayer.

Plenary Session Eight

Thursday, July 31, 2025
2:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened Thursday, July 31, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 2:00 p.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated).

Elections: Second Ballot for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary*

The presiding bishop invited Ms. Jennifer E. Trom, co-chair of the Elections Committee, to introduce the second ballot for secretary. Ms. Trom stated that there were 104 names on the first ballot for secretary; of these, 75 names were withdrawn by the deadline, leaving 29 names on the second ballot.

Presiding Bishop Eaton reviewed the voting process and invited Mr. Paul K. Irwin, associate general counsel, to provide the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. Irwin reported that, as of 2:00 p.m., there were 803 eligible voting members present. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to adopting the Report of the Credentials Committee and, there being none, declared the report adopted. The presiding bishop called for the vote following a hymn and prayer.

Greetings: Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations Guests

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section II.1, Report of the Office of the Presiding Bishop*

Presiding Bishop Eaton reviewed the importance of the ecumenical and inter-religious relationships in which this church is engaged and welcomed Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ).

Rabbi Jacobs celebrated the blessing of the unity and depth of relationships shared between this church and the Union for Reformed Judaism. He lamented escalating antisemitism and stressed the importance of speaking clearly to address when legitimate criticism of the State of Israel and Zionism becomes antisemitism. Rabbi Jacobs reviewed expressions of the deep relationship between this church and the URJ. Emphasizing URJ opposition to Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and support for a two-state solution, Rabbi Jacobs stated that true support for Israel includes struggling for dignity and security for Israelis *and* Palestinians.

Rabbi Jacobs lamented the attacks on Jewish civilians by terrorists claiming to support the Palestinian people and expressed concern that the resolution approved by this church in response to Y^SY^2NWl·fă 2y^á{ű|·yŘ ŦŦ2N t l·fŜăűŵYWl·y^wW∃Kúă l·yŘ 9yŘ ű2 hŎŎdzLJl·ű2y^2Ŧ t l·fŜăűŵySɛ will embolden people who do not envision a peaceful future for Palestinians. He shared his disappointment that the resolution did not mention the atrocities perpetrated by Hamas or express empathy for suffering inflicted on Israelis. He concluded by returning to the theme of cooperation, expressing hope that the URJ and this church will continue to work together in support of peace everywhere, especially in the Middle East.

Presiding Bishop Eaton thanked Rabbi Jacobs and welcomed to the podium Mr. Mohammed El Senussi, executive director of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. Mr. El Senussi brought a greeting of peace to the assembly on behalf of the Islamic Society of North America and the American Muslim community. He expressed appreciation to the ELCA for this ŎKdzNŎKΩă f2y∃-standing commitment to cultivating meaningful interfaith relationships and

cooperation, particularly ΰĶλă ŎĶdzℕŎĶΩă leadership in the creation of the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign. Mr. El-Senussi celebrated examples 2ŦΰĶλă ŎĶdzℕŎĶΩă Ŏ2ϒϒλΰϒŜyΰ ΰ2 λyΰŜℕŦIλΰĶ relationships and the impact of these efforts to foster reconciliation and mutual respect among religious communities. He concluded by congratulating the Rev. Yehiel Curry, presiding bishop-elect of the ELCA, and shared his eagerness to continue interfaith work with Bishop Curry as presiding bishop.

Presiding Bishop Eaton expressed joy over the growing reconciliation between Lutherans and Roman Catholics and introduced video greetings sent from Bishop Denis J. Madden, titular bishop of Baia and auxiliary bishop of Baltimore, who serves as co-chair of the United States Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue along with the Rev. Patricia J. Lull, bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod. Bishop Madden expressed regret that he could not join the assembly in person and celebrated progress made toward reconciliation between Lutherans and Catholics. Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced the Rev. Russell K. McDougall of the University of Notre Dame, Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, who was present at the assembly on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church.

Presiding Bishop Eaton then introduced Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, president and general secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ (NCC) in the USA, who was elected as the first female bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 2000. Bishop McKenzie thanked tℕŜăλŘλyƎ .λăK2LJ 9I·ΰ2ϒI·yŘ ΰĶŜ 9[/! Ŧ2ℕ ΰĶλă ŎĶdzℕŎĶΩă ăΰℕ2yƎΣ I·ŎΰΛØŜ fŜI·ŘŜℕăĶλLJ in the NCC. She provided an overview of the work of the NCC to support member churches, particularly in ecumenical relations, as the NCC celebrates its 75th anniversary.

Noting that 2025 marks the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea, Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced the Rev. Nicolas Kazarian, director of the Department of Inter-Orthodox Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Father Kazarian brought greetings on behalf of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. He celebrated ongoing growth in the relationship between the Orthodox Church and this church reflected in the άCommon Statement on the *Filioque*έ to be considered by the assembly, and he ŜÈLJℕŠăâŜŘ ƎℕI·ΰλΰdzŘŜ ΰ2 ΰĶŜ 9[/! Ŧ2ℕ ΰĶλă ŎĶdzℕŎĶΩă Ŏ2ϒϒλΰϒŜyΰ ΰ2 ecological justice.

Presiding Bishop Eaton led the assembly in showing gratitude to the ecumenical and interfaith guests of the assembly for their presence and for the many ways that persons of different faiths and denominations are cooperating to support migrants.

Presiding Bishop Eaton welcomed to the stage guests representing The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), whose presence serves as a reminder that this church is part of a global Lutheran movement. She invited to the podium the Rev. Kristine Sandmæl, chair of the Church of Norway Committee on Ecumenical and International Relations. Pastor Sandmæl brought greetings on behalf of the Church of Norway, highlighting the close relationship between global Lutheran churches and ΰĶŜ ŎĶdzℕŎĶŜăΩ shared challenges, particularly in repairing relationships with indigenous communities and confronting racism.

The presiding bishop introduced the Rev. Anne Burghardt, general secretary of the LWF. Pastor Burghardt ƎℕŜŠΰŜŘ ΰĶŜ I·ăăŜϒōfè 2y ōŜKI·fŦ 2Ŧ ΰĶλă ŎĶdzℕŎĶΩă ăλōfλyƎă λy ΰĶŜ [²C and expressed gratitude for ELCA leadership within the LWF and Ŧ2ℕ ΰĶŜ 9[/!Ωă support of LWF member churches. She celebrated the diversity of global Lutheranism and presented a gift to the presiding bishop and this church as a reminder of the unity LWF member churches share in Christ.

Consideration: Reception of the òCommon Statement on the *Filioque*ó

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:9, Reception of the Common Statement on the* Filioque

Presiding Bishop Eaton provided background information on the *filioque* controversy that was a major factor in the schism between the Eastern and Western churches in 1054. She then provided an overview of the history of dialogues between the LWF and the Orthodox Churches that led ű2 ŰKŜ á/2Y Y2y {ű I·ŰŜY Ŝyű,é and explained what it means to áreceivŜé the statement. On behalf of the Church Council, Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced a motion to receive the á/2Y Y2y {ű I·ŰŜY Ŝyű 2y ŰKŜ *Filioque*Φé ¢KŜ LJNŜăλŘλyƎ ōλăK2LJ λyØλúŜŘ ŘλăǑdzăăλ2y I·yŘΣ ŰKŜNŜ ōŜλyƎ none, called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION *YES-748; NO-15*

CA25.04.17 WHEREAS, 2025 is the 1,700th anniversary of the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea, and a year in which we will celebrate a common date for Easter, which presents a unique opportunity for reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christianity; and

WHEREAS, the end-result of the Council of Nicaea τ later expanded in 381 τ was the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which has served as a common confession of faith for Christians around the world ever since; and

WHEREAS, the addition to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of the *filioque* τ Y ŜI·yλyƎ áI·yŘ ŰKŜ ă2yé τ by the Latin Church in an attempt to resolve a dispute, resulted in the division between the Eastern and Western churches in the year 1054; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, talks between the ELCA and the Standing Conference of /I·y2yλǑI·f hNŰK2Ř2È . λăK2LJă λy ŰKŜ ! Y ŜNλǑI·ă I·NNλØŜŘ I·ú á! [dzŰKŜNJI·y-Orthodox /2Y Y2y {ű I·ŰŜY Ŝyű 2y CI·λŰK λy ŰKŜ I2fè ¢NλyλúèΣé Ǒ2Y λyƎ ű2 I· ăKI·NJŜŘ understanding of history and the emphases of each tradition with regard to the creed; and

WHEREASΣ λy нллсΣ ŰKŜ 9[/! /KdzNJǑK /2dzyǑλf I·Ř2LJŰŜŘ á! [dzŰKŜNJI·y-Orthodox /2Y Y2y {ű I·ŰŜY Ŝyű 2y CI·λŰK λy ŰKŜ I2fè ¢NJλyλúèΣé I·yŘ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* was published with a footnote to the Nicene Creed that says it is appropriate to confess the creed without the phrase; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is a member church of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the LWF has been in dialogue with the Orthodox Church for more than forty years; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, at the Eighth LWF Assembly in Curitiba, the LWF approved omitting the *filioque* clause in ecumenical services when the Orthodox Church is present, setting a precedent later adopted by other world communions; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, the Joint International Commission on Theological 5λI·f2ƎdzŜ ōŜűøŜŜy ŰKŜ [² C I·yŘ ŰKŜ hNŰK2Ř2È /KdzNJǑK I·ŦŦλNJY ŜŘ I· á/2Y Y2y Statement on the *Filioque*Σé I·ŦŦλNJY λyƎ ŰKI·ű ŰKŜ *filioque* is not a church-dividing issue and encouraging renewed theological reflection on the Trinity and the role of the Holy Spirit, which was adopted by the LWF Council that June; and

WHEREAS, this Common Statement presents a ground-breaking opportunity to understand our history in light of our dialogue with the Orthodox, and to begin to heal millennium-old divisions in the body of Christ; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the ELCA prayerfully engage in commemorating the 1,700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council at Nicaea, and the common date of Easter, as an opportunity for continued theological reflection on the Trinity and the role of the Holy Spirit and reconciliation between the Western and Eastern churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Churchwide Assembly prayerfully receive the 2024 Lutheran-h[illegible] understanding such reception to be an intention to lean into a fuller understanding of this issue and the promise of greater unity in the Body of Christ.

The presiding bishop led the assembly in the Nicene Creed, omitting the *filioque*, followed by a hymn.

Elections: Report of the First Common Ballot

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section X, Report of the First Common Ballot*

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel, to provide a report on behalf of the Elections Committee. Mr. Cunniff reported that the results of the first common ballot were available to assembly members electronically for all 109 tickets of the first common ballot for the Church Council, Committee on Appeals, Committee on Discipline, Nominating Committee, and boards of the Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services), Mission Investment Fund, Endowment Fund of the ELCA (ELCA Foundation), and the Publishing House of the ELCA (Augsburg Fortress). Mr. Cunniff asked for and received from the presiding bishop permission to dispense with reading the results. Presiding Bishop Eaton declared elected all persons receiving a majority of votes on the first common ballot.

ASSEMBLY ACTION

CA25.04.18 To declare elected all those who received a majority of votes cast on the first ballot.

Church Council
Ms. Deborah Maria Nyquist, 1A
The Rev. Barbara R. Rossing, 1D
The Rev. Moses Paul Peter Penumaka, 2A
Ms. Terri Lynn Robertson, 2C
Mr. Timothy Hiller, 3D
Mr. Matthew Allan Schur, 4A
The Rev. Alvaro Nova, 4C
Ms. Deidre D. Hayes, 4F
The Rev. Ryan Howard Anderson, 5C
Mr. Andrew William Stevens, 5K
Ms. Jessi Grieser, 6A
The Rev. Chad Michael Huebner, 6F
Mr. Moses Kavishe, 8D
The Rev. Daniel Collins, 8H
Ms. Jillian Colleen Stierwalt, 9A

Ms. Patricia P. Harper, 5A
Ms. Spencer Sanders, 2B
Ms. Emma Lynn Witt, 3C
Mr. Benjamin James Caseley, 1C

Committee on Appeals
The Rev. Sara J Anderson, 7B
Deacon Rebekah L. Forst, 9B
The Rev. Henry Wesley Burt, 3I
The Rev. Shelley Rae Wickstrom, 1A
Ms. Alice R Senechal, 3B
Ms. Deborah Banks Williams, 5A
Mr. Paul G Dodds, 1C
Mr. Ralston Henry Deffenbaugh, 2E
Ms. Lacy Elizabeth Tooker-Kirkevold, 3G

Committee on Discipline
The Rev. Sara Funkhouser, 1B
The Rev. Michael Vance Johnson, 6A
The Rev. Mardy Ringer, 9D
The Rev. Brittany Megan Barkus, 5G
The Rev. Hannah Claire Norem, 9B
The Rev. Adam Christian Schultz, 9A
The Rev. Chryll D. Crews, 2B
The Rev. Ariel Otterstad, 4F
Mr. Charles Edward Lifford, 9B
Mr. Anthony Ormsbee-Hale, 4D
Mr. Josh S. Tatum, 6C
Ms. Catherine Olivia McKenna, 5A
Ms. Sara Jo Larson, 2E
Ms. Ashley N Procanyn, 7E
Ms. Joy R. Grace, 7F
Ms. Kylie Oversen, 3B
Mr. John Sander Christensen, 1A

Nominating Committee
The Rev. Susan Marie Halvor, 1A
The Rev. Moses Paul Peter Penumaka, 2A
The Rev. Anthony F. Acompanado, 5J
Ms. Kasey Miranda Schultz, 1B
Ms. Karen Michele McClain, 2B
Ms. Kristine Kay Bjorke, 3G
Ms. Elizabeth Ann Dieringer, 4E
Ms. Jillian Marie Russell, 6D
Mr. Kevin D. Anderson, 8G

Board of Pensions (Portico Benefits Services)
The Rev. Hans Eric Becklin, 7E
The Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich, 5A
The Rev. Thomas Paul Schlotterback, 1F
Deacon Kayla Elizabeth Smrt, 5A
Ms. Carla Jean Borchardt, 3C
Ms. Angela Dejene, 3G
Ms. Marjorie B. Ellis, 6F
Ms. Amy Johnson, 3G
Ms. Elizabeth Baran Wagner, 7A
Mr. Vincent Paul Brown, 2C
Mr. Kyle Joe Gilster, 8G
Mr. Ted W. Goins, 9B
Mr. Brett A Kraemer, 4E
Mr. Todd Jason Maloy, 4B
The Rev. Adam John Copeland, Full Communion Partner: Presbyterian Church (USA)
Mr. Richard Dale Hall, Full Communion Partner: The United Methodist Church

Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress)
The Rev. Stacy Lynn Chavis, 8D
The Rev. Shauna Hannan, 2E
Deacon David Hope-Tringali, 8D
The Rev. Adam Patrick White, 3G
Ms. Ileana (Lilly) Kimmelshue, 2A
Ms. Cynthia Diane Moe-Lobeda, 1B
Ms. Shelly Ann Talcott, 8F
Ms. Jennifer Kay Ward, 5F
Ms. Cheryl Geneva Williams, 8F
Mr. Michael Chan, 3D
Mr. Kurt Barneson Galvez, 2A
Mr. Michael Alan Miller, 5H
Mr. John Erik Opgrande, 3H
Mr. Brook Selassie, 9A
The Rev. Joy J. Moore, Full Communion Partner: The United Methodist Church

Mission Investment Fund
The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, 1B
Ms. Liza Canino, 9B
Ms. Krista H. Kapp, 5A
Ms. Monica R. Powers, 1C
Ms. Julie E. Swanson, 9A
Mr. Randall Foster, 2B

Mr. Warren W. Hanson, 3G
Mr. Joseph T. Nolte, 5D
The Rt. Rev. Ruth M. Woodliff-Stanley, Full Communion Partner: The Episcopal Church (USA)

Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation)
The Rev. Franklin Thomas Espegren, 2A
The Rev. William Edward Flippin, 9D
The Rev. Anthony Robert Prinsen, 8G
The Rev. Kathleen O'Keefe Reed, 7B
Ms. Mary Beth Baron, 2D
Ms. Naomi M. Horsager, 3H
Ms. Heather L. Marx, 3I
Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford, 5A
Ms. Pamela Fetzer Vetter, 4E
Mr. Roberto C. Lara Aranda, 7C
Mr. Gregg Alan Draeger, 3I
Mr. Bruce Douglas George, 7B
Mr. Mark Fenner Stauffer, 2C
Mr. Andrew Steele, 8F
The Rev. Lisa Carol Bennett, Full Communion Partner: The Episcopal Church (USA)

Elections: Second Common Ballot

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section X, Second Common Ballot*

Mr. Cunniff announced that there was one ticket on the second common ballot. He provided instruction on casting the ballot, and Presiding Bishop Eaton called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY ACTION

CA25.04.19 To declare elected those who received a majority of votes cast on the second common ballot.

Church Council
Mr. Christopher Anthony Vergara, 7C

Report of the Conference of Bishops

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited to the stage the Rev. Yehiel Curry, bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, to provide the report of the Conference of Bishops. Bishop Curry invited synod bishops and bishops-elect to be recognized by the assembly and provided an overview of the work of the conference. He emphasized that the ministry of bishops, collectively and individually, is ministry for and on behalf of this entire church.

Recess

The assembly recessed at 3:46 p.m. and reconvened at 4:07 p.m.

Elections: Special Report of the Elections Committee

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited to the stage Ms. Trom who reported a problem with the second ballot for secretary and, on behalf of the Elections Committee, introduced a motion to invalidate and revote the ballot.

ASSEMBLY ACTION — *TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED*
YES-702; NO-54

CA25.04.20 To declare the second ballot for secretary invalid and revote the second ballot for secretary.

Elections: Second Ballot for Secretary *(cont.)*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary*; *Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Mr. Irwin to provide the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. Irwin reported that, as of 4:10 p.m., there were 803 voting members. Ms. Trom provided clarification regarding the revote of the second ballot to help voting members avoid the error that had invalidated the original second ballot. A voting member provided additional clarification. Presiding Bishop Eaton called for the vote following a hymn and prayer.

Consideration of Amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* Removed from *En Bloc (cont.)* and Additional Proposed Amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:4, Recommendation: Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Constitutions of the ELCA; Section IX, Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited the Rev. Gwendolyn S. King and Mr. Mitchell S. McCartney, co-chairs of the Reference and Counsel Committee, ű2 Ŏ2ýűłyűzŜ űKŜ Ŏ2YY łűűŜŜ□ă ₩ŜLJ2₩ű. Pastor King reminded assembly members that there was a motion before the assembly to further amend the amendment to constitutional provision 22.11.b. that had been recommended by the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Moved;
Seconded: *To amend the recommended amendment to provision 22.11.b. by deletion:*

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

. . . .

b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly ~~or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly~~.

Voting members spoke in opposition to the motion. The Rev. Charlene A. Guiliani [Greater Milwaukee Synod] introduced a motion to suspend the rules of the assembly to allow the person who had been chair of the subcommittee on Dismantling Racism for the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, who was not a member of the assembly, to address the assembly.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
Seconded; *Yes-501; No-281*
Defeated: To suspend the Rules of Organization and Procedure to allow the chair of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church subcommittee on Dismantling Racism to address the assembly.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion to suspend the rules had failed and invited additional debate on the motion. On behalf of the Reference and Counsel Committee, Pastor King provided additional background information related to the wŜŦŜŠŜyŎŜ I·yŘ /ƨdzyãŜf /ƨŸŸŠúúŜŜŰă decision not to support the motion. A voting member called the question.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
Seconded; *Yes-544; No-241*
Carried: To end debate.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion to close debate was adopted and called for the vote.

Moved;
Seconded; *Yes-396; No-386*
Carried: *To amend the recommended amendment to provision 22.11.b. by deletion:*

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

. . . .

b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly~~ or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly~~.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion to further amend was adopted and turned the assembly to consideration of the recommended amendment as amended.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
[Seconded]: *To amend provision 22.11.b.:*

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

. . . .

b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come

before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly.

The Rev. Alexander G. Ohman [Northwestern Minnesota Synod] introduced a motion to amend the amended language. Presiding Bishop Eaton stated that the amendment was out of order because it was not received by the deadline for submitting amendments. However, she invited the assembly to vote on whether to allow consideration of additional amendments received after the deadline.

ASSEMBLY ACTION *YES-485; NO-287*

CA25.04.21 To allow consideration of additional amendments to the recommended amendment of 22.11. that were received after the deadline.

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motion to allow consideration of additional amendments was adopted.

Moved;
Seconded: *To amend the recommended amendment to provision 22.11.b. by addition:*

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

. . . .

b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly or the amendment may be provisionally effective by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly. The provisional status will be removed only by ratification of the amendment by the Churchwide Assembly. If the Churchwide Assembly fails to ratify, the provisional effective status of the amendment shall be revoked.

Pastor Ohman spoke to his motion. Mr. Brandon M. Graves [Northern Illinois Synod] introduced a motion to refer.

Moved;
Seconded: To refer consideration of amendment of provision 22.11. to the Office of the Secretary for further study.

Voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion to refer. Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, provided information related to the role the Office of the Secretary would play if consideration of the proposed amendment were referred to it. Mr. Cunniff and Presiding Bishop Eaton also provided information related to consideration of the proposed

amendment. The Rev. Michael L. Lozano, bishop of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, introduced a motion to postpone consideration of the motion to refer.

Moved;
Seconded: To postpone consideration of the motion to refer until the next Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee.

Voting members spoke in support of the motion to postpone consideration of the motion to refer.

ASSEMBLY ACTION *YES-644; NO-119*

CA25.04.22 To postpone consideration of the motion to refer until the next Report of the Reference and Council Committee.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion to postpone consideration of the motion to refer was adopted.

Consideration of Motion E:

On behalf of the Reference and Counsel Committee, Pastor King introduced a motion to amend bylaw 14.32.01. as proposed by the Rev. Matthew L. Riegel, bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod. He proposed amending the terms served by liaison bishops to the Church Council from four years to three years; this proposal was codified as Motion E.

Motion E:
To amend 14.32.01. by striking "four-year" and inserting "three-year" (in its place).

The presiding bishop invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY ACTION *TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED* *YES-765; NO-11*

CA25.04.23 *To amend bylaw 14.32.01. by substitution:*

14.32.01. The Church Council shall have as liaison members nine synod bishops, each elected by the Conference of Bishops to one ~~four-year~~ three-year term. One bishop shall be elected from each region.

Elections: Report of the Revote of the Second Ballot for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton called for the orders of the day and invited Ms. Trom to provide the report of the second ballot for secretary. Ms. Trom reported that there were 768 legal ballots cast on the second ballot for secretary and no illegal ballots. She announced that none of the nominees received the 576 votes required for election and presented the results of the second ballot.

Matthew Riegel	143	Rozella White	26	Daniel Lenz	12
Kevin Anderson	126	Erin Clausen	24	Chemezie Ukaonu	9
Keith Fry	116	Peter Asplin	22	Marie Leafblad	8
Daniel Kirschbaum	83	Chelle Huth	21	Mark Parker	4
Josh Tatum	42	Richard Gates	16	David Kenzie	3
[dzÔlffŜ á/Ŝ/ŜŜé a lffă	38	Gwendolynn Edwards	14	Matt Olson	3
Tyler Rasmussen	32	Yvette Newberry White	13	Matthew Regal	3

Lisa Solak	3	Hardt Bergman	1	Kerry Fearan	0
Lawrence Clark	2	Peter Everton	1	David Lento	0
Khala Currly	2	Jeff Pennington	1		

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that there was no election for secretary on the second ballot. She announced that the seven nominees receiving the most votes on the second ballot would address the assembly prior to the third ballot for secretary and provided additional information related to the third ballot.

Announcements

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Secretary Rothmeyer for announcements.

Adjournment

The eighth plenary session of the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned at 5:57 p.m., following a hymn and prayer

Plenary Session Nine

Friday, Aug. 1, 2025
9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened Friday, Aug. 1, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 9:02 a.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated) and opened the meeting with prayer.

Addresses by Nominees for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Biographical Information for Nominees for Secretary*

Presiding Bishop Eaton announced that the seven persons who received the most votes on the second ballot for secretary ø2dzfŘ I·ŘŘℕŜăă úKŜ I·ăăŜY ōfè℗ Ly I·ŎŎ2ℕŘ øλűK űKŜ áwdzfŜă 2Ŧ hℕ∃I·yλÎI·úλ2y I·yŘ tℕ2ŎŜŘdzℕŜε 2Ŧ úKŜ I·ăăŜY ōfèΣ úKŜ 2ℕŘŜℕ λy øKλŎK y2YλySŜă would speak was determined by random drawing.

b2űλy∃ [dzűKŜℕΩă Ŏ2yŎŜLJű 2Ŧ űKŜ LJℕλŜăúK22Ř 2Ŧ I·ff úKŜ ōI·LJűλÎŜŘΣ Mr. Josh Tatum stated that he has practiced law for 15 years, much of which involved representing faith groups from across the religious spectrum. He noted the responsibilities of the secretary in ELCA governing documents, emphasizing that he believes a primary responsibility is to foster relationships with and serve as a resource for congregations and synods. As secretary, he would be devoted to stories, connections, and listening to this church in its entirety.

The Rev. Tyler Rassmussen introduced himself to the assembly, stating that he has served as a minister of this church in three regions, serving in widely diverse communities. He considered the role of secretary through the fŜyã 2Ŧ á ² Ŝ !ℕŜ /KdzℕŎK ¢2∃ŜűKŜℕ,ε noting that often expressions of this church feel it is easier to act independently. While this church continues to discern what it means to be church together, he said, the secretary plays a leading role in this discernment of how to grow into our unity in Christ.

The Rev. Keith Fry spoke of his time working in the Office of the Secretary under the leadership of three of the four previous secretaries of this church and pointed out the gifts each secretary had brought to the role. Despite ways in which the office of secretary appealed to him, he said, he had discerned the night before that he was not being called to this role. He apologized for not discerning this prior to the deadline to withdraw and encouraged voting members to join him in discerning which of the remaining nominees the Holy Spirit was calling to the office.

Daniel Kirschbaum ℕŜŦŜℕŜyŎŜŘ [dzűKŜℕΩă 2Ŧú-ℕŜLJŜI·úŜŘ IjdzŜăúλ2yΣ á ² KI·ú Ř2Ŝă űKλă YŜI·y?ε, stating that this question has shaped all aspects of their engagement with this church. They reviewed their time in the churchwide organization and how this has shaped their commitment to boldly asking questions in the face of injustices faced by members of historically underrepresented groups and the role of the governing documents of this church in addressing these. This, they concluded, is the role of the secretary.

The Rev. Matthew L. Riegel, bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod, stated that he is open to being called as secretary because he is dedicated to an ethic of service. He stated his belief that an ethic of deeply rewarding service is at the heart of the governance of this church. The end of all of this service, he emphasized, is proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Rev. [dzŎλffŜ á/Ŝ/ŜŜε aλffă ăűI·úŜŘ úKI·ú ăKŜ λă ŜÈŎλűŜŘ Ŧ2ℕ úKŜ opportunity to serve as secretary because of her deep commitment to the importance of the documents of this church as

core expressions of how members of this church understand God and relate to each other. She stated that the purpose of the constitution is to allow this entire church to be able to share together in mission and ministry. She expressed a desire to help a variety of people come together as church, facilitated by the governing documents.

Mr. Kevin Anderson said that he has used his gifts as a lawyer and a certified public accountant in service to all expressions of this church. He reviewed various roles in which he has served: as a member of the Church Council, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, member of the Executive Committee of the Church Council, and resource person for the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. He reviewed recent activities and changes to the governing documents of this church initiated by these bodies intended to increase diversity in the governance of this church.

Following the addresses, Presiding Bishop Eaton explained how voting members could access biographical information on the nominees.

Consideration: Adoption of the Social Statement on Faith and Civic Life and Its Implementing Resolutions

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:7, Background and Resolutions for Recommended, Proposed Social Statement on Faith and Civic Life and Its Implementing Resolutions*

Following a prayer, the presiding bishop invited Mr. Paul K. Irwin, associate general counsel, to provide the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. Irwin reported that, as of 9:55 a.m., there were 803 eligible voting members present. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to adopting the Report of the Credentials Committee and, there being none, declared the report adopted.

Presiding Bishop Eaton explained that consideration of the social statement would begin with the recommendations of the Faith and Civic Live Social Statement *Ad Hoc* Committee which received amendments to the social statement and its implementing resolutions proposed by assembly members. She introduced the Rev. Anthony M. Bateza and Ms. Phyllis Johnson, co-chairs of the Task Force for Studies on Civic Life and Faith, along with additional members of the task force.

On behalf of the Church Council, Deacon Sue. E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, introduced a motion to adopt the proposed social statement, άFaith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All.έ

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
[Seconded]: To adopt the proposed social statement, άFaith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All,έ as a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in !ϒŜ№ϡǑΙ· ϡϒ ΙΌǑƢ№ŘΙ·ϒǑŜ ǿϡύK ύĹŜ άt2fϡǑϡŜă Ι·ϒŘ t№2ǑŜŘdz№Ŝă 2Ŧ ύĹŜ 9ØΙ·ϒƎŜtϡǑΙ·f [dzűĹŜ№Ι·ϒ/Kdz№ǑK ϡϒ!ϒŜ№ϡǑΙ· Ŧ2№ !ŘŘ№ŜăăϡϒƎ {ƨǑϡΙ·f /ƨϒǑŜ№ϒãέ óнлмyú℗

On behalf of the Faith and Civic Life Social Statement *Ad Hoc* Committee, Ms. Johnson introduced a motion to amend the proposed social statement. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Yes-747; No-24*
Carried: Article 4, at line #342, to insert a new sentence as follows, renumbering accordingly:

άLűis sin when the power in social structures, such as government, is distorted so that it is not used for the common good of neighbors and creation (Matthew 22:36-40). For instance, the

individual domination of one person by another became multiplied in the social structure of slavery, which was supported by laws, policies, religious beliefs, and cultural practices in the United States. In our contemporary context, this church recognizes that white supremacy, in both its historical and present-day forms, is a structural sin that has shaped civic life, governmental institutions, and religious structures. Such systemic sins are particularly horrendous because the things done and left undone dramatically deepen the oppression of other LJŜ2LJfŜ¢é

And Article 38, at line #1478, insert áădzLJNŜY˙I·Ŏèé for áădzLJŜNλ2NλűèéY

á¢Kλă privileging of white, U.S.-born Christians is connected to our Ŏ2dzyűNèQă violent practices of white supremacy ~~superiority~~, such as Jim Crow laws or the hundreds of years of Black African ăfI·ØŜNè¢é

The presiding bishop declared that the motion to amend was adopted. On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, Pastor Bateza introduced another motion to amend the proposed social statement. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Yes-741; No-29*
Carried: Article 4, lines #332çoonΣ {dzōăűλűdzűŜ Ŧ2N űKŜ ăŜyűŜyŎŜ ōŜ∃λyỲλy∃ á{λy˙ŎI·y˙ I·ťă2Xé I·yŘ λyãŜNűŭ Ŧ22ůy2ůŜΣ NŜydzY˙ōŜNλy∃ I·ŎŎ2NŘλy∃fèY

áSin can also take the form of an inordinate self-KI·úNŜŘ 2N űKŜ λy1·ōλfλűè ű2 I·LJLJNŜŎλI·úŜ 2yŜQă own giftedness and agency. ~~Sin can also take the insidious form of self-denial and a lack of self-love.~~ This happens when, for example, a person diminishes their own contributions to human life or denies that they possess the dignity and value of every human being created in D2ŘQă λY˙I·∃Ŝ¢[10]é

fn. 10: This reference to sin addresses cases where individual and systemic patterns have perpetuated great harm through internalized inferiority of different kinds, especially among those who have been marginalized in our society because of their race, class, gender, or sexual identity, to name but a few categories. As a result of our broken trust in God, human relationships also become broken and distorted. This reference is not directed at cases of diminished self-worth that are all too familiar to anyone who has experienced depression, anxiety disorders, or cared for someone with a mental illness. For more guidance in these complex cases, see the social messages á¢KŜ Body of Christ and Mental LftyŜăăé (2012) and áCI·λűKΣ Sexism, and Justice: A Call to !Ŏűλ2yé (2019).

The presiding bishop declared that the motion was adopted. On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, Ms. Johnson introduced another motion to amend the proposed social statement. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Yes-733; No-29*
Carried: Article 38, line #1497, to replace the word áNŜ2ŜŎűăé with áNŜLJdzŘλI·ûŜă¢é

áC2N theological reasons, the ELCA repudiates ~~rejects~~ Christian nationalism as a distortion of the Christian faith that crosses the line into λŘ2fI·úNè¢é

The presiding bishop declared that the motion was adopted. On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, Pastor Bateza introduced another motion to amend the proposed social statement. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Yes-755; No-18*
Carried: Article 44, Line #1708, add the following sentences and footnote, renumbering accordingly:

Civic participation cannot be fully realized without confronting the structural barriers that limit access for many.[84] These barriers, which function to silence voices and restrict public engagement, disproportionately affect already marginalized communities, both democratic ideals and the biblical call to seek justice for our neighbors.

Fn. 84: Many recognize that poverty, systemic racism, immigration status, limited language access, and lack of affordable transportation and childcare, are obstacles to equitable access to civic life. This church supports the work of advocacy, accompaniment, and the reimagining of public systems so that all people, especially those historically excluded, may share in shaping the life we hold in common.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion was adopted. On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, Pastor Bateza introduced another motion to amend the proposed social statement.

Moved;
[Seconded]: Article 45, line #1732, iyãŜ№ú á¢Kλă ŎKdz№ŎK №ŜŎ2∃yλÎŜăέ ú2 №ŜLJfI·ŎŜ á a I·yê ØλŜØΣέ thus revised to read:

This church recognizes ~~Many view~~ the political relationship between the U.S. government and its unincorporated territories as problematic because of the inherent inequality between the territories and the states.

A voting member spoke in support of the motion. A voting member provided commentary on the status of United States territories, and the Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics, who directed the social statement process, provided additional clarification regarding the status of United States territories. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited additional discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Yes-732; No-36*
Carried: Article 45, line #1732, iyãŜ№ú á¢Kλă ŎKdz№ŎK №ŜŎ2∃yλÎŜăέ ú2 №ŜLJfI·ŎŜ á a I·yê view,έ úKdžă №ŜØλăŜŘ ú2 №ŜI·ŘY

This church recognizes ~~Many view~~ the political relationship between the U.S. government and its unincorporated territories as problematic because of the inherent inequality between the territories and the states.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion was adopted. There being no further amendments, the assembly turned to consideration of adoption of the proposed social statement, áFaith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All,é as amended, as a social statement of the ELCA.

ASSEMBLY ACTION *TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED YES-762; NO-16*

CA25.05.24 To adopt the proposed social statement, áFaith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All,é as amended, as a social statement of the 9Ø·I·yƎŜfλŎI·f [dzúKŜ№I·y´/KdzNŎK λy´!Y´Ŝ№λŎI·λy´I·ŎŎ2№ŘI·yŎŜ ØλúK úKŜ á t2fλŎλŜă and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for !ŘŘ№ŜăăλyƎ {2ŎλI·f /2yŎŜ№yãέ онлмyúΦ

[The text of *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All* as adopted by the assembly is included as Exhibit H of these minutes.]

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All* was adopted as a social statement of the ELCA. The presiding bishop referred voting members to the implementing resolutions associated with *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All* found in the *Bulletin of Reports*, and directed the assembly to consider the implementing resolutions for the new social statement.

On behalf of the Faith and Civic Life Social Statement *Ad Hoc* Committee, Pastor Bateza introduced a motion to amend the implementing resolutions associated with the social statement. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Yes-742; No-19*
Carried: Add a new implementing resolution as #5, at Line #2139, and renumber accordingly:

5. To urge members of this church to pray, participate in, and advocate for civic life in the United States by supporting efforts to increase voter registration and access to polling places, and to help dismantle structural barriers to the ballot box and to civic participation more broadly, all as a part of this ŎKdzNŎK℠ă faithful civic witness.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion was adopted. On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, Ms. Johnson introduced another motion to amend the implementing resolutions. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Yes-747; No-23*
Carried: Add a new implementing resolution as #12, at Line #2159, and renumber accordingly:

12. To direct the churchwide office, including but not limited to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and churchwide organization teams such as Witness in Society and Building Resilient Communities, to serve this ŎKdzNŎK℠ă commitments to racial justice and civic engagement in accordance with the best practices of this church. This includes centering the voices of people most impacted by injustice, working for equitable representation in leadership, and assessing the impact of its public witness on historically marginalized communities.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion was adopted and called for a vote on adoption of the proposed implementing resolutions as amended.

ASSEMBLY ACTION — *TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED* — *YES-761; NO-13*

CA25.05.25 To adopt the recommended proposed implementing resolutions for *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All* as resolutions of the 9ØI·yƎŜfńŎI·f [dzűKŜNI·y′ /KdzNŎK ńy′ ! YŜNńŎI· ńy′ I·ŎŎ2NŘI·yŎŜ ønńűK űKŜ ńt2fńŎńŜă and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for ! ŘŘNŜăăńyƎ {2ŎńI·f /2yŎŜNyãé онлмyúΦ

1. To urge members of this church to pray, participate in, and l·ŘØ2Ǒl·ű$ ŧ2ℕ ǑλØλǑ ťλŧ$ λϒ űK$ ¦ yλű$Ř {ű l·ű$ă űKl·ű ℕ$ŧf$Ǒűă D2ŘΩă activity and call, which seek both the well-being of all people and a creation marked by justice and peace;
2. To encourage members to draw inspiration from the ELCA social Y$ăăl·Ǝ$ άD2Ø$ℕyYY$yű l·yŘ /λØλǑ 9y∃l·ƎYyűY 5λăǑλLJf$ăKλLJ λϒ l· 5$Y2Ǒℕl·ǑèΣέ øKλǑK KλƎKfλƎKűă űK$ Ǒl·ff ű2 $Yōℕl·Ô$ Řl·λfè 2dzℕ baptismal vocation through active participation in self-governance;
3. To reaffirm and encourage use across our church of other existing social teaching and policy documents that promote robust and wise civic participation, such as those that address matters of voting, campaign finance, public service, nonviolent protest, and the like;
4. To recognize with deep appreciation the commitments and efforts by those in this church τ including but not limited to churchwide organization teams such as Witness in Society and Building Resilient Communities, as well as the many church-related social ministry organizations and educational institutions τ that contribute to healthy civic life through service, advocacy, or education;
5. To urge members of this church to pray, participate in, and advocate for civic life in the United States by supporting efforts to increase voter registration and access to polling places, and to help dismantle structural barriers to the ballot box and to civic LJl·ℕűλǑλLJl·üλ2yY2ℕ$ ōℕ2l·Řfè$ l·ff l·ă LJl·ℕű 2ŧ űKλă ǑKdzℕǑKΩă ŧl·λűKŧdzf ǑλØλǑ witness.
6. To call upon all members of this church to intentionally evaluate the dangers of polarization and the threats posed by disregard for democratic practices and self-government;
7. To encourage ELCA worshiping assemblies and ministries to build bridges, foster reconciliation, practice communal discernment, provide opportunities for difficult conversations, and address polarization constructively in their communities;
8. To encourage synod leaders, in collaboration with other appropriate bodies, to explore creating or expanding state public policy advocacy in their domains as part of the ELCA Witness in Society network, similar to those already existing in several states;
9. To direct the churchwide office, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, theologians, and ethicists, rostered leaders, and elected lay leaders, to develop guidelines and protections consistent with this social statement regarding the

roles in civic life of representatives of this church who have official responsibility to preach, teach, and lead on behalf of our church;

10. To call upon the publishing and educational ministries of this church, including but not limited to Augsburg Fortress Publishers, to consider the need for civics education curricula, civic participation guidance, and related theological reflection, and to create these in multiple formats, including multimedia and online;
11. To call upon the publishing and educational ministries of this church, including but not limited to Augsburg Fortress Publishers, to explore the need for resources dedicated to nonviolent resistance and peaceful engagement in civic life, with special concern for materials dedicated to religious and political histories, liturgical guidance, and training for rostered and lay leaders;
12. To direct the churchwide office, including but not limited to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and churchwide organization teams such as Witness in Society and Building Resilient Communities, to serve ű€Kλă ŎKdzNŎKΩă Ŏ2YYλűYŜyűă ű2 NIŏλI·f ƨdzăűλŐŜ I·yŘ ŎλØλŎ engagement in accordance with the best practices of this church. This includes centering the voices of people most impacted by injustice, working for equitable representation in leadership, and assessing the impact of its public witness on historically marginalized communities.
13. To direct the Witness in Society team of the churchwide organization and to call upon all expressions of this church in their advocacy efforts to support and advocate for policies and laws consistent with this social statement, and to give sustained attention to the fresh convictions and commitments found here in the creation of programs and projects;
14. To direct the Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop to share this statement as a resource for dialogue, discernment, and collaboration with ecumenical and inter-religious partners toward the well-being of all people and creation from within the U.S. context;
15. To urge faculty, staff, and administrators of ELCA-related colleges, universities, and seminaries to renew and emphasize education toward callings in public service, and to model and encourage dynamic civic participation among their students;
16. To direct appropriate units in the churchwide organization, coordinated by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to establish or oversee processes for implementation of these resolutions, with an initial report to the fall meeting of the ELCA Church Council in 2027.

Consideration of Additional Proposed Amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section IX, Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton announced that the assembly would consider constitutional amendments prior to the third ballot for secretary. The presiding bishop announced that consideration of motions related to amendment of constitutional provision 22.11.b. would resume during the tenth plenary session, after the Reference and Counsel Committee had a chance to meet.

Consideration of Motion D:

Ms. Hannah M. Peterson [Metropolitan Chicago Synod] proposed an amendment to continuing resolution 5.01.E19., amending the percentage goal of youth and young adults on ELCA governing bodies. The proposal was codified as Motion D.

Motion D:
In continuing resolution 5.01.E19., to include the goal of this church to be at least 20 percent of the voting members of Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults.

On behalf of the committee, Mr. Mitchell S. McCartney, co-chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, introduced a motion to amend continuing resolution 5.01.E19. in accord with Motion D.

Moved;

[Seconded]: *To amend continuing resolution 5.01.E19. to increase the percentage goal of youth and young adult voting membership of Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees from 10 percent to 20 percent, as follows:*

5.01.E19. *It is the goal of this church that at least 20 ~~10~~ percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the* Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.*

and

To direct the Church Council to develop and present a plan for implementation of this continuing resolution at its April 2026 meeting that also addresses barriers to youth and young adult participation.

Voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion. Mr. McCartney provided clarification of the motion and addressed its implications for the governance of this church.

Presiding Bishop Eaton called for the orders of the day.

Elections: Third Ballot for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Mr. Irwin to provide the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. Irwin reported that, as of 11:34 a.m., there were 803 eligible voting members present. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to adopting the Report of the Credentials Committee and, there being none, declared the report adopted and called for the vote on the third ballot for secretary, following a hymn and prayer.

Elections: Report of the Third Ballot for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Ms. Jennifer E. Trom, co-chair of the Elections Committee, to provide the report of the third ballot for secretary. Ms. Trom reported that there were 788 legal ballots cast on the third ballot for presiding bishop and no illegal ballots, with 526 votes required for election. She presented the results of the third ballot.

[dzŎ\ffŜ ά/Ŝ/ŜŜέ a\ffă	229	Daniel Kirschbaum	61
Matthew Riegel	183	Keith Fry	24
Josh Tatum	178	Tyler Rasmussen	19
Kevin Anderson	94		

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that there was no election for secretary on the third ballot. She announced that the three nominees receiving the most votes on the third ballot would be invited to respond to three questions in a forum prior to the fourth ballot.

Announcements

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Secretary Rothmeyer for announcements.

Adjournment

The ninth plenary session of the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned at 11:57 a.m., following a hymn and prayer

Plenary Session Ten

Friday, Aug. 1, 2025
2:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened Friday, Aug. 1, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 2:01 p.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated) and opened the meeting with prayer.

Secretary Nominee Question-and-Answer Forum

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Biographical Information for Nominees for Secretary*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited to the stage the three remaining nominees for secretary: Mr. ₩2ăK ¢l·úʤY˙Σ úKŜ wŜØΦ [ʤŎλftŜ ά/Ŝ/ŜŜέ aλftăΣ l·yŘ .λăK2LJ a l·üúKŜø wλŜ∃Ŝf. She explained the process for the question-and-answer forum, noting that the order in which nominees would respond to questions was determined by random drawing.

Prompt 1: What is your knowledge and understanding of the current *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*?

Response: Mr. Tatum

Mr. Josh Tatum stated that, as a synod attorney, he regularly engages and interprets the governing documents of this church in meeting the needs of synods and congregations. He stressed that interpreting the constitution is something that is done as part of a team.

Response: Pastor Mills

The Rev. [ʤŎλftŜ ά/Ŝ/ŜŜέ aλftă ăúl·úŜŘ úKl·ú ăKŜ Kl·ă l·y˙ λyűλY˙l·úŜ ˥y2ø†ŜŘ∃Ŝ 2₮ úKŜ 9[/! constitutions, noting that they explain how this church understands what it means to apply [ʤűKŜ₦Ωă theological insights today. She said that her engagement in leadership roles within this church has shown her the need to be able to apply the constitution to varied situations.

Response: Bishop Riegel

The Rev. Matthew L. Riegel, bishop of the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod, said that he has a thorough knowledge of the constitutions of this church as well as of its predecessor bodies. This knowledge helps him to discern why the governing documents are the way they are and how they could be different. Rules are useful to advance the life of the people of God, he said, but must not become ώwhat this church is all about.έ

Prompt 2: Describe the lens through which you would interpret and respond to questions of the governing documents of this church as they pertain to the mission and ministry of úKŜ 9[/!Ωă úK₦ŜŜ ŜÈLJ₦Ŝăăλ2yãΦ

Response: Pastor Mills

Pastor Mills said that, serving on synod staff, she regularly does this for congregations. The first step is to listen carefully to ensure that the issue to be addressed is understood. The second step is to locate the proper portion of the constitution and apply it to the issue. She then provides guidance regarding how to adhere to the constitution and how to engage processes to propose amendments to the constitution if that is úKŜ Ŏ2y∃₦Ŝ∃l·úλ2yΩă desire.

Response: Bishop Riegel

Bishop Riegel shared a story from his time as bishop to illustrate the importance of recognizing both the extent and the limits of l· ōλǩK2LJ̈ǎ authority within this church. It is crucial, he said, that the governing documents of this church balance the granting of power with the restriction of power so that people are not abused, because each member of this church is, at the same time, saint and sinner.

Response: Mr. Tatum

Mr. Tatum stated that he would read the constitution through the lens of a lawyer. The constitution is a legal document, but also a missional document, he stated, and part of that mission as it pertains to the secretary is maintaining relationships between the three expressions of this church. These documents bind us together as millions of Lutherans in thousands of ministry centers. Finally, he said, he views the constitution through the lens of a layperson.

Prompt 3: What specific experiences do you bring that have best prepared you for this leadership position in this church?

Response: Bishop Riegel

Bishop Riegel shared stories of his long-time engagement with parliamentary procedure in various settings. He highlighted his experiences as a synod bishop working regularly with the ELCA constitutions, particularly in working with congregations to ensure that they understand the freedoms l·ff2ǿŜŘ ΰǨKŜϒ ƛγΎΰǨλǎ ŎKdzℕŎǨJ̈ǎ ∃2ØŜℕγΏγ∃ Ř2ŎdzϒŜγΰǎ¢

Response: Mr. Tatum

Mr. Tatum stated that he has been working with congregations in a legal capacity addressing concerns related to governing documents for 15 years and serving on various boards and assemblies of this church. Managing legal firms and making management decisions about hiring, discipline, and similar matters have also prepared him to do the work of the secretary.

Response: Pastor Mills

Pastor Mills related that her first call to ministry was as a mission developer, which involved creation of a new constitution for the worshiping community. In doing this, she drew on her experiences in congregation leadership that began when she was 12 years old. Her experiences have led her to understand the constitution as a document that should clearly reflect the mission and purpose of this church and provided her with the skills to do this.

Elections: Fourth Ballot for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Mr. Paul K. Irwin, associate general counsel, to provide the report of the Credentials Committee. Mr. Irwin reported that, as of 1:55 p.m., there were 803 eligible voting members present. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked for objections to adopting the Report of the Credentials Committee and, there being none, declared the report adopted. She reviewed the voting process, then called for the vote on the fourth ballot for secretary, following a hymn and prayer.

Elections: Report of the Fourth Ballot for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Ms. Jennifer E. Trom, co-chair of the Elections Committee, to provide the report of the fourth ballot for secretary. Ms. Trom reported that there were 784 legal

ballots cast on the fourth ballot for secretary, with 471 votes required for election. She presented the results of the fourth ballot.

Matthew Riegel	316
[dzŎλttŜ á/Ŝ/ŜŜé aλttă	311
Josh Tatum	157

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that there was no election on the fourth ballot.

Elections: Fifth Ballot for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

The presiding bishop announced that the assembly would proceed to the fifth ballot for secretary, with Bishop aI·úúKŜø wλŜƎŜf I·yŘ tI·ăű2ℕ [dzŎλttŜ á/Ŝ/ŜŜé aλttă úKŜ y2YˇλySŜă ℕŜYˇI·λyγλyƎ on the ballot. She then called for the vote on the fifth ballot for secretary, following a hymn and prayer.

Elections: Report of the Fifth Ballot for Secretary

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Ms. Trom to provide the report of the fifth ballot for secretary. Ms. Trom reported that there were 782 legal ballots cast on the fifth ballot for secretary with 392 votes required for election. She presented the results of the fifth ballot.

[dzŎλttŜ á/Ŝ/ŜŜé aλttă	404
Matthew Riegel	378

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that úKŜ wŜØ¢ [dzŎλttŜ á/Ŝ/ŜŜé aλttă had been elected and announced the assembly action resulting from the ballot.

ASSEMBLY ACTION

CA25.05.26 ¢2 ŜfŜŎű úKŜ wŜØ¢ [dzŎλttŜ á/Ŝ/ŜŜé aλttă ű2 I· ăλÈ-year term as secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, commencing on the first day of the third month after election.

Address by the Secretary-elect

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited Secretary-elect Mills to address the assembly. Secretary-elect Mills said that, like Presiding Bishop-elect Curry, she is the product of investments in leadership by this church, including in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) candidacy program. She thanked her family and the leaders of communities of which she has been a member for their support. The secretary-elect stated that she believes this is a new season for this church and that this is the reason why the assembly was able to identify her, an African American woman with no academic degrees, as having the gifts and potential to fill this role. She celebrated that this church listens ű2 D2ŘΩă ŎI·ff and will ōŜŎ2YˇŜ D2ŘΩă ōŜf2ØŜŘ Ŏ2YˇYˇdzyλűè¢

Recess

The assembly recessed at 2:56 p.m. and reconvened at 3:05 p.m.

Following the recess, Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, and the Rev. Kelly Sherman-Conroy (Oglala Sioux Tribe), associate pastor for All Nations Indian Church and secretary of the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association, led the assembly in a litany of repentance for unintended harm caused by words and actions.

Consideration: Adoption of the Edited Social Statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:8, Background and Resolution for Recommended, Proposed Edited Social Statement:* Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust

Presiding Bishop Eaton announced that the assembly would begin consideration of the revised social statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*. Mr. Keoni Newman [Church Council] introduced a motion to suspend the rules to allow consideration of Motion D from the Reference and Counsel Committee prior to consideration of the revised social statement.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
Seconded; *Yes-427; No-307*
Defeated: To suspend the Rules of Organization and Procedure to allow consideration of Motion D from the Reference and Counsel Committee prior to consideration of the revised social statement.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion had failed and returned to consideration of the revised social statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*. She invited to the stage the Rev. Keats Miles-Wallace and the Rev. Joel Benson, chairs of the *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* Editorial *Ad Hoc* Committee, the Rev. Brenda K. Bos, bishop of the Southwest California Synod, and the Rev Kevin T. Jones, bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, members of the *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* Editorial *Ad Hoc* Committee, the Rev. Roger A. Willer, program director for theological ethics, and Mr. Ryan P. Cumming, director for theological ethics.

On behalf of the Church Council, Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, introduced a motion to adopt the edits to *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* recommended by the *ad hoc* committee.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
[Seconded]: To adopt the identified changes to the social statement on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009) as an editorial update to bring wording up to date, to clarify, and to bring it into congruence with subsequent social teaching, as authorized by 2022 Churchwide Assembly action CA22.01.07.

Pastor Miles-Wallace announced that, of the further amendments to the proposed edited social statement that were proposed by voting members, the committee recommended adoption of three but did not recommend adoption of two others.

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, Pastor Miles-Wallace introduced a motion to amend the proposed edits to the social statement. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Yes-739; No-19*
Carried: *In lines 137ç142, to ỉyÃŜŴŭ áăʤžǑK I·ăɛ I·ű the end of first sentence and combine the remaining sentences into a single sentence, with necessary technical adjustments to the wording*:

ά ² ΚλfŜ [dzűΚŜℕl·yã Κ2fŘ ØI·ℕλ2dză Ŏ2yØλŎűλ2yã ℕŜ∃I·ℕŘλy∃ Y I·ℕℕλI·∃Ŝ ōŜűøŜŜy˝λyŘλØλŘdzI·fă 2Ŧ ŘλØŜℕăŜ sex, gender, or sexuality, this church is united on many critical issues, such as.[27] It opposesing all forms of verbal or physical harassment and assault based on actual or perceived sex, gender, or sexuality; . It supportsing legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services;. and It has called ing upon congregations and members to welcome, care for, and support all couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection.[27]é

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, Pastor Benson introduced a motion to amend the proposed edits to the social statement. Pastor Miles-Wallace offered clarification on the rationale for the proposed amendment. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited additional discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Yes-732; No-35*
Carried: *In line 266, to ŘŜfŜűŜ áăλy∃fŜ 2ℕ dzY˝I·ℕℕλŜŘé I·yŘ ű2 ℕŜLJfI·ŎŜ űΚλă ŘŜfŜűλ2˝øλűΚ ádzY˝I·ℕℕλŜŘ 2ℕ ăλy∃fŜTé ű2 I·ŘŘ I· Ŧ22ůy2ůŜ ℕŜŦŜℕŜy˝Ŏλy∃ IjdzI·yűλűI·ůλØŜ ŘI·ůI· 2˝∃ŜyŘŜℕ disparity of single-parent headed households in the U.S.; and to adjust numbering of subsequent footnotes accordingly:*

ά a λfλ2yã 2Ŧ Κ2dzăŜΚ2fŘă λy˝űΚŜ ¦φ{φΣ I·yŘ Y I·yê λy˝2dzℕ ŎΚdzℕŎΚΣ I·ℕŜ ΚŜI·ŘŜŘ ōè ~~single or unmarried~~ unmarried or single parents, whether widowed, divorced, or never married.[36]é

fn 36: άIn 2023, 8.242 million single-parent households with children τ over 80 percent of single-parent households with children in the U.S. τ were maintained by single mothers, while single fathers maintained 2.037 million households with children. U.S. Census Bureau, άTable FG5. One-Parent Unmarried Family Groups with Own Children Under 18, by Labor Force Status of the Reference Person: 2023,é America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2023, https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2023/demo/families/cps-2023.html, accessed on July 30, 2025. The U.S. Census data do not reflect the many single, non-parent adults who maintain households with children across the U.S. and within this church.é

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, Pastor Miles-Wallace introduced a motion to amend the proposed edits to the social statement. Presiding Bishop Eaton invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Yes-720; No-44*
Carried: *In line 151, to ŘŜfŜűŜ á¢ΚŜ Κλăű2ℕλŎ /ΚℕλăűλI·y˝ űℕI·Řλűλ2y˝ ΚI·ă ℕŜŎ2∃yλÎŜŘ Y˝I·ℕℕλI·∃ŜXé and to replace it øλűΚ á¢ΚŜ /ΚℕλăűλI·y˝ űℕI·Řλűλ2y˝ ΚI·ă Κλăű2ℕλŎI·ffè ŘŜŦλySŘ Y˝I·ℕℕλI·∃ŜXé:*

á¢ΚŜ ~~historic~~ Christian tradition has ~~recognized~~ historically defined marriage to be a covenant between a man and a woman, reflected in the language of Genesis 1:27; 2:23-нп¢é

The Rev. Amalia J. Vagts [Grand Canyon Synod] introduced a motion to further amend the social statement.

Moved;
Seconded: *To amend lines 151ç152 by substitution:*

άThe Christian tradition has historically defined marriage ~~to be a covenant between a man and a woman,~~ as reflected in the language of Genesis 1:27; 2:23ç24.é

Voting members spoke in support of the proposed amendment. Pastor Benson reiterated that the *ad hoc* committee chose not to recommend adoption of the proposed amendment.

Moved;
Seconded; *Yes-552; No-211*
Carried: *To amend lines 151ç152 by substitution:*

ά~~The Christian tradition has historically defined marriage to be a covenant between a man and a woman,~~ as reflected in the language of Genesis 1:27; 2:23ç24.έ

After consideration of proposed amendments was complete, Presiding Bishop Eaton called for a vote to adopt the identified changes to the social statement as amended, following a prayer.

ASSEMBLY ACTION *TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED YES-724; NO-46*

CA25.05.27 To adopt the identified changes to the social statement on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009), as amended, as an editorial update to bring wording up to date, to clarify, and to bring it into congruence with subsequent social teaching, as authorized by 2022 Churchwide Assembly action CA22.01.07.

Marriage: shelter and context for trust

Trust is a quality of relationship that, while never perfected, is nurtured and reinforced over time. The trust and mutuality afforded by marriage can make marriage one of the most beautiful, abiding, and transformative forms of human relationship. Depth of care, matched to an intimacy of touch, creates relationships much stronger than simple and momentary erotic interest. Sexual intimacy, together with promises of fidelity and public accountability, is intended to nurture~~s~~ bonds that allow people to thrive. Additionally, marriage can ~~and~~ provide~~s~~ a rich context for the care and support of children and dependents.

In the United States, individual states determine the legal status and definition of marriage and may not discriminate against marriages between individuals of legal age based on race, sex, gender, or sexuality.[23] Within Christianity, ~~M~~marriage is often understood as a covenant of mutual promises, commitment, and hope between two individuals, authorized legally by the state and blessed by God. Ongoing interpretation of the Scriptures and the Confessions[24] has introduced complex considerations to moral discernment about sex, gender, and sexuality about which there is not universal agreement. ~~The historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions have recognized marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman, reflecting Mark 10: 6çφ[illegible] reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let [illegible]~~ (see Addendum)

[23 In the United States[illegible] Hodges, 576 U.S. 644 (2015) holds that states may not discriminate against marriages between individuals according to sex, gender, or sexuality, but otherwise the legality of marriage in the U.S. is determined at the state level.]

[24 ά[illegible]-era writings, central to Lutheran theology and practice and [illegible] *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* [Chicago:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2019], p. 71, footnote 14.) Though the writings that constitute the Book of Concord (commonly referred to as the Lutheran Confessions) engage a range of issues regarding teaching and practice, they do not address every question ƨℕ ΰƨLJЖΘΦ wl·ΰKŜℕΣ ΰKŜѐ ŦƨΘdžă ƨƴΰKŜ {ÕℕΛLJΰdzℕŜăΩ purpose: to reveal Jesus Christ.]

As mentioned previously (page 10), this church recognizes these matters are not central to our salvation, though they are central to the trust, flourishing, and well-being of human relationships. For this reason, they do require our best moral discernment, guided by Scripture, the sciences, and human experience, though this discernment may lead to different conclusions.

Marriage requires constant care and cultivation. It is intended to protect the creation and nurturing of mutual trust and love as one foundation of human community. ~~It is a binding relationship that provides conditions for personal well-being, the flourishing of the partner, and the possibility of procreation and the nurturing of children. It also is intended to be a blessing to the community and the world.~~ Because of promises of fidelity and public accountability, marriage is intended to provide~~s~~ a context of love, trust, honesty, and commitment within which a couple can express the profound joy of relationship as well as address the troubles they encounter throughout life. It is a binding relationship that should provide conditions for personal well-being and the flourishing of the partner; it also can provide conditions for the raising and nurturing of children.[25] It is intended to be a blessing to the community and the world.

[[25] This church acknowledges that there are multiple ways of nurturing children, including but not limited ΰƨ ÕI·ℕΛyƎ Ŧƨℕ ƨyŜΩă ƨǿƴ õΛƨfƨƎΛÕI·f ƨℕ I·Ř2LJΰŜŘ ÕKΛfŘℕŜyΘ]

Christians believe that marriage is not solely to ~~legitimate~~ legitimize physical sexual intimacy but to support long-term and durable communion for the good of others. It is a communion within which the play and delight of ~~physical~~ love are ~~crucial~~ expressions of the depth of trust and in which lovemaking can be a tender and generous act of self-giving that tends to the joy and pleasure of the other.

The public character of marriage also implies a civil responsibility. Marriage is intended not only to protect the people who are married, but to signal to the community their intention to live a peaceful and mutually fulfilling life, even as they endeavor to strengthen the community in which they live. The public promises of marriage ~~between a man and a woman~~, therefore, also protect the community by holding people accountable to their vows. Fidelity to promises blesses all who depend on this trust within and beyond the marriage.

This church recognizes that in some situations the trust upon which marriage is built becomes so deeply damaged or is so deeply flawed that the marriage itself must come to a legal end (Matthew 19:3ς12). This church does not treat divorce lightly nor does it disregard the responsibilities of marriage. However, in such situations, it provides support to the people involved and all who are affected. ~~Divorced li~~individuals experiencing marital distress are encouraged to avail themselves of pastoral care, to be I·ăădzℕŜŘ ƨŦ D2ŘΩă LJℕŜăŜyÕŜΣ ŦƨℕƎMØŜyŜăăΣ and healing, and to remain in the communion of the church, recognizing the all-encompassing mercy of God.

This church will provide supportive pastoral care to those who are separated or divorced. Further, it believes that those who wish to remarry may gain wisdom from the past and may be assured of

úKŜ D2ăLJŜfΩă ₸NŜŜŘ2Y΄Σ ~~in the midst of~~ amid brokenness and forgiveness, to enter into their new responsibilities in joy and hope. This church will tend pastorally to the special concerns of blended families, to children of separated or divorced parents, and to the particular tensions that may accompany family ~~breakdown~~ distress and transition.

Despite its awareness of the presence of sin and failure in marriage, the Christian tradition places great emphasis on the value of marriage for ~~a husband and wife~~ both spouses. It is in marriage that the highest degrees of physical intimacy are matched with and protected by the highest levels of binding commitment, including legal protection. It is in marriage that public promises of lifetime commitment can create the foundation for trust, intimacy, and safety.

. 2űK űKŜ Ŏ2dzLJfŜΩă λyűŜyű λY΄úKŜNJ ťŦŜf2yƎ LJNJ2Y΄λăŜă I·yŘ úKŜ ŎλØλf NJŜIjdzNJŜY΄ŜyűăŦ2NJ Y΄I·NJNJλI·ƎŜ I·NJŜ important. Mutual promises of enduring care and fidelity, made before God, allow a couple to open themselves to each other. They permit the sharing of profound and tender affection as well as deep vulnerabilities and anxieties. The legal contract creates a public arrangement within which a couple ~~may~~ can safely and equitably share their assets and resources, arrive at joint decisions, ~~anticipate children, protect and nurture them, and plan for a shared future.~~and plan for a shared future, and may anticipate, protect, and nurture children.

¢KŜ ŎKdzNJŎKΩă KλăűŽNJλŎI·f ŜÈLJŜNJλŜyŎŜ ădzLJLJŽNJúă λúă Ŏ2yŦλŘŜyŎŜ úKI·ú ă2fŜY΄Y΄LJNJ2Y΄λăŜăΣ Y΄I·ŘŜ ŌŜŦ2NJŜ I· Ŏ2Y΄LJI·yê 2Ŧ ǿλűyŜăăŜă ǿK2 I·ă] Ŧ2NJ D2ŘΩă ŌfŜăăλyƎ 2Y΄ ~~a man and a woman~~ the couple, have the power to create a unique framework within which two people, a new family, and the community may thrive. Consistent with that experience, this church has confidence that such promises, supported by the contractual framework of civil law, can create a lifetime relationship of commitment and cooperation.

~~Recognizing that this conclusion differs from the historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions, some people, though not all, in this church and within the larger Christian community, conclude that marriage is also the appropriate term to use in describing similar benefits, protection, and support for same-gender couples entering into lifelong, monogamous relationships. They believe that such accountable relationships also provide the necessary foundation that supports trust and familial and community thriving. Other contractual agreements, such as civil unions, also seek to provide some of these protections and to hold those involved in such relationships accountable to one another and to society.~~

~~Lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships~~ Sex, gender, and sexuality in marriage

Within the last decades, this church has begun to understand and experience in new ways the need or desire of ~~same-gender-oriented~~ individuals to seek ~~relationships~~ marriage as a relationship of lifelong companionship and commitment, as well as public accountability and legal support ~~for those commitments~~. At the same time, public debates and deliberations have continued regarding understandings of ~~human sexuality~~ sex, gender, and sexuality in medicine, social science, and corresponding public policy ~~about same-gender relationships~~.

We in the ELCA recognize that many of our ~~sisters and brothers in same-gender relationships~~ siblings of diverse sexual orientations in relationships sincerely desire the support of other

Christians for living faithfully in all aspects of their lives, including their sexual fidelity. In response, we have drawn deeply on our Lutheran theological heritage and Scripture. This has led, however, to differing and conscience-bound understandings about the place of such relationships within the Christian community. We have come to various conclusions concerning how to regard ~~lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships~~ marriage of LGBTQ+ couples, including whether and how to recognize publicly ~~their~~ those lifelong commitments within the context of this church.

While Lutherans hold various convictions regarding ~~lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships~~ marriage between individuals of diverse sex, gender, or sexuality, this church is united on many critical issues, such as ~~It~~ oppos~~e~~ing all forms of verbal or physical harassment and assault based on ~~sexual orientation~~ actual or perceived sex, gender, or sexuality;~~.~~ ~~It~~ support~~s~~ing legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services;~~.~~ and ~~It has~~ call~~ed~~ing upon congregations and members to welcome, care for, and support ~~same-gender~~ all couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection.

The ELCA recognizes that it has a ~~pastoral~~ responsibility to care for all children of God. This includes a ~~pastoral~~ responsibility to minister to those ~~who are same-gender in their orientation~~ with diverse sex, gender, or sexual identities and to those who are seeking counsel about their gender or sexual self-understanding. All are encouraged to avail themselves of the means of grace and pastoral care. This church understands pastoral care to be marked by a gracious affirmation of the value of the ƛyŘƛØƛŘdzI·fΩă fƛŦŜ I·yŘ ōè Ǒ2yǑŜ₦yϒŦ2₦ úKŜ₳₦ ǿŜff-being, regardless of their sex, gender, or sexuality.[28]

[28 A similar approach to pastoral care is evident in other ELCA social teaching; see, for an early example, the 1991 ELCA social statement on abortion, p.6.]

~~This church also acknowledges that consensus does not exist concerning how to regard same-gender committed relationships~~ The Christian tradition has historically defined marriage as reflected in the language of Genesis 1:27; 2:23ς24.[29] However, this church acknowledges that consensus does not exist concerning how to regard marriage for couples of diverse sexual orientations, even after many years of thoughtful, respectful, and faithful study and conversation. ~~We do not have agreement on whether this church should honor these relationships and uplift, shelter, and protect them or on precisely how it is appropriate to do so.~~

[29 While not the only reference in Scripture to marriage, Genesis 1:27; 2:23ς24 has been a core source for the historic Christian tradition. It is often cited alongside Mark 10:6-9, where Jesus references the Genesis verses while responding to the male-privilegŜŘ ŘƛØ2₦ǑŜ ⱠJ₦I·ǑΩƛǑŜă 2Ŧ Kƛă ŘI·è I·yŘ Ŧ2₦ōƛŘŘƛyƎ I·ff ŘƛØ2₦ǑŜϒ ά.dzΰ Ŧ₦2Y úKŜ ōŜƎƛyϒƛyƎ 2Ŧ Ǒ₦ŜI·úƛ2yΣ ΨD2Ř Y I·ŘŜ úKŜY Y I·fŜ I·yŘ ŦŜY I·fŜΦ C2₦ úKƛă ₦ŜI·ă2yX úKŜ úø2 ăKI·ff ōŜǑ2YŜ 2yŜ ŦfŜăKΦ {2 úKŜè I·₦Ŝ y2 f2yƎŜ₦ úø2 ōdzΰ 2yŜ ŦfŜăKΦ ¢KŜ₦ŜŦ2₦Ŝ ǿKI·ΰ D2Ř KI·ă ⁇ƛyŜŘ Ω2ƎŜΰher, let no one ăŜⱠJI·₦I·ΩŜΦέ]

Loving families: Ground and source for social trust

One of the places where social trust is most important is in the context of the family. In Ǒ2yΩŜYⱠJ2₦I·₦è ă2ǑƛŜΩèΣ úKŜ ΩŜ₦Y άŦI·Yƛfèέ ~~includes~~ denotes a variety of forms, such as married Ǒ2dzⱠJfŜăΣ ⱠJI·₦ΩyŜ₦ăΣ ǑKƛfŘ₦ŜyΣ ŜÈΩŜyŘŜŘ ₦ŜfI·ΩƛØŜăΣ I·yŘ 2ΩKŜ₦ă ǿK2 Y I·è ōŜ ⱠJI·₦Ω 2Ŧ 2yŜΩă ǑK2ăŜyϒI·Y ƛfèΦ This understanding is Y2₦Ŝ I·ⱡƛyϒΩ2 ΩKŜ 2fŘŜ₦ ΩŜ₦Y 2Ŧ άK2dzăŜK2fŘΣέ ~~exclusively~~ employed by Luther to include immediate family members, relatives, and others.

Children learn either trust or distrust from their earliest relationships of dependence upon parents, caregivers, and others in the household. Patterns of loyalty and confidence established in the

family can reach into all future relationships. Those who do not learn to trust face significant obstacles to becoming trustworthy individuals in the more complicated relationships of mod- ern life and may find it difficult to develop a mature and healthy sexuality.

This church regards the family as an indispensable social institution because of its role in establishing conditions of trust and protection of the vulnerable. As such, society is responsible for both protecting and supporting ~~properly both regulates and shelters~~ families through ~~family law~~ public policy ~~that exists~~ to ensure that these critical responsibilities will be met and that dependent family members will be protected and treated justly when households dissolve.

~~Many current s~~Social trends[35] in the United States and elsewhere properly raise concerns about the health of families. While these trends do involve individuals who carry personal responsibility for their choices, they also are driven by economic and social forces that are both complex in origin and significantly resistant to correction.

[35 Such trends include remarkably large numbers of physically or psychologically absent fathers and teenagers with parenting responsibilities for which they are not prepared. They include the reluctance of some ~~men and women~~ individuals to commit themselves to marriage. Stresses on marriages and individuals in marriages contribute to high rates of divorce with accompanying concerns for children and other extended family members.]

In ~~this country and throughout~~ the latter half of the ~~twentieth~~ 20th century, the legally married, heterosexual, ~~á~~nuclear family~~é has been~~ was supported by strong social conventions.[31] With that strong social support, t~~T~~he nuclear family ~~is well-structured to~~ fosters positive experiences for many people. ~~the development of trust in children and youth. The experience of millions of people and recent social science findings demonstrate its ability to do so.~~[32] This does not mean, however, that it has always done so effectively. In fact, ~~F~~families of all kinds can shelter sexism or domestic violence, and~~,~~ in such situations, the safety of children or others who ~~are~~ may be harmed is of utmost importance.[33] Moreover, there have always been wide variations in household structure, as stated above, including households with extended family members or non-biologically-related members.

[~~31 Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions assume and encourage households, similar in some ways to this model, but historically and currently there are wide variations that include many other family members, widowed heads of households, laborers, and the like.~~

~~32 This point and the supporting data may be found in various sources. One source is the attempt by Don S. Browning to summarize and employ that data for a consecutive proposal in *Equality and the Family: A Fundamental, Practical Theology of Children, Mothers, and Fathers in Modern Societies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005). See especially the citations in chapters four and seven.~~

~~33 Ibid.~~]

In this country and in our congregations, families are formed in many ways. Some examples include biologically-related ~~There are natural~~ and adoptive families, foster families, blended families, families with a missing generation, families without children, and families where the parents are the same sex or gender. Millions of households in the U.S., and many in our church, are headed by unmarried or single parents, ~~, mostly women~~ whether widowed, divorced, or never married.[36] The critical issue with respect to the family is not whether it has a conventional form but how it performs indispensable individual and social tasks. All families have responsibility for the tasks of providing safety, shielding intimacy, and developing trustworthy relationships.

[36 In 2023, 8.242 million single-parent households with children τ over 80 percent of single-parent households with children in the U.S. τ were maintained by single mothers, while single fathers maintained 2.037 million households with children. U.S. Census Bureaʤ ά¢Ι·ōfŜ CDpΦ hyŜ-Parent Unmarried Family DW2ʤLJă ØλΰK hάy´ /KλfŘWŜy´ ¦ yŘŜW мyΣ ōè [Ι·ō2W C2WÔŜ {ΰΙ·ΰʤă 2Ŧ ΰKŜ wŜŦŜWŜyÔŜ tŜWă2yϒ нлноΣé ! YŜWλÔΙ·Ωă Families and Living Arrangements: 2023, www.census.gov/data/tables/ 2023/demo/families/cps-2023.html, accessed on July 30, 2025.é The U.S. Census data do not reflect the many single non-parent adults who maintain households with children across the U.S. and within this church.]

¢Kλă ŎKʤWŎKΩă ŦΛWăΰ WŜăLJ2yãŜ ΰ2ØΙ·WŘ ŦΙ·Y´λfΛŜă Ι·yŘ K2ʤžŜK2ŦŘă ăK2ʤfŘ ōŜ 2yŜ 2Ŧ ØŜfÔ2Y´Ŝ Ι·yŘ ădzLJLJ2Wΰ that includes particularly the care for and safety of children. Children are to be invited into the community of the baptized regardless of their family situation or household structure.

This church responds to the needs of families through its ministry and service in various settings. It also has the task of addressing and advocating against social and economic trends that ~~counter~~ inhibit the development of strong families.

¢KW2ʤZK ΰKŜ LJW2ŎfΙ·Y´Ι·ΰλ2y´2Ŧ D2ŘΩă ² 2WŘ Ι·yŘ ΰKŜ ăΙ·ŎWΙ·Y´Ŝyΰăΐ D2Ř ŎWŜΙ·ΰŜă Ι·yŘ ăΰWŜyƎΰKŜyã ŦΙ·λΰK and supports believers both inside and outside of families. Family life also is supported when its members strive to meet reasonable expectations to forgive and to seek forgiveness and to bear each 2ΰKŜWΩă ōʤWŘŜyã WŜăLJ2yãλōfèΦ ~~These practices honor God and, when learned in the context of a loving and committed family, may lead to mature and healthy expressions of sexuality.~~ When trust has been betrayed in such situations, then forgiveness, loving correction, and reconciliation should be encouraged when appropriate to the specific situation.[37] ~~must be attempted.~~

[37 Forgiveness and reconciliation can be appropriate responses in certain situations; however, in the context 2Ŧ ŎΙ·WŜΣ yŜλΰKŜW ŎΙ·y´ōŜ ŘŜY´Ι·yŘŜŘ 2Ŧ ØλÔΰΛY´ă 2Ŧ Øλ2fŜyŎŜ 2W ōŜΰWΙ·èΙ·fΦ ά/KWăΰΛΙ·yã Ι·WŜ y2ΰ λy´Ι· LJ2ăλΰλ2y´ΰ2 demand forgiveness by others for others. Coercing someone to forgive may actually subvert healing and Ι·ÔŎ2ʤzyΰΙ·ōλfΛΰèé ELCA, άDŜyŘŜW-ōΙ·ăŜŘ ±λ2fŜyŎŜé (Chicago: ELCA, 2015).]

This church acknowledges with regret the way in which the misuse of historical teachings concerning sex, gender, and sexuality has harmed individuals, deepened suffering, or torn families apart. This includes actions that abandon or shun people for unwed pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity. ~~or for a same-gender orientation.~~ Hate crimes and violence based on the ØλŎΰΛY´Ωă Ι·ŎΰʤzΙ·f 2W LJŜWŎŜλØŜŘ ăŜÈΣ ƎŜyŘŜWΣ 2W ăŜÈʤzΙ·fΛΰè ~~against those who are regarded as sexually different~~ sometimes ~~have been~~ are perpetrated ~~publicly~~ in the name of Christ. Not only must such behaviors be denounced, but this church must work toward greater understanding of sex, gender, and sexuality.[38] ~~sexual orientation and gender identity.~~

[38 9[/ ! ă2ŎλΙ·f Y´ŜăăΙ·ƎŜΣ άDŜyŘŜW-ōΙ·ăŜŘ ±λ2fŜyŎŜΣé LJLJΦ нΣ c-10.]

wŜƎΙ·WŘfŜää 2Ŧ 2yŜΩă ōŜfΛŜTΣ 2y´ΰKŜ Ŏ2Y´LJfŜÈ ΰ2LJλŎă λy´ΰKλă ă2ŎλΙ·f ăΰΙ·ΰŜY´Ŝyΰΰ ΰKλă ŎKʤWŎK ~~It~~ must seek that which is positive and life-giving for the neighbor while protecting each other from ~~all~~ that which is harmful and destructive (Matthew 22:39-40.)[39]

[39 See *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, pp. 2ς5, 12ς14, 28ς30, 34ς35, 61ς62.]

These laws have a direct impact on patterns of social trust within households and networks of kinship. Criminal statutes, state enforcement, and judicial handling of matters related to sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual threats, and domestic violence require our close attention.[40] Victims of sexual violation must be able to rely on public institutions for intervention in troubled

relationships. They must be able to expect protection when their trust in an individual has been abused.

[40 For more on domestic violence and gender-based violence, see *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, p. 76. See also άDŜYŘŜ-based Violence.έ]

Society at large must ensure that all who are dependent upon others in the ~~family~~ household for spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being are protected by social policies and practices. Even social institutions and practices not directly related to family institutions can and should facilitate and support familial care and responsibility. Examples include tax and poverty law, real estate and zoning regulations, and insurance industry policies and practices.

The ELCA will support familial relationships as central to nurturing and sustaining trust and security in human relationships. It will advocate for public policies that support and protect families. This church commits itself to continued attention to and discernment about ~~changing~~ diverse family configurations and the ways they serve to shelter and protect relationships of mutual trust.

The presiding bishop declared that the motion was adopted and led the assembly in thanking the *ad hoc* committee.

Consideration of Amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* Removed from *En Bloc* and Additional Proposed Amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA (cont.)*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section V:4, Recommendation: Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Constitutions of the ELCA; Section IX, Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited the Rev. Gwendolyn S. King and Mr. Mitchell S. McCartney, co-chairs of the Reference and Counsel Committee, to continue consideration of proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA.* The presiding bishop announced that the consideration of proposed amendments would resume with pending business, consideration of the motion to amend continuing resolution 5.01.E19.

Moved;

[Seconded]: *To amend 5.01.E19. to increase the percentage goal of youth and young adult voting membership of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees from 10 percent to 20 percent, as follows:*

5.01.E19. *It is the goal of this church that at least 20 ~~10~~ percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the* Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, *ΰKŜ ΰŜℕY άè2dzΰKέ YŜI·yã I· Ø2ΰλyΞ YŜYōŜℕ 2ŦI· Ŏ2yΞℕŜΞI·ΰλ2yϒøK2 KI·ă y2ΰ reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term άè2dzyΞ I·Řdztΰέ YŜI·yã a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.*

and

To direct the Church Council to develop and present a plan for implementation of this continuing resolution at its April 2026 meeting that also addresses barriers to youth and young adult participation.

A voting member spoke in support of the motion. A voting member called the question; voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion to end debate.

Moved: *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
Seconded; *Yes-672; No-78*
Carried: To end debate.

The presiding bishop declared debate closed and called for the vote on the main motion.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION *YES-530; NO-236*

CA25.05.28 *To amend 5.01.E19. to increase the percentage goal of youth and young adult voting membership of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees from 10 percent to 20 percent, as follows:*

5.01.E19. *It is the goal of this church that at least 20 ~~10~~ percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the* Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, *ŭKŜ ŭŜℕY áè2dzŭKɛ YŜI·yã I· Ø2ŭłyƎ member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time 2ŦŜfŜŎŭłz2y 2ℕ I·LJLJ2łyŭYŜyŭ Ŧ2ℕ ăŜℕØłŎŜ℗ ¢KŜ ŭŜℕY áè2dzyƎ I·Řdzfŭɛ YŜI·yã a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.*

and

To direct the Church Council to develop and present a plan for implementation of this continuing resolution at its April 2026 meeting that also addresses barriers to youth and young adult participation.

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motion was adopted and announced that the assembly would return to business postponed from the eighth plenary session, the motion to refer amendment of provision 22.11.b. to the Office of the Secretary.

Moved;
Seconded: To refer consideration of amendment of provision 22.11.b. to the Office of the Secretary for further study.

Pastor King provided clarification regarding the motion before the assembly. A voting member spoke in opposition to the motion to refer. A voting member called the question; voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion to end debate.

In response to a point of information raised by a voting member, Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel, clarified that, if the amendment to provision 22.11.b. were approved by the assembly, the soonest it could be incorporated into the ELCA constitution would be 2028. If the assembly referred consideration of the amendment of provision 22.11.b. to the Office of the

Secretary, and the Church Council recommended adoption by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly, the amendment would also be incorporated into the ELCA constitution in 2028.

Moved: *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
Seconded; *Yes-692; No-73*
Carried: To end debate.

The presiding bishop declared debate closed and called for the vote on the motion to refer.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION *YES-517; NO-247*

CA25.05.29 To refer amendment of provision 22.11.b. to the Office of the Secretary for further study.

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motion to refer was adopted.

Consideration of Motion I:

The Rev. Kari S. Niedermaier [Florida-Bahamas Synod] proposed amendment of bylaw 7.31.02.a.8. and parallel passages in the *Constitution of the ELCA*, *Constitution for Synods*, and *Model Constitution for Congregations*. The proposal was codified as Motion I.

Motion I:
*In bylaw 7.31.02.a.8., to ăúℕλ⟅Ŝ áŜYōℕI·ŏλyƎ I·yŘ ǿŜfŏ2YλyƎ ℕI·ŏλI·ffè I·yŘ ŜűKyΛŏI·ffè ŘλØŜℕăŜ populations,é and replace it with the following language, áunifying and reconciling the diverse body of Christ into which we are baptized, giving special honor to members of historically dzyŘŜℕℕŜLJℕŜăŜyűŜŘ ƎℕƨdzLJăΦé ! yŘ űKI·ű űKŜ ăI·YŜ ădzōăűλűdzűλ2yˇλă Ř2yŜ λyˇűKŜ ŧ2ff2ǿλyƎ ŧ2ŏI·ûλ2yãY mΦcмΦлнΦŏΦ ϟ{мпΦмнΦI·ΦyΦΣ ϟ{мпΦонΦŏΦΣ *C9.03.a.8., *C9.23.c.*

The Reference and Counsel Committee declined to recommend Motion I. On behalf of the committee, Pastor King moved an alternative amendment to bylaw 7.31.02.a.8. and parallel provisions and bylaws.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
[Seconded]: *To strike the phrase áŜYōℕI·ŏλyƎ I·yŘ ǿŜťŏ2YλyƎ ℕI·ŏλI·ffè I·yŘ ŜűKyΛŏI·ffè ŘλØŜℕăŜ LJ2LJdzfI·ûλ2yãé in bylaw 7.31.02.a.8. and to replace it with the following language: áŜYōℕI·ŏλyƎ I·yŘ ǿŜfŏ2YλyƎ YŜYōŜℕă 2ŧ KλăűƨℕλŏI·ffè dzyŘŜℕℕŜLJℕŜăŜyűŜŘ ƎℕƨdzLJă.é*

7.31.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

X

8) X working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming ~~racially and ethnically diverse populations~~ members of historically underrepresented groups.

and

To make parallel substitution in the following provisions and bylaws: тΦсмΦлнΦŏΦΣ ϟ{мпΦмнΦI·ΦyΦΣ ϟ{мпΦонΦŏΦΣ Ғ / ΦΦлоΦI·ΦyΦΣ Ғ / ΦΦноΦŏΦ

Pastor Niedermaier introduced a substitute motion.

Moved;
Seconded: *To substitute for the motion before the assembly the following motion:*

To amend bylaw 7.31.02.a.8. and parallel provisions and bylaws by substitution:

7.31.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

X

8) X working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and ~~embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations~~ unifying and reconciling the diverse body of Christ into which we are baptized, giving special honor to members of historically underrepresented groups.

and

To make parallel substitution in the following provisions and bylaws: т⌀см⌀лн⌀Ŏ⌀Σ Ч{мп⌀мн⌀І·⌀у⌀Σ Ч{мп⌀он⌀Ŏ⌀Σ Ғ / ф⌀ло⌀І·⌀у⌀Σ Ғ / ф⌀но⌀Ŏ⌀

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited proposed amendments to the motion of the Reference and Counsel Committee; there being none, she invited proposed amendments to the substitute motion and, there being none, called for the vote on the motion to substitute.

Moved;
Seconded;
Carried: *Yes-390; No-312*

To substitute for the motion before the assembly the following motion:

To amend bylaw 7.31.02.a.8. and parallel provisions and bylaws by substitution:

7.31.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

X

8) X working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and ~~embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations~~ unifying and reconciling the diverse body of Christ into which we are baptized, giving special honor to members of historically underrepresented groups.

and

To make parallel substitution in the following provisions and bylaws: т⌀см⌀лн⌀Ŏ⌀Σ Ч{мп⌀мн⌀І·⌀у⌀Σ Ч{мп⌀он⌀Ŏ⌀Σ Ғ / ф⌀ло⌀І·⌀у⌀Σ Ғ / ф⌀но⌀Ŏ⌀

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motion to substitute was adopted and called for consideration of the motion before the assembly.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
Seconded: *To amend bylaw 7.31.02.a.8. and parallel provisions and bylaws by substitution:*

7.31.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

X

8) X working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and ~~embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations~~ unifying and reconciling the diverse body of Christ into which we are baptized, giving special honor to members of historically underrepresented groups.

and

To make parallel substitution in the following provisions and bylaws: т♦см♦лн♦Ŏ♦Σ ҂{мп♦мн♦ł·♦у♦Σ ҂{мп♦он♦Ŏ♦Σ ҂ / ф♦ло♦ł·♦у♦Σ ҂ / ф♦но♦Ŏ♦

Pastor Niedermaier spoke in support of the motion. Other voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion. After four voting members in a row had spoken in opposition, Presiding Bishop Eaton asked whether any voting member wished to speak in support of the motion. When none did, she called for the vote on the motion in accord with the rules of the assembly.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
Seconded; *Yes-53; No-702*
Defeated: *To amend bylaw 7.31.02.a.8. and parallel provisions and bylaws by substitution:*

7.31.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

X

8) X working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and ~~embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations~~ unifying and reconciling the diverse body of Christ into which we are baptized, giving special honor to members of historically underrepresented groups.

and

To make parallel substitution in the following provisions and bylaws: т♦см♦лн♦Ŏ♦Σ ҂{мп♦мн♦ł·♦у♦Σ ҂{мп♦он♦Ŏ♦Σ ҂ / ф♦ло♦ł·♦у♦Σ ҂ / ф♦но♦Ŏ♦

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motion had failed and called for the orders of the day.

Announcements

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Secretary Rothmeyer for announcements.

Adjournment

The tenth plenary session of the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned at 4:52 p.m. A litany of repentance and lamentation for the sins of patriarchy and sexism immediately followed the plenary session.

Plenary Session Eleven

Saturday, Aug. 2, 2025
11:00 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened Saturday, Aug. 2, 2025, in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order at 11:00 a.m. (all times Mountain Standard Time unless otherwise indicated).

Consideration of Additional Proposed Amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA (cont.)*

Reference: *2025 Bulletin of Reports, Section IX, Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee*

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited the Rev. Gwendolyn S. King and Mr. Mitch S. McCartney, co-chairs of the Reference and Counsel Committee, to continue the report of the committee.

Consideration of Motion F:

Mr. Brandon M. Graves [Northern Illinois Synod] proposed addition of a bylaw limiting the consecutive terms served by a presiding bishop. The proposal was codified as Motion F.

Motion F:
That the presiding bishop shall serve no more than two terms.

On behalf of the committee, Mr. McCartney moved amendment of the constitution in accord with Motion F.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
[Seconded]: *To amend the constitution by addition:*

13.22.03. The presiding bishop shall serve no more than two terms.

Voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the proposed amendment. In response to questions from voting members, Presiding Bishop Eaton and Mr. McCartney provided clarification regarding the motion.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
[Seconded]: *Yes-102; No-540*
Defeated: *To amend the constitution by addition:*

13.22.03. The presiding bishop shall serve no more than two terms.

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motion had failed.

Consideration of Motion G:

Mr. Graves also proposed addition of a bylaw limiting the consecutive terms served by a secretary. The proposal was codified as Motion G.

Motion G:
That the secretary shall serve no more than two terms.

On behalf of the committee, Mr. McCartney moved amendment of the constitution in accord with Motion G.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
[Seconded]: *To amend the constitution by addition:*

13.42.03. The secretary shall serve no more than two terms.

Mr. Graves rose to request that the motion be withdrawn. Presiding Bishop Eaton asked whether there was any objection to the motion being withdrawn and, there being none, declared the motion withdrawn by unanimous consent.

Moved;
[Seconded]; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
Withdrawn: *To amend the constitution by addition:*

13.42.03. The secretary shall serve no more than two terms.

Consideration of Motion H:

Ms. Rebecca J. Bass [Florida-Bahamas Synod] proposed amendment of bylaw 19.04.02.a. concerning the definition of synod membership. The proposal was codified as Motion H.

Motion H:
¢KI·ű ōèfI·ø мфѱлпѱлнѱI·ф ōŜ I· YˆŜyŘŜŘ ōè ăúℕλ⟅λyƎ άΣ ǿλűK űKŜ ℕŜŎ2ƎyЋűλ2yˇűKI·ű ădzŎK I· LJŜℕă2yˇăKI·ff reside within the territory of the synod or in the area immediately adjacent to the territory in the case of border areas.έ ₹ℕ2Yˇ űKŜ űŜÈűф

On behalf of the committee, Mr. McCartney moved adoption of Motion H.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
[Seconded]: *To amend bylaw 19.04.02.a. by deletion:*

19.04.02. For purposes of nomination to and service on the Church Council, a committee of the churchwide organization, or a board of a separately incorporated ministry, άăèy2Ř YˆŜYˇōŜℕăKλLJé ăKI·ff ōŜ ŘŜ₹λyŜŘ I·ă ₹2ff2ǿăY

a. A layperson shall be recorded in the synod that includes the congregation in which such a person holds voting membership~~, with the recognition that such a person shall reside within the territory of the synod or in an area immediately adjacent to the territory in the case of border areas~~.

Voting members spoke in support of and opposition to the motion. Mr. McCartney and Presiding Bishop Eaton provided clarification regarding the proposed amendment. A voting member called for the question, and the assembly affirmed by unanimous consent to forgo debate of the motion to close debate.

Moved: *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
Seconded; *Yes-595; No-17*
Carried: To end debate.

The presiding bishop declared debate closed and called for the vote on the motion to amend.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
[Seconded]: *Yes-404; No-211*
Defeated: *To amend bylaw 19.04.02.a. by deletion:*

19.04.02. For purposes of nomination to and service on the Church Council, a committee of the churchwide organization, or a board of a separately incorporated ministry, άăèy2Ř YˆŜYˇōŜℕăKλLJé ăKI·ff ōŜ ŘŜ₹λyŜŘ I·ă ₹2ff2ǿăY

a. A layperson shall be recorded in the synod that includes the congregation in which such a person holds voting membership~~, with the recognition that such a person shall reside within the territory of the synod or in an area immediately adjacent to the territory in the case of border areas~~.

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motion had failed.

Consideration of Motion J:

Mr. William D. Platnick [Upstate New York Synod] proposed adoption of a resolution on artificial intelligence. The proposal was codified as Motion J.

Motion J:

Resolution on Artificial Intelligence in the Church

² KŜℕŜI·ăΣ ǿŜ ŌŜfiŜØŜ űKI·ű áD2Ř ŎℕŜI·űŜŘ KdzYI·y˺ɻyŘ ɻy˺ŵD2ŘΩăê ɻYI·ƎŜɛ óDŜySˆăλă ʍʏʜmú I·yŘ űKI·ű ŜØŜℕë human being bears the imago Dei, endowed with intrinsic dignity, creativity, and moral responsibility;

² KŜℕŜI·ăΣ űKŜ 9[/ !Ωă ă2ŎλI·t YˆŜăăI·ƎŜ CI·λűKΣ {ŎλŜyŎŜ I·yŘ ¢ŜŎKy2t2ƎëY 9yØfiℕ2yYˆSyúΣ a ŜŘfiŎλySΣ I·yŘ DŜySˆűλÒă ℕŜYˆɻyŘă dză űKI·ű áD2Ř ǿ2ℕ˺ă űKℕ2dzƎK KdzYI·y˺ŎℕŜI·űλØfiúëΣɛ I·yŘ ŎI·ftă űKŜ ŎKdzℕŎK ű2 ŜËŜℕŎλăŜ ǿλăŜ stewardship of all God-given gifts;

Whereas, artificial intelligence (AI) τ broadly defined as computer systems capable of tasks once thought to require human intelligence τ has seen rapid advances in areas such as language processing, decision-making, and pattern recognition, with profound implications for work, relationships, worship, and public life;

Whereas, AI raises urgent ethical and theological questions around human dignity, agency, bias, privacy, justice, the nature of vocation, and the safe deployment of powerful new tools τ especially for those most vulnerable to technological displacement or surveillance;

Whereas, AI-driven automation threatens to displace workers across industries, exacerbating economic inequity and calling the church to stand in solidarity with those affected;

Whereas, congregations, rostered leaders, and church institutions increasingly encounter AI-driven tools in pastoral care, education, administration, and global mission, yet lack consistent frameworks to discern where such tools may augment human ministry τ and where they risk undermining the gospel and human flourishing;

Whereas, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly has called for ongoing socio-ethical reflection on emerging technologies and directs its Division for Church in Society to resource this church in engaging public policy, advocacy, and education;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. *Affirms that human beings alone τ created by God, redeemed in Christ, and guided by the Holy Spirit τ remain the ultimate bearers of moral responsibility; no AI system can ℕŜLJfI·ŎŜ űKŜ Ø2ŎI·űλ2yΣ Ô2YˆLJI·ăăλ2yΣ 2ℕ ŘλăŎŜℕyYˆSyú ŜyűℕdzăűŜŘ ű2 D2ŘΩă LJŜ2LJfŜΦ*
2. *Directs the ELCA Division for Church in Society, in partnership with the ELCA Advocacy Office and the seminary network, to develop and publish by March 2026:*
   - *ω ! Ŏ2yŎλăŜ á!ʟ I·yŘ CI·λűKɛ ăűdzŘë ƎdzλŘŜ ₮2ℕ ăYI·ff ƎℕΔ2dzLJă I·yŘ I·Řdzfű ₮2ℕdzYˆăΣ ǿλűK discussion questions rooted in Lutheran theology.*
   - *ω Ethical and Safe-Use Guidelines for AI in worship planning, pastoral care tools, educational settings, administrative functions, and social ministry programs τ emphasizing transparency, accountability, data privacy, bias mitigation, and safeguards against unintended harm.*
3. *Encourages all ELCA councils (congregational, synod, and churchwide) to utilize the following Values Framework τ originally adopted by the Presbyterian Church (USA) 226th General Assembly τ in order to interpret and apply the Ethical and Safe-Use Guidelines (see 2) as they arise in new or unanticipated contexts, while more comprehensive policy is under development:*

a. *Recognize the fundamental, inherent dignity of every human.*
b. *Ensure no human or human community is subjected to harm at any stage in the AI lifecycle, and mitigate disruptive impacts.*
c. *!Ŏ]y2øfŜŘƎŜ !Lℚă LJ2ű$ŷűλI·f ű2 I·ăăλăű I·ű ŜØŜℕè ăűI·ƎŜ 2₮ űKŜ KdzY'I·y'fλ₮Ŝ ŎèŎfŜ℗*
d. *Insist on preservation, promotion, and expansion of fundamental freedoms and rights for individuals and communities in AI-assisted contexts.*
e. *Implement environmental and ecosystem safeguards to ensure the flourishing of creation.*
f. *Foster participative and enabling roles for all actors, in building peaceful and just societies.*
g. *Promote peace, inclusivity, justice, equity, and interconnectedness throughout the AI lifecycle.*
h. */2Y'Yλű ű2 ŜyƎI·ƎλyƎ !Lℚă ōℕ2I·ŘŜℕ λY'LJfλŎI·űλ2yã λy' I· űKŜ2f2ƎλŎI·ffè ℕŜăLJ2yãλōfŜ manner.*

4. *Encourages ELCA seminaries and partner institutions to establish or expand interdisciplinary courses and research initiatives at the intersection of theology, ethics, computer science, and social justice τ preparing future rostered ministers and church profŜăăλ2yl·fă ű2 yl·ØλƎI·ű$!Lℚă ŎKI·ffŜyƎŜă ₮I·λűK₮dzffè I·yŘ ăI·₮Ŝfè℗*
5. *Urges the ELCA to:*
   ω *Advocate, with ecumenical and interfaith partners, for public policies that protect workers displaced by automation, uphold data privacy, prohibit lethal autonomous weapons, and promote responsible innovation.*
   ω *Partner with global companion churches to ensure AI-enabled tools (e.g., translation, health diagnostics, educational platforms) advance the gospel, human well-being, and equitable access, rather than entrench existing inequities.*
6. *Requests that by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council report on progress made, lessons learned, and recommend any further actions needed to ensure ELCA ministries remain rooted in the gospel, responsive τ and safe τ in an age of rapid technological change and ecological challenge.*

On behalf of the Reference and Counsel Committee, Pastor King introduced a motion to refer Motion J to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Service and Justice unit, and the Office of the Treasurer. Mr. Platnick spoke in support of the motion to refer.

ASSEMBLY ACTION *YES-584; NO-15*

CA25.06.30 To refer the Resolution on Artificial Intelligence in the Church to the Office of the Presiding Bishop (Theological Discernment) and to the Service and Justice unit (Advocacy), in consultation with the Office of the Treasurer (Information Technology), and to request a progress report to the Church Council by its Spring 2026 meeting.

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motion had passed. Pastor King led the assembly in thanking the members of the Reference and Counsel Committee for their service.

On behalf of the committee, Mr. McCartney and Pastor King introduced a series of motions recognizing and thanking various individuals and groups who have served this church during this assembly and over the past three years. The motions were approved by acclamation.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31a We, the members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, give thanks to God for the members of the Church Council who will be concluding their six-year terms at this assembly. We wish to thank these 22 individuals for their dedicated service to this church during their terms, and to acknowledge that their service included membership on task forces and *ad hoc* committees, attendance at synod assemblies, and representation of this church in global, national, and local forums:

- Mr. Kevin Anderson
- Ms. Tracey Beasley
- The Rev. Benjamin Bergren
- The Rev. Marcus Bigott
- The Rev. Nick Billardello III
- Ms. Susan Kingrey Boxberger
- The Rev. Bill Callister
- Ms. Divine
- The Rev. Joanne Engquist
- Ms. Kerry Fehrman
- Bishop-elect Emily Hartner
- The Rev. Pamela Hoh
- Ms. Cherrish Holland
- Mr. David Lenz
- The Rev. Tara Lynn
- Mr. Ethan Miller-Perez
- Mr. Keoni Newman
- Mr. Noah Roux
- Ms. Valerie Shaw
- Ms. Andraine Sinaga
- Mr. Loren Solberg
- Ms. Loni Taylor

We appreciate their tireless work of renewing and growing the ŎKdzNŎKΩă Y˙λăăλ2yΦ ² Ŝ Ŏ2yΰλyΩzŜ ΰ2 ⌊ŜŜLJ ΰKŜY˙ I·yŘ ΰKŜλNJ ø2ℕ⌊Σ øKλŎK λă 2dzNJ work, in prayer.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31b The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered in Phoenix, Ariz., thank the churchwide organization and staff for their hard work and dedication to the mission of Christ in this church. We thank God for their willingness to serve as a part of the everyday lifeblood of this church both here in the United States and globally.

We thank each of the offices and units of the churchwide organization:

- Office of the Presiding Bishop
- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the Treasurer
- Christian Community and Leadership
- Service and Justice
- Innovation

We are church together in Christ because of this churchwide ƨNƎIˑyλÎIˑűλƨyΩă ǿλtftλyƎyŜăă űƨ ǑƨyűλyʤzŜ NŜySŜǿλyƎ IˑyŘ ƎNƨǿλyƎ ƨdzN ǑKdzNǑK in both acceptance of others and what it means to truly live the gospel.

ASSEMBLY ACTION

CA25.06.31c Giving glory to God, and acknowledging the presence of the Spirit, we the members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, gathered in Phoenix, Ariz., give thanks to God for you, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, for your leadership as our presiding bishop for the past twelve years (2013ς2025), the first woman ever to guide and direct the ELCA in its journey with God. You have served with distinction as its pastor, preacher, faithful servant, and minister of Word and Sacrament.

We thank you for leaving a legacy of four foundational pillars τ άǿŜ are Church; we are Lutheran; we are Church together; we are Church for űKŜ ăIˑ]Ŝ ƨŦ űKŜ ǿƨNfŘέ τ which will move with us into our future, as church, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ƨŜ űKIˑy] èƨdz ŦƨN èƨdzN ŜyǑƨdzNIˑƎŜYˆŜyű űƨ NŜIˑŘ [dzűKŜNΩă {YˆIˑff Catechism and spend time with the word of God and in prayer.

We thank you for your faithful ambassadorship for Jesus Christ and on our behalf in national and worldwide arenas; with our ecumenical and interfaith siblings; in sickness and in health, especially noting our celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation with events in Washington, D.C., and the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification with our Roman Catholic siblings; your vice presidency for the North American Region of the Lutheran World Federation from 2017ς 2023; updating the 1994 Declaration to the Jewish Community and its 30th anniversary celebration; and your address to the Parliament of World Religions.

We give thanks for your humor and quick wit, especially in tense or difficult situations, not just at this assembly, but also in other settings, giving us a chance to laugh, breathe, and gain perspective.

We give thanks to the Rev. T. Conrad Selnick, your husband and our Episcopal brother, and to your family for their patience, sacrifices, and

support over these past twelve years. It has been a gift and blessing to us.

² Ŝ ǿƛăK è2ʤ ǿŜft ƛƴ˝ è2ʤNJ NJŜűƛNJŜϒŜyű I·yŘ I·ă⅂ D2ŘΩă Ŏ2yűƛyʤzŜŘ blessings upon you and your family and hold you in prayer as you journey.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31d We, the members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, give thanks to God for the service of Vice President Imran Siddiqui. We thank him for his dedicated service to this church, his willingness to answer this call, and his tireless leadership and guidance in renewing this church and lifting up the role of fI·è fŜI·ŘŜNJă I·yŘ fI·è Yˇ ŜYˇōŜNJă óKŜyŎŜŦ2NJűK I·fă2 ⅂y2ǿƴ˝ I·ă ádzyŘŜNJŎ2ØŜNJ I·ƎŜyűă Ŧ2NJ űKŜ Ǝ2ăLJŜfέúΦ ² Ŝ Ŏ2yűƛyʤzŜ ű2 ⅂ŜŜLJ KƛYˇΣ I·yŘ Kƛă ǿ2NJ⅂Σ ƛƴ˝LJNJI·èŜNJΦ

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31e Giving glory to God and acknowledging the presence of the Spirit, we the members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, meeting in Phoenix, Ariz., give thanks to you, Secretary Sue Rothmeyer, and give thanks to God for your leadership as secretary of the ELCA for the past six years (2019ç2025). As the first woman and deacon to head the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA, you have done so with distinction and grace.

We thank you for your attention to detail. Your vocational commitment to serve God and the gospel through your administrative skills and abilities has been a blessing to us.

We thank you for your stewardship and care of the governing documents, history, records, rosters, and policies of this church, the ELCA. With excellence as your hallmark, you have helped us in the ELCA tell the story of our witness and vocational callings. The wise advice you offer related to the ELCA *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions,* as well as legal matters, has helped many a congregation and we thank you.

We thank you for your astuteness in parliamentary procedure. As a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians, your ʤyŘŜNJăűI·yŘƛyƎ I·yŘ ⅂y2ǿfŜŘƎŜ 2Ŧ űKŜ ádfI·űŜăűέ ƛƴ˝ *Robert's Rules of Order* have kept us in order when we have gathered in assembly, and as the Church Council, congregation councils and meetings, committees, boards, task forces, etc. of the ELCA in all three of its expressions. Your guidance as we elected synod bishops, other officers, and representatives helped to forge positive relations between the churchwide and synod expressions.

We thank you for your insight, thoughtfulness, kind heart, strong sense of hospitality, passion for campus ministry, and for sharing your ŜÈűNI·2NŘλγ1·Nè ăλγΞλγΞ Ø2λŎŜ I·yŘ űKI·ű άL2ά I·y˝{LJλNλύ,έ άλűK dză 2ØŜN űKŜ LJI·ăű 30 years of your service in the churchwide organization. We thank your family and friends for sharing you with us, and we acknowledge their sacrifices in support of your position as secretary.

² Ŝ άλăK è2dz άŜft λy˝ è2dzNJ NŜűλNŜY˝Ŝyű I·yŘ I·ă] D2ŘΩă Ŏ2yűλyΩzŜŘ blessings in this next chapter of your life. As you journey forth, receive our prayers and gratitude.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31f The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America give thanks to God for the service of Treasurer Lori Fedyk. We thank her for her dedicated service to this church, her financial guidance and expertise, her dedication to explaining financial concepts in language that non-financial people can understand, and her attention to the stewardship of the resources of this church. We continue to keep her, and her work, in prayer.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31g The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered in Phoenix are grateful for the work of the Holy Spirit moving among us as we deliberated, voted, listened, discerned, prayed, and finally celebrated the elections of our Presiding Bishop-Elect Yehiel Curry and Secretary-9fŜŎű [dzŎλffŜ ά/Ŝ/ŜŜέ aλffăφ ² Ŝ commit to holding them and those around them in prayer as they transition to their new calls serving the ELCA.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31h The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered in Phoenix, Ariz., thank all those who put their names forward for election at this assembly. We thank God for their willingness to consider taking on important roles within our church. From those nominees for the offices of presiding bishop and secretary to those who stood for Church Council, and all those who stood for other churchwide committees and boards of separately incorporated ministries, we give thanks. We are church together because of those willing to place their names forward and serve our church in this way.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31i The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered in Phoenix, Ariz., thank all those

who served on the committees of this assembly. We thank God for those individuals who gave of their time and talent to ensure the work of this assembly could be carried out.

We thank each of the committees and their members of this assembly for their work:

- Churchwide Assembly Planning Committee;
- Credentials Committee;
- Elections Committee;
- Local Arrangements Committee;
- Memorials Committee;
- Minutes Team;
- Nominating Committee;
- Reference and Counsel Committee;
- *Ad Hoc* Committee for *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* Reconsiderations;
- *Ad Hoc* Committee for Faith and Civic Life;
- Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church Task Force;
- Hosts of pre-assembly hearings; and
- Worship Committee and our worship leaders and musicians.

We also extend our deep gratitude to all those volunteers who worked tirelessly throughout the assembly with such good humor and hospitality.

ASSEMBLY ACTION

CA25.06.31j The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in assembly gives thanks to God for the presence and partnership of our ecumenical guests and those who gathered with us for the AMMPARO Prayer Vigil. The assembly has been blessed by their participation in this assembly, and we give thanks for their contributions to our life together as the Church. They embody the global nature of the Church and remind us how we are connected globally as the people of God. We give thanks to God for these ecumenical and global partners who have joined with us this week at this assembly either in person or by sharing video greetings.

Furthermore, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in assembly gives thanks to God for the presence and partnership of our inter-religious guests. Their participation in this assembly reminds us of our commitment to love our neighbor and to deepen our commitment to seek mutual understanding with our neighbors of other religions and worldviews. May their presence continue to assist us on the road with ƨdzN yŜʎƎKō2Nă 2Ŧ 2ŭKŜN NŜfʎƎʎ2yã l·yŘ ø2NťŘØʎŜøă l·ă ʎyãúNdzYˆŜyűă 2Ŧ D2ŘΩă justice and peace.

We give thanks to God for the presence this week of all ecumenical, inter-Religious, and global guests:

- Dr. Funmi Adeyemi, Moderator and President, Evangelical & Pentecostal Family, Christian Churches Together in the USA
- The Rev. Eddy Alemán, General Secretary, Reformed Church in America
- The Rev. Dr. David Bennett, President, Moravian Church Northern Province
- The Rev. Dr. Anne Burghardt, General Secretary, The Lutheran World Federation
- Bishop Guadalupe Cortez, Salvadoran Lutheran Church (ILS; a member church of The Lutheran World Federation)
- Dr. Mohamed Elsanousi, Executive Director of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers; Co-Founder, Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign
- The Rev. Rock Fremont, President, Arizona Interfaith Movement
- Bishop-elect Imad Mousa Dawood Haddad, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL; a member church of The Lutheran World Federation)
- Ms. Julia Ayala Harris, President, House of Deputies, The Episcopal Church (U.S.A.)
- Ms. Danielle Hickman, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relationships Manager, United Church of Christ
- Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President, Union for Reform Judaism
- The Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC; a member church of The Lutheran World Federation)
- The Rev. Protopresbyter Dr. Nicolas Kazarian, Director, Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
- Bishop Denis J. Madden, Titular Bishop of Baia; Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; co-chair, Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue in the United States*
- The Rev. Russell McDougall, Executive Director, Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, President and General Secretary, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
- The Rev. Jihyun Oh, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- The Rev. Hilja Ndatala-Eenyofi Nghaangulwa, Bishop, Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN; a member church of The Lutheran World Federation)

The assembly also gives thanks to the ethnic associations of the ELCA, who have joined us in friendship and supported us in many ways throughout the week.

- African Descent Lutheran Association
- American Indian Alaska Native Association, Inc.
- Asociación de Ministerios Latinos - ELCA
- Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
- Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders
- ELCA Association of White Lutherans for Racial Justice

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31k The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in assembly gives thanks to God for the presence and partnership of our separately incorporated ministries, including Augsburg Fortress, the ELCA Foundation, Portico Benefit Services, the Women of the ELCA, and the Mission Investment Fund/ELCA Federal Credit Union as well as our Independent Lutheran Organizations, especially the Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association. Their generosity and presence have made our time together enjoyable and sociable.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31l The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in assembly would like to give thanks to God and to the representatives present from our ELCA colleges, universities, and seminaries. We recognize and appreciate the value of educating and fortifying the present and future leaders in our church. We are especially grateful for the time, energy, and conversations that representatives from these institutions of higher education had with our youth and young adults about discerning their futures on Tuesday evening over ice cream. We are so grateful.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION

CA25.06.31m It is a gift to be able to gather together in word and sacrament. The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly give thanks to the Worship Committee, and to the many leaders, preachers, musicians, and volunteers who helped us gather together in worship throughout the assembly. We give thanks for messages shared by the preaching ministers: Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, the Rev. Nelson Rivera García, Bishop-elect Imad Mousa Dawood Haddad, Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, and the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock.

The assembly would also like to thank the Rev. Chad Rimmer for his powerful theological reflection and online Bible study leaders Mr. Willie Korboi, Deacon Clare Josef-Maier, and the Rev. Atahualpa Hernández Miranda for grounding us in scripture and the Living Word of God as we LJNŜLJI·NŜŘ ű2 I·Ŏű ά₮2N ŭKŜ fΛ₮Ŝ 2₮ ŭKŜ ø2NtŘΦε ² Ŝ I·tă2 ŜÈLJNŜăă 2dzN ƎNJI·ŭΛŭdzŘŜ

to our floor prayer team and music team for preparing our hearts with Spirit-filled prayer and song as we did our work together.

ASSEMBLY ACTION

CA25.06.31n As we conclude our fellowship together this week, we acknowledge that we have assembled on the original and ancestral homelands of the I2K2l·Y h02ŘKl·Y l·yŘ tλLJl·l·ăK LJŜ2LJtŜă² Ŝ ƎλØŜ ůKl·yl̃ă ₮2ℕ ůKŜλℕ presence on the land since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call the land their home. Let us remember the Indigenous peoples and tribal nations who were the first to love, pray, grow, celebrate, cry, drum, dance, and sing upon the lands.

The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America deeply thank the City of Phoenix, the Grand Canyon Synod, and Region 2 for hosting this assembly, for their hospitality, assistance, warmth, generous spirit, and for l·ft ůKλyƎă άLJNλŎl̃tề LJŜl·ℕ¢é ² Ŝ l·Ŏl̃yŽøtŜŘƎŜ ůKŜ úℕŜYŜyŘ2dză ădzLJLJ2ℕű l·yŘ ø2ℕl̃ 2₮ .λăK2LJ Hutterer and the synod staff.

We give thanks to the Indigenous leaders of the Phoenix area who led, taught, inspired and gathered us for a Powwow experience, a first for many members of the assembly.

We give thanks for AMMPARO and the local migrant rights and ecumenical leaders who led us in prayer and advocacy at the prayer vigil on behalf of those whose inherent human dignity is being negated in our communities.

We give thanks for the numerous volunteers whose invaluable work has welcomed, assisted, supported, and enabled us to participate in and conduct this assembly in an efficient, enjoyable, and caring manner.

We give thanks for the Phoenix Convention Center for their accommodations, for their assistance in helping us assemble together in prayer and business, facilitating our ability to worship boldly, and for serving as a focal point in the work of this church. We thank especially those hospitality staff, servers, catering, and security personnel who have kept us fed, safe, comfortable, and warmly greeted throughout our time.

We give thanks for the Hyatt Regency, Hilton Garden Inn, and Sheraton hotels for giving us a place to rest and reflect on our time together and acknowledge the privilege we have in a comfortable, climate-controlled, safe space.

We also give thanks to the hotel staff, restaurant, and transportation workers of Phoenix for their hard work and gracious hospitality.

The City of Phoenix embodies a beautiful expression of what it means to be church, and we thank them for welcoming us into their city so warmly.

Presiding Bishop Eaton declared that the motions were adopted and announced that, in keeping with the rules of the assembly, all unfinished business would be referred to the Church Council for disposition.

Honoring Synod Bishops

Presiding Bishop Eaton led the assembly in recognizing and thanking synod bishops for their service to this church, particularly bishops who had retired, resigned, or completed their terms of service since the last Churchwide Assembly:

The Rev. Kristen E. Kuempel, Northwest Intermountain Synod
The Rev. Michael K. Girlinghouse, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod
The Rev. John Roth, Central/Southern Illinois Synod
The Rev. Robert F. Humphrey, Virginia Synod
The Rev. Shelley R. Wickstrom, Alaska Synod
The Rev. James W. Gonia, Rocky Mountain Synod
The Rev. Ann M. Svennungsen, Minneapolis Area Synod
The Rev. Laurie Skow-Anderson, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
The Rev. William O. Gafkjen, Indiana-Kentucky Synod
The Rev. James E. Hazelwood, New England Synod
The Rev. Patricia A. Davenport, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
The Rev. Paula J. Lebo, Allegheny Synod
The Rev. Idalia C. Negrón-Caamaño, Caribbean Synod

Presiding Bishop Eaton also recognized bishops whose terms ended during the assembly or whose terms were soon coming to an end, leading the assembly in thanking them and wishing them Godspeed:

Bishop Richard E. Jaech, Southwestern Washington Synod
Bishop Laurie A. Jungling, Montana Synod
Bishop Susan Candea, Central States Synod
Bishop Michael W. Rinehart, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Bishop Lorna H. Halaas, Western Iowa Synod
Bishop Craig A. Satterlee, North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Bishop Tracie L. Bartholomew, New Jersey Synod
Bishop Paul T. Egensteiner, Metropolitan New York Synod
Bishop Michael L. Lozano, Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop Kurt F. Kusserow, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop James S. Dunlop, Lower Susquehanna Synod
Bishop Leila M. Ortíz, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod
Bishop Timothy M. Smith, North Carolina Synod

The presiding bishop then recognized and led the assembly in expressing gratitude to bishops and bishops-elect elected since the last Churchwide Assembly:

Bishop Timothy R. Oslovich, Alaska Synod
Bishop Keith A. Marshall, Southwestern Washington Synod
Bishop Meggan H. Manlove, Northwest Intermountain Synod

Bishop-elect Benjamin K. Quanbeck, Montana Synod
Bishop Jeff R. Johnson, Sierra Pacific Synod
Bishop Meghan C. Johnston Aelabouni, Rocky Mountain Synod
Bishop Jennifer L. Nagel, Minneapolis Area Synod
Bishop-elect Donna J. Simon, Central States Synod
Bishop Rebecca E. Middeke-Conlin, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod
Bishop-elect Tracey L. Breashears Schultz, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Bishop Greg G. Busboom, Central/Southern Illinois Synod
Bishop-elect Scott A. Dalen, Western Iowa Synod
Bishop Martin R. Halom, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Bishop-elect Julie E. Schneider-Thomas, North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Bishop Timothy M. Graham, Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Bishop-elect Christa M. Compton, New Jersey Synod
Bishop Nathan D. Pipho, New England Synod
Bishop Katrina D. Foster, Metropolitan New York Synod
Bishop Bryan J. Penman, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop-elect Kristen M. Papson, Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop-elect Melissa L. Stoller, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop-elect Stephen R. Herr, Lower Susquehanna Synod
Bishop-elect Philip C. Hirsch, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod
Bishop Phyllis K. Milton, Virginia Synod
Bishop-elect Emily C. Hartner, North Carolina Synod
Bishop Vivian J. Dávila, Caribbean Synod

The assembly joined the presiding bishop in welcoming the new bishops.

Recognition of Synod Officers

Presiding Bishop Eaton led the assembly in expressing gratitude to synod vice presidents, secretaries, and treasurers for their service to this church.

Recognition of Outgoing Church Council Members

Presiding Bishop Eaton invited to the stage Church Council members whose terms were ending at the end of this assembly. Each outgoing council member was presented with a citation reading:

> On behalf of a grateful church, this is presented to you in recognition of your conscientious service as a member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. You have served diligently and thoughtfully in rendering strategic leadership in the work of the board of directors.
>
> For your commitment to the faith of the whole Church of Jesus Christ, for your care of the mission that God has entrusted to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in all its expressions and entities, and for the wisdom and compassion that you have offered so generously in your service as a member of the Church Council, we hereby express our heartfelt gratitude.
>
> Although you now complete your term as a member of the Church Council, we will continue to be grateful for your ongoing, constructive contributions to the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

¢KŜ ŎλűI·úλ2y˘Ŏ2yŎtdzŘŜŘ ǿλűK I· ăŎNJĂLJűdzNJŜ ØŜNJăŜ ŦNJ2Y˘ WdzŘŜY άNow to the One who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever.έ Deacon Sue. E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, read the names of outgoing council members as Presiding Bishop Eaton distributed the citations.

Mr. Kevin D. Anderson
Ms. Tracey A. Beasley
The Rev. Benjamin B. Bergren
The Rev. Marcus A. Bigott
The Rev. Nicholas M. Billardello III
Ms. Susan Boxberger
The Rev. William H. Callister
Ms. Divine
The Rev. Joanne E. Engquist
Ms. Kerry A. Fehrman *(not present)*
Bishop-elect Emily C. Hartner
The Rev. Pamela J. Hoh *(not present)*
Ms. Cherrish Holland
Mr. David M. Lenz
The Rev. Tara R. Lynn
Mr. Ethan G. Miller-Perez
Mr. Keoni Newman
Mr. Noah F. Roux
Ms. Valerie J. Shaw *(not present)*
Ms. Andraine A. Sinaga
Mr. Loren A. Solberg
Ms. Loni Taylor *(not present)*

Announcements

Secretary Rothmeyer once again congratulated the Rev. Yehiel Curry and the Rev. Lucille ά/Ŝ/ŜŜέ Mills on their recent elections, made announcements related to the conclusion of the assembly, and announced that the 2028 Churchwide Assembly would be held in Des Moines, Iowa. Presiding Bishop Eaton thanked assembly members for their service and led the body in the Order for the Closing of an Assembly and a closing hymn.

Adjournment

The seventeenth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA adjourned at 12:39 p.m. on Aug. 2, 2025, following a benediction delivered by Presiding Bishop Eaton.

Exhibits

Exhibit A

Members of the Churchwide Assembly

Voting Members

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

Church Council
The Rev. A. Elizabeth (Lisa) Ahlness
Mr. Kevin D. Anderson
Ms. Tracey A. Beasley
The Rev. Benjamin B. Bergren
The Rev. Marcus A. Bigott
The Rev. Nicholas M. Billardello III
Ms. Susan Boxberger
The Rev. Heather E. Brown
Ms. Jamie L. 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 C. Hartner
Ms. Kristy K. Henriksen *(excused)*
The Rev. Pamela J. Hoh
Ms. Cherrish Holland
Mr. Rindra Josoa
The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King
Mr. David M. Lenz
The Rev. Tara R. Lynn
Ms. Olivia L. Martin-Call
Mr. Mitchell S. McCartney
Mr. Joel A. Miller
Mr. Ethan G. Miller-Perez
Mr. Keoni Newman
Deacon Kari A. Olsen *(excused)*
Mr. Iván A. Pérez
Ms. Linda C. Rivera *(excused)*
Mr. Noah F. Roux
Ms. Valerie J. Shaw *(excused)*
Ms. Andraine A. Sinaga
Mr. Loren A. Solberg
Ms. Loni Taylor
Ms. Jennifer E. Trom

Alaska Synod (1A)
Mr. Xandor C. Beck
Bp. Timothy R. Oslovich
The Rev. Sandra S. Rudd
Mr. Richard E. Stasenko
Ms. Christina J. Stuive
Ms. Leslie J. Swenson

Northwest Washington Synod (1B)
Mx. Dante N. Austin
Bp. Shelley M. Bryan Wee
Mr. Dan Clements
Ms. Kathryn Edgerton
The Rev. Ivar D. Hillesland
The Rev. Kristi A. Lambing
Mr. Seth J. Lambing
Ms. Rachel A. Pritchett
Ms. Kasey M. Schultz

Southwestern Washington Synod (1C)
Ms. Jenna W. Coley
Ms. Leslee Froehlich
Mr. Thomas R. Hulst
Mx. Gabrielle K. Irle
The Rev. Keith A. Marshall
Mr. Brendan Nelson
The Rev. Adrienne E. Strehlow
The Rev. Carol J. Tomer

Northwest Intermountain Synod (1D)
The Rev. Dane A. Breslin
Mr. Mondo Davila
Ms. Heidi A. Hellner-Gomez
Ms. Sylvia L. Hwang
Bp. Meggan H. Manlove

Mr. Jason C. Mills
Ms. Lisa D. Therrell

Oregon Synod (1E)
The Rev. John R. Barton
Ms. Marilyn T. Keller
Bp. Laurie A. Larson Caesar
Mr. Dawson Mangels
Mr. Edwin Ntiranyibagira
Ms. Anelise Nzocumugani
Ms. Debi C. Stromberg
Mr. Paul K. Stromberg

Montana Synod (1F)
Ms. Jasmine L. Allen
Ms. Kimberly Bloch
The Rev. Judith L. Gosnell-Lamb
Mr. John V. Hanson
The Rev. Eric S. Huseth
Bp. Laurie A. Jungling
Mr. Micah B. Langdji
Ms. Morgan A. May
Mr. Kian M. Ryan

Sierra Pacific Synod (2A)
Mr. Tyler N. Biscocho
Mr. Gary S. Ely-Grisham
The Rev. Kathryn A. Gulbranson
Ms. Sue C. Hertless
Ms. Erika Hidley
Bp. Jeff R. Johnson
The Rev. Sara L. Pearson
Mr. Jeffrey A. Pennington
Mx. Logan E. Rimel
Ms. Catherine N. Slabaugh
Mr. Yat Chun S. Wong

Southwest California Synod (2B)
The Rev. Douglas D. Barclay
Bp. Brenda K. Bos
Ms. Lisa F. Curtis
Ms. Frances E. Hale
Ms. Karen L. Moyer
The Rev. Albert Starr Jr.
Ms. Grace Steele

Pacifica Synod (2C)
Ms. Ingrid D. Allen
Mr. Jeffrey T. Cours
The Rev. Darryl W. Kozak
Bp. David C. Nagler
The Rev. Maria A. Santa Cruz
Mr. Kyle Tweet
Mr. Landon D. Tweet
Ms. Kathryn M. Weidmann

Grand Canyon Synod (2D)
The Rev. Veronica Alvarez
Ms. Barbara B. Carl
Ms. Lynn D. Davis *(7/29ç8/2)*
Mr. Peter G. Garang *(7/28)*
Mr. Richard Green
Ms. Kathye Hamm
Bp. Deborah K. Hutterer
Ms. Leslie Johnson *(7/29ç8/2)*
Mr. Mark W. Myers
Mr. Kenneth Olmedo
Ms. Layra Y. Siqueiros *(7/28)*
The Rev. Amalia J. Vagts

Rocky Mountain Synod (2E)
Ms. Emmy L. Baylis
Deacon Sarah M. Bjornebo
The Rev. Katherine J. Chullino
Ms. Terry E. Cole
Ms. Veronica F. Daub
Ms. Celia C. Davis
Mr. Michael R. Ferry
Bp. Meghan C. Johnston-Aelabouni
Mr. Kenneth P. Maldonado
The Rev. Joel W. Pancoast
Ms. Marissa S. Seuc-Hester
Mr. Erik J. Stone

Western North Dakota Synod (3A)
The Rev. Michael G. Burns
Ms. Beth Campbell
Ms. Stephanie G. Fournier
The Rev. Kimberly J. Gifford
The Rev. Brandy J. Gerjets
Mr. Timothy L. Holdahl
Mr. Noah D. Knudson
Ms. Amy Nelson
Mr. Alvin B. Nygard
Mr. Danial C. Pillar
Ms. Emma Pister
The Rev. Katherine E. Rodriguez
Bishop Craig A. Schweitzer
Mr. Kenneth M. Will

Eastern North Dakota Synod (3B)
Mr. Matuor D. Alier
The Rev. Cassandra J. Borges
Ms. Amy D. Boyer
The Rev. Aaron M. Bye
Mr. Brigham L. Drevlow
Mr. Christopher Flann
Mr. Merlyn D. Greene
Ms. Molly J. Haagenson
Mr. Michael A. Haukaas
The Rev. Susan E. Haukaas
Ms. Barbara E. Hultin
Ms. Eliza K. Johnson
The Rev. Amy K. Kippen
Ms. Marla J. Larson
The Rev. Jessica K. Merchant
Bp. Tessa R. Moon Leiseth
The Rev. David C. Peterson
Mr. Robert Schlotman
Ms. Elna K. Solvang
The Rev. Lexy R. Steinle

South Dakota Synod (3C)
The Rev. Jeff D. Backer
The Rev. Laura L. Beall
Mr. Kyle C. Boese
Ms. Marlene A. Braun
Mr. Malcom Chapman
The Rev. Kari M. Foss
Mr. Orland Geigle
Mr. Michael J. Gillis
Bp. Constanze Hagmaier
The Rev. Michael A. Jordan
Mr. Wyatt M. Lesmeister
The Rev. Scott T. Munger
The Rev. Daniel J. Overbo
The Rev. Katie L. Pauly
Ms. Annelies Seffrood
Mr. Dennis R. Thompson
Ms. Kathleen A. Thompson
Ms. Barbara Vandever
Ms. Emma L. Witt

Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D)
Mr. Eric B. Billings
The Rev. Allen L. Brooks
Ms. Tamara L. Brooks
Mr. Kenneth Dessellier
Mr. Melkamu I. Dime
Ms. Amanda D. Hawk
The Rev. Tammy S. Jacobson
Ms. Sharon Josephson
The Rev. Amber J. Kalina
Ms. Glory G. Lekashu
Ms. Kathy M. Levenhagen
Ms. Richard C. Levenhagen
Ms. Karen M. Mellum
Mr. Chad Netland
The Rev. Alexander G. Ohman
The Rev. Mark R. Olson
Mr. Palmer J. Olson
The Rev. Emily J. Papke-Larson
Bp. William T. Tesch

Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E)
Ms. Rachel C. Berry
The Rev. Joshua K. Blair
The Rev. Jeffery S. Davis
Mr. David W. Erdmann
Mr. Simon D. Erdmann
Mr. Richard J. Gabriel
The Rev. Lori A. Gordon
Ms. Theresa M. Jacobson
Bp. Amy J. Odgren
Ms. Anna L. Pancoast
Ms. Kari S. Pancoast
Ms. Jane E. Williams

Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F)
Ms. Claire M. Boersma
The Rev. Paul E. Bravinder
Mr. Keith D. Evenson
The Rev. Thomas D. Evenson
Ms. Kaylee R. Helgeson
Ms. Jodi L. Johnson
The Rev. Austin J. Krohnke
Ms. Maria Lokensgard
Mr. Shawnn L. Martin
Mr. Jan C. Nelson
The Rev. Kirsten M. Nelson Roenfeldt
The Rev. Janine L. Olson
Mr. Timothy L. Ostby
Bp. Diane S. Pederson
Mr. Austin L. Peters-Smith
The Rev. Adam C. Roberts
Mr. Steven Roenfeldt
The Rev. Jennifer M. Thul
The Rev. Chimezie Ukaonu

Minneapolis Area Synod (3G)
Ms. Anna C. Amundson
Mr. Matthias G. Bergstrom
Ms. Felecia Boone
Mr. Bruce R. Bousu
Mr. Kyle Bresin
Mr. Donny J. Chillstrom *(7/28ç7/31)*
Ms. Carolyn N. Davis
The Rev. Yolanda K. Denson Byers
Mr. Luke Friendshuh
The Rev. Eric E. Hoffer
Mr. Eric Howard
Ms. Emily K. Johnson
Mr. Douglas J. Jones
Mr. Charles C. Jordan
The Rev. Laura L. Laughlin
The Rev. Maria R. Markman
Bishop Jennifer L. Nagel
Ms. Alicia J. Noreen
Ms. Madisen K. Noreen
The Rev. Ashley C. Osborn
The Rev. Hierald E. Osorto
The Rev. Andrea E. Roske-Metcalfe
Ms. Abby Shea
Ms. Wubitu A. Sima
Mr. Admasu Simeso *(8/1ç8/2)*
Mr. Trevor J. Skorburg
Mr. Clarance M. Smith *(7/28ç7/31)*
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Ms. BethAnn Lynch
Deacon John E. Weit

Exhibit B

Report of the Elections Committee

First Common Ballot

The individuals elected are indicated in boldface print. The designation (PC/L) is used to indicate positions reserved for persons of color or whose primary language is other than English. The designation (YA) is used to indicate a young adult. An asterisk (*) indicates an incumbent who was eligible for reelection.

		Votes	Percent
Ticket 1 / Church Council / Lay Woman (PC/L) *Alaska Synod (1A)*			
A	Ms. Kathleen LaVonne Bourdon, Nome, Alaska (1A)	301	44.99
B	Ms. Deborah Maria Nyquist, Soldotna, Alaska (1A)	368	55.01
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	669	100
Ticket 2 / Church Council / Rostered Woman *Northwest Intermountain Synod (1D)*			
A	The Rev. Ann M. Bjorklund, Idaho Falls, Idaho (1D)	300	44.91
B	The Rev. Barbara R. Rossing, Leavenworth, Wash. (1D)	368	55.09
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	668	100
Ticket 3 / Church Council / Rostered Man *Sierra Pacific Synod (2A)*			
A	The Rev. Moses Paul Peter Penumaka, Berkeley, Calif. (2A)	430	64.28
B	The Rev. Kristofer Shurson Rhude, San Jose, Calif. (2A)	239	35.72
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	669	100
Ticket 4 / Church Council / Lay Woman *Pacifica Synod (2C)*			
A	Ms. Nancy A. Marlin, San Diego, Calif. (2C)	310	46.55
B	Ms. Terri Lynn Robertson, Fullerton, Calif. (2C)	356	53.45
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	666	100
Ticket 5 / Church Council / Lay Man *Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D)*			
A	Mr. Timothy Hiller, Dilworth, Minn. (3D)	458	68.56
B	Mr. Dean Leonard Monke, Fergus Falls, Minn. (3D)	210	31.44
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	668	100
Ticket 6 / Church Council / Lay Man *Nebraska Synod (4A)*			
A	Mr. Jeffrey Dennis Akerson, Bellevue, Neb. (4A)	247	37.03
B	Mr. Matthew Allan Schur, Lincoln, Neb. (4A)	420	62.97
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	667	100

Ticket 7 / Church Council / Rostered Man *Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C)*			
A	The Rev. Steve Evans, Oklahoma City, Okla. (4C)	116	17.39
B	The Rev. Alvaro Nova, Tulsa, Okla. (4C)	551	82.61
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	667	100
Ticket 8 / Church Council / Lay Woman (PC/L) *Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod (4F)*			
A	Ms. Maria Edna Campos, Houston, Texas (4F)	307	46.10
B	Ms. Deidre D. Hayes, New Orleans, La. (4F)	359	53.90
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	666	100
Ticket 9 / Church Council / Rostered Man *Central/Southern Illinois Synod (5C)*			
A	The Rev. Ryan Howard Anderson, Springfield, Ill. (5C)	431	62.20
B	The Rev. Adam Joel Dichsen, Jacksonville, Ill. (5C)	230	34.80
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	661	100
Ticket 10 / Church Council / Lay Man *South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5K)*			
A	Mr. Andrew William Stevens, Madison, Wis. (5K)	357	53.60
B	Mr. Paul Waelchli, Beloit, Wis. (5K)	309	46.40
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	666	100
Ticket 11 / Church Council / Lay Woman *Southeast Michigan Synod (6A)*			
A	Ms. Kelle Shawn Shepherd-Bhavsar, Farmington Hills, Mich. (6A)	313	47.42
B	Ms. Jessi Grieser, Ann Arbor, Mich. (6A)	347	52.58
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	660	100
Ticket 12 / Church Council / Rostered Man *Southern Ohio Synod (6F)*			
A	The Rev. Chad Michael Huebner, Athens, Ohio (6F)	349	52.48
B	The Rev. David Jansen Kamphuis, Hilliard, Ohio (6F)	316	47.52
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	665	100
Ticket 13 was not voted on the first ballot due to an error in production of the ballot.			
Ticket 14 / Church Council / Lay Man *Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D)*			
A	Mr. Moses Kavishe, Camp Hill, Penn. (8D)	444	66.37
B	Mr. Charles R. Roberts, Harrisburg, Penn. (8D)	225	33.63
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	669	100
Ticket 15 / Church Council / Rostered Man *West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H)*			
A	The Rev. Daniel Collins, Martinsburg, W.Va. (8H)	432	64.86
B	The Rev. Richard T. Egtvedt, McHenry, Md. (8H)	234	35.14
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	666	100

Ticket 16 / Church Council / Lay Woman (PC/L; YA) *Virginia Synod (9A)*			
A	Ms. Jillian Colleen Stierwalt, Portsmouth, Va. (9A)	335	50.76
B	Ms. Karen Griffith, Norfolk, Va. (9A)	325	49.24
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	660	100
Ticket 17 / Church Council / Lay Person (Financial Expertise)			
A	Ms. Patricia P. Harper, Chicago, Ill. (5A)	447	66.42
B	Mr. Mark R. Roskopf, Vancouver, Wash. (1C)	226	33.58
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	673	100
Ticket 18 / Church Council / Lay Person (Legal Expertise)			
A	Mr. Frank Albert Roth, Ardmore, Pa. (7F)	326	48.80
B	Ms. Spencer Sanders, Hawthorne, Calif. (2B)	342	51.20
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	668	100
Ticket 19 / Church Council / Lay Woman (Youth; 3-year term)			
A	Ms. Evelyn Marie Parvin Fuller, Louisville, Miss. (9D)	204	30.63
B	Ms. Emma Lynn Witt, Sioux Falls, S.D. (3C)	462	69.37
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	666	100
Ticket 20 / Church Council / Lay Man (Youth; 3-year term)			
A	Mr. Benjamin James Caseley, Tacoma, Wash. (1C)	351	52.78
B	Mr. Gabriel Thor Shafer, Salisbury, N.C. (9B)	219	32.93
C	Mx. Hunter Lazarian Whitaker, Columbia, S.C. (9C)	95	14.29
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	665	100
Ticket 21 / Committee on Appeals / Rostered Minister *Region 7*			
A	The Rev. Sara J Anderson, Manchester, Conn. (7B)	435	71.66
B	The Rev. Susan Stephanie Salomone, Camillus, N.Y. (7D)	172	28.34
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	607	100
Ticket 22 / Committee on Appeals / Rostered Minister *Region 9*			
A	Deacon Rebekah L. Forst, Belmont, N.C. (9B)	435	71.78
B	The Rev. Christopher Russell Hermansen, Suwanee, Ga. (9D)	171	28.22
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	606	100
Ticket 23 / Committee on Appeals / Rostered Minister *Region 3*			
A	The Rev. Justin Charles Boeding, Red Wing, Minn. (3I)	207	34.44
B	The Rev. Henry Wesley Burt, Albert Lea, Minn. (3I)	394	65.56
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	601	100
Ticket 24 / Committee on Appeals / Rostered Minister			
A	The Rev. Tracie L Bartholomew, Trenton, N.J. (7A)	276	44.81
B	The Rev. Shelley Rae Wickstrom, Anchorage, Alaska (1A)	340	55.19
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	616	100

Ticket 25 / Committee on Appeals / Lay Woman			
A	Ms. Katherina Elizabeth Farrow, Tulsa, Okla. (4C)	181	29.82
B	Ms. Alice R Senechal, Grand Forks, N.D. (3B)	426	70.18
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	607	100
Ticket 26 / Committee on Appeals / Lay Woman *Region 5*			
A	Ms. Kate English, Marion, Iowa (5D)	203	33.55
B	Ms. Deborah Banks Williams, Chicago, Ill. (5A)	402	66.45
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	605	100
Ticket 27 / Committee on Appeals / Lay Man *Region 1*			
A	Mr. Paul G Dodds, Vancouver, Wash. (1C)	365	60.73
B	Mr. Eric Edward Nord, Anaconda, Mont. (1F)	236	39.27
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	601	100
Ticket 28 / Committee on Appeals / Lay Man *Region 2*			
A	Mr. Ralston Henry Deffenbaugh, Estes Park, Colo. (2E)	305	50.92
B	Mr. Jay Beebe Simonson, Cherry Hills Village, Colo. (2E)	294	49.08
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	599	100
Ticket 29 / Committee on Appeals / Lay Person (YA) *Region 3*			
A	Ms. Lacy Elizabeth Tooker-Kirkevold, Minneapolis, Minn. (3G)	318	52.65
B	Ms. Madeline Cecelia Trosvig, Sioux Falls, S.D. (3C)	286	47.35
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	604	100
Ticket 30 / Committee on Discipline / Rostered Minister *Region 1*			
A	The Rev. Bergen Anders Nelson Eickhoff, Snohomish, Wash. (1C)	232	38.67
B	The Rev. Sara Funkhouser, Seattle, Wash. (1B)	368	61.33
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	600	100
Ticket 31 / Committee on Discipline / Rostered Minister *Region 6*			
A	The Rev. Michael Vance Johnson, Detroit, Mich. (6A)	339	56.22
B	The Rev. Sarah Anne Moore, Ashtabula, Ohio (6E)	264	43.78
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	603	100
Ticket 32 / Committee on Discipline / Rostered Minister *Region 1 or Region 9*			
A	The Rev. David Henry Brauer-Rieke, Portland, Ore. (1E)	194	32.12
B	The Rev. Mardy Ringer, East Point, Ga. (9D)	410	67.88
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	604	100
Ticket 33 / Committee on Discipline / Rostered Minister *Region 5*			
A	The Rev. Brittany Megan Barkus, Wakefield, Mich. (5G)	471	78.37
B	The Rev. Nate Montover, Marion, Iowa (5D)	130	21.63
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	601	100

Ticket 34 / Committee on Discipline / Rostered Minister *Region 7 or Region 9*			
A	The Rev. Hannah Claire Norem, Hickory, N.C. (9B)	363	60.50
B	The Rev. Johanna K. Rehbaum, Pittsford, N.Y. (7D)	237	39.50
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	600	100
Ticket 35 / Committee on Discipline / Rostered Minister *Region 9*			
A	The Rev. David Eric Fox, Hampton, Va. (9A)	206	34.68
B	The Rev. Adam Christian Schultz, Lexington, Va. (9A)	388	65.32
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	594	100
Ticket 36 / Committee on Discipline / Rostered Minister (PC/L) *Region 2*			
A	The Rev. Chryll D. Crews, Inglewood, Calif. (2B)	435	73.23
B	The Rev. Tracy Maria Williams, Bellflower, Calif. (2B)	159	26.77
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	594	100
Ticket 37 / Committee on Discipline / Rostered Minister *Region 2 or Region 4*			
A	The Rev. Pamela Joan-Swarts Challis, Boulder, Colo. (2E)	232	38.86
B	The Rev. Ariel Otterstad, Katy, Texas (4F)	365	61.14
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	597	100
Ticket 38 / Committee on Discipline / Lay Man *Region 9*			
A	Mr. Frederick H. Black, Chapel Hill, N.C. (9B)	273	45.96
B	Mr. Charles Edward Lifford, Gastonia, N.C. (9B)	321	54.04
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	594	100
Ticket 39 / Committee on Discipline / Lay Man *Region 4*			
A	Mr. David Lee Humphrey, Tulsa, Okla. (4C)	194	32.77
B	Mr. Anthony Ormsbee-Hale, Weatherford, Texas (4D)	398	67.23
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	592	100
Ticket 40 / Committee on Discipline / Lay Man *Region 6*			
A	Mr. Seth Gee, Gahanna, Ohio (6F)	290	48.58
B	Mr. Josh S. Tatum, Indianapolis, Ind. (6C)	307	51.42
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	597	100
Ticket 41 / Committee on Discipline / Lay Woman *Region 5*			
A	Ms. Myrtis Jean Brown, Chicago, Ill. (5A)	295	49.50
B	Ms. Catherine Olivia McKenna, Naperville, Ill. (5A)	301	50.50
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	596	100
Ticket 42 / Committee on Discipline / Lay Woman (YA) *Region 2*			
A	Ms. Savannah Kay Jorgensen, Sacramento, Calif. (2A)	234	39.26
B	Ms. Sara Jo Larson, Littleton, Colo. (2E)	362	60.74
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	596	100

Ticket 43 / Committee on Discipline / Lay Woman *Region 7*			
A	Ms. Melissa Marie Bedell, Johnstown, N.Y. (7D)	226	37.86
B	Ms. Ashley N Procanyn, Albrightsville, Penn. (7E)	371	62.14
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	597	100
Ticket 44 / Committee on Discipline / Lay Woman *Region 2 or Region 7*			
A	Ms. Joy R. Grace, Coatesville, Penn. (7F)	300	50.59
B	Ms. Myrna Jean Wells-Ulland, Scottsdale, Ariz. (2D)	293	49.41
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	593	100
Ticket 45 / Committee on Discipline / Lay Woman			
A	Ms. Sydney Brinkman, Allison, Iowa (5F)	153	25.63
B	Ms. Kylie Oversen, Fargo, N.D. (3B)	444	74.37
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	597	100
Ticket 46 / Committee on Discipline / Lay Person *Region 1*			
A	Mr. John Sander Christensen, Anchorage, Alaska (1A)	336	56.76
B	Mx. Emily Rebecca Sue Leckie, Vancouver, Wash. (1C)	256	43.24
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	592	100
Ticket 47 / Nominating Committee / Rostered Minister *Region 1*			
A	The Rev. Susan Marie Halvor, Anchorage, Alaska (1A)	444	75.00
B	The Rev. Martin Duane Wells, Spokane, Wash. (1D)	148	25.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	592	100
Ticket 48 / Nominating Committee / Rostered Minister *Region 2 or Region 8*			
A	The Rev. Nicole Raddu Ferry, Monument, Colo. (2E)	233	39.16
B	The Rev. Moses Paul Peter Penumaka, Berkeley, Calif. (2A)	362	60.84
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	595	100
Ticket 49 / Nominating Committee / Rostered Minister *Region 5*			
A	The Rev. Anthony F. Acompanado, Waukesha, Wis. (5J)	385	64.92
B	The Rev. Lukas E. Harris-Ferree, Evanston, Ill. (5A)	208	35.08
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	593	100
Ticket 50 / Nominating Committee / Lay Woman *Region 1*			
A	Ms. Carolyn Beth Adams, Vancouver, Wash. (1C)	192	32.71
B	Ms. Kasey Miranda Schultz, Seattle, Wash. (1B)	395	67.29
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	587	100
Ticket 51 / Nominating Committee / Lay Woman *Region 2*			
A	Ms. Diane L. Brauer, Rio Rancho, N.M. (2E)	241	40.99
B	Ms. Karen Michele McClain, Santa Monica, Calif. (2B)	347	59.01
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	588	100

Ticket 52 / Nominating Committee / Lay Woman *Region 3*			
A	Ms. Kristine Kay Bjorke, Maple Grove, Minn. (3G)	409	69.56
B	Ms. Kathleen Fick, Grand Forks, N.D. (3B)	179	30.44
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	588	100
Ticket 53 / Nominating Committee / Lay Woman *Region 4*			
A	Ms. Elizabeth Ann Dieringer, Georgetown, Texas (4E)	344	59.21
B	Ms. Susan Humphrey, Tulsa, Okla. (4C)	237	40.79
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	581	100
Ticket 54 / Nominating Committee / Lay Woman *Region 6 or Region 9*			
A	Ms. Ginger Mildred Cutrell, Tullahoma, Tenn. (9D)	230	39.38
B	Ms. Jillian Marie Russell, Waldo, Ohio (6D)	354	60.62
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	584	100
Ticket 55 / Nominating Committee / Lay Man *Region 8*			
A	Mr. Kevin D. Anderson, Gaithersburg, Md. (8G)	300	50.68
B	Mr. John Henderson, Baltimore, Md. (8F)	292	49.32
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	592	100
Ticket 56 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Minister of Word and Sacrament (Congregational Leadership; Finance)			
A	*The Rev. Hans Eric Becklin, Reading, Pa. (7E)	577	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	577	100
Ticket 57 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Minister of Word and Sacrament (Health Care Administration)			
A	*The Rev. Kathie Bender Schwich, Mount Prospect, Ill. (5A)	584	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	584	100
Ticket 58 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Minister of Word and Sacrament (Social Ministry Organization Leadership)			
A	*The Rev. Thomas Paul Schlotterback, Billings, Mont. (1F)	576	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	576	100
Ticket 59 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Minister of Word and Service (Congregational Leadership)			
A	Deacon Kayla Elizabeth Smrt, Glen Ellyn, Ill. (5A)	578	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	578	100
Ticket 60 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Lay Woman (Health Care Policy Administration)			
A	Ms. Carla Jean Borchardt, Sioux Falls, S.D. (3C)	574	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	574	100

Ticket 61 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Lay Woman (Marketing and Communications)			
A	*Ms. Angela Dejene, Maple Grove, Minn. (3G)	577	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	577	100
Ticket 62 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Lay Woman (PC/L; Insurance; Health and Managed Care)			
A	*Ms. Marjorie B. Ellis, Worthington, Ohio (6F)	574	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	574	100
Ticket 63 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Lay Woman (Benefits Administration; Deferred Compensation)			
A	Ms. Amy Johnson, Long Lake, Minn. (3G)	576	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	576	100
Ticket 64 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Lay Woman (Strategic Philanthropic Giving; Board Governance)			
A	Ms. Elizabeth Baran Wagner, Princeton Junction, N.J. (7A)	573	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	573	100
Ticket 65 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Lay Man (PC/L; Investments)			
A	*Mr. Vincent Paul Brown, Sacramento, Calif. (2C)	574	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	574	100
Ticket 66 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Lay Man (Regulatory and Governmental Affairs; Legal)			
A	Mr. Kyle Joe Gilster, Arlington, Va. (8G)	574	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	574	100
Ticket 67 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Lay Man (Executive Leadership; Health and Human Services)			
A	*Mr. Ted W. Goins, Salisbury, N.C. (9B)	574	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	574	100
Ticket 68 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Lay Man (Global Health Compliance; Legal)			
A	*Mr. Brett A Kraemer, San Antonio, Texas (4E)	568	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	568	100
Ticket 69 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Lay Man (Investments)			
A	*Mr. Todd Jason Maloy, Chesterfield, Mo. (4B)	571	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	571	100

Ticket 70 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Full Communion (Digital Health; Health Care Administration)			
A	The Rev. Adam John Copeland, Rochester, Minn.	570	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	570	100
Ticket 71 / Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services) / Full Communion (Global Actuarial)			
A	Mr. Richard Dale Hall, Bloomington, Ill.	568	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	568	100
Ticket 72 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Minister of Word and Sacrament (PC/L; Business Leadership; Inclusive Marketing)			
A	The Rev. Stacy Lynn Chavis, Lancaster, Penn. (8D)	573	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	573	100
Ticket 73 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Minister of Word and Sacrament (Author and Publishing Expertise)			
A	The Rev. Shauna Hannan, Columbia, S.C. (2E)	573	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	573	100
Ticket 74 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Minister of Word and Service (Non- profit Leadership)			
A	Deacon David Hope-Tringali, Houston, Texas (8D)	570	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	570	100
Ticket 75 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Minister of Word and Sacrament (Campus Ministry, Senior Pastoral Leadership)			
A	The Rev. Adam Patrick White, Waconia, Minn. (3G)	572	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	572	100
Ticket 76 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Lay Woman (PC/L; International Marketing; Corporate Sales)			
A	*Ms. Ileana (Lilly) Kimmelshue, Sacramento, Calif, (2A)	570	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	570	100
Ticket 77 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Lay Woman (Author, Theological and Social Ethics; Board Governance and Strategic Leadership)			
A	Ms. Cynthia Diane Moe-Lobeda, Seattle, Wash. (1B)	569	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	569	100
Ticket 78 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Lay Woman (Senior Organizational Management; Strategic Leadership)			
A	*Ms. Shelly Ann Talcott, Baltimore, Md. (8F)	571	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	571	100

Ticket 79 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Lay Woman (Executive Non-Profit Leadership; Board Management and Development)			
A	Ms. Jennifer Kay Ward, Decorah, Iowa (5F)	571	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	571	100
Ticket 80 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Lay Woman (PC/L; Corporate Strategic Planning; Marketing and Communications			
A	*Ms. Cheryl Geneva Williams, Baltimore, Md. (8F)	572	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	572	100
Ticket 81 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Lay Man (PC/L; Academic Research and Author; Digital Media Innovator)			
A	*Mr. Michael Chan, Moorhead, Minn. (3D)	572	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	572	100
Ticket 82 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Lay Man (Finance and Audit Expertise; Senior Organizational Leadership)			
A	*Mr. Kurt Barneson Galvez, Sacramento, Calif. (2A)	569	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	569	100
Ticket 83 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Lay Man (Executive Non-Profit Leadership; Board Management and Development)			
A	*Mr. Michael Alan Miller, Washburn, Wis. (5H)	570	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	570	100
Ticket 84 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Lay Man (Senior Corporate and Finance Leadership; Information Technology Corporate Entrepreneur)			
A	Mr. John Erik Opgrande, Woodbury, Minn. (3H)	568	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	568	100
Ticket 85 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Lay Man (PC/L; Corporate Strategic Planning; Corporate Acquisitions and Mergers)			
A	*Mr. Brook Selassie, Charlottesville, Va. (9A)	570	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	570	100
Ticket 86 / Publishing House (Augsburg Fortress) / Full Communion (PC/L; Higher Education Senior Leadership)			
A	*The Rev. Joy J. Moore, Lisle, Ill.	563	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	563	100
Ticket 87 / Mission Investment Fund / Minister of Word and Sacrament [three-year term]			
A	*The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, Tacoma, Wash. (1B)	569	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	569	100

Ticket 88 / Mission Investment Fund / Lay Woman (PC/L) [six-year term]			
A	Ms. Liza Canino, Charlotte, N.C. (9B)	565	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	565	100
Ticket 89 / Mission Investment Fund / Lay Woman [six-year term]			
A	*Ms. Krista H. Kapp, Chicago, Ill. (5A)	568	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	568	100
Ticket 90 / Mission Investment Fund / Lay Woman (PC/L) [six-year term]			
A	Ms. Monica R. Powers, Bonney Lake, Wash. (1C)	567	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	567	100
Ticket 91 / Mission Investment Fund / Lay Woman [three-year term]			
A	*Ms. Julie E. Swanson, Roanoke, Va. (9A)	568	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	568	100
Ticket 92 / Mission Investment Fund / Lay Man (PC/L) [three-year term]			
A	*Mr. Randall Foster, Inglewood, Calif. (2B)	571	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	571	100
Ticket 93 / Mission Investment Fund / Lay Man [six-year term]			
A	*Mr. Warren W. Hanson, Minneapolis, Minn. (3G)	568	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	568	100
Ticket 94 / Mission Investment Fund / Lay Man [three-year term]			
A	*Mr. Joseph T. Nolte, Des Moines, Iowa (5D)	491	85.84
B	Mr. Steven Laune Beumer, 9E	81	14.16
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	572	100
Ticket 95 / Mission Investment Fund / Full Communion [six-year term]			
A	*The Rt. Rev. Ruth M. Woodliff-Stanley, Charleston, S.C.	565	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	565	100
Ticket 96 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Minister of Word and Sacrament (Legal)			
A	*The Rev. Franklin Thomas Espegren, Sacramento, Calif. (2A)	562	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	562	100
Ticket 97 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Minister of Word and Sacrament (PC/L; Governance)			
A	*The Rev. William Edward Flippin, Decatur, Ga. (9D)	563	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	563	100

Ticket 98 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Minister of Word and Sacrament (Governance)			
A	The Rev. Anthony Robert Prinsen, Vienna, Va. (8G)	562	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	562	100
Ticket 99 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Minister of Word and Sacrament (Development)			
A	*The Rev. Kathleen O'Keefe Reed, Worcester, Mass (7B)	563	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	563	100
Ticket 100 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Lay Woman (Investments and Financial Planning)			
A	Ms. Mary Beth Baron, Phoenix, Ariz. (2D)	562	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	562	100
Ticket 101 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Lay Woman (Finance)			
A	*Ms. Naomi M. Horsager, Apple Valley, Minn. (3H)	566	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	566	100
Ticket 102 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Lay Woman (Legal)			
A	*Ms. Heather L. Marx, Winona, Minn. (3I)	562	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	562	100
Ticket 103 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Lay Woman (Finance)			
A	*Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford, Evanston, Ill. (5A)	563	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	563	100
Ticket 104 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Lay Woman (Legal and Financial Administration)			
A	Ms. Pamela Fetzer Vetter, Austin, Texas (4E)	562	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	562	100
Ticket 105 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Lay Man (PC/L; Marketing and Communications)			
A	*Mr. Roberto C. Lara Aranda, New York, N.Y. (7C)	557	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	557	100
Ticket 106 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Lay Man (Accounting and Financial Services)			
A	Mr. Gregg Alan Draeger, Owatonna, Minn. (3I)	561	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	561	100
Ticket 107 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Lay Man (Investments)			
A	*Mr. Bruce Douglas George, Westborough, Mass. (7B)	561	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	561	100

Ticket 108 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Lay Man (Audit)			
A	*Mr. Mark Fenner Stauffer, Encinitas, Calif. (2C)	562	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	562	100
Ticket 109 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Lay Man (Development)			
A	*Mr. Andrew Steele, Baltimore, Md. (8F)	564	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	564	100
Ticket 110 / Endowment Fund (ELCA Foundation) / Full Communion (Development)			
A	The Rev. Lisa Carol Bennett, Friday Harbor, Wash.	566	100.00
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	566	100

Second Common Ballot

		Votes	Percent
Ticket 13 / Church Council / Lay Man *Metropolitan New York Synod (7C)*			
A	Mr. Christopher Anthony Vergara, New York, N.Y. (7C)	509	69.63
B	Mr. John David Litke, Huntington Station, N.Y. (7C)	222	30.37
	Invalid Ballots	0	0
	Total Ballots	731	100

Exhibit C

Report of the Presiding Bishop

Part One: Written Report

Welcome to the 17th Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America! As you prepare for the assembly in Phoenix, I urge you to read these materials carefully. There is much to be discussed, considered, and voted upon that will guide the work of this church for the next triennium and beyond.

When our assembly gathered in Columbus, Ohio, in 2022, we were emerging from a pandemic τ a challenging time in our church and in the world. At that assembly I expressed my gratitude for the resilience and creativity demonstrated by our congregations and worshipping communities who found new ways to share the gospel with neighbors in a very uncertain time. Our congregations and worshipping communities found ways to stay connected with their people and continue to serve their communities.

The theme for the 17th assembly τ For the Life of the World τ derives in part from the Nicene Creed, ǿKŜℕŜ ǿŜ Ŏ2y₮Ŝăă ΰKI·ΰ ǿŜ ƒ2Ƶ⌉ ₮2ℕ áΰKŜ ƒ₳₮Ŝ 2₮ ΰKŜ ǿ2ℕƒŘ ΰ2 Ŏ2Y˙Ŝ℗ε ¢Kλă èŜI·ℕ ǿŜ 2ōăŜℕØŜ the 1,700th anniversary of the first Council of Nicaea. It was at this council that the Nicene Creed began to be formulated. The Church was still relatively young in the year 325 and there was not yet one universal, comprehensive statement of faith about the nature of the Trinity. In order to unify the Roman Empire, the emperor, Constantine, wanted first to unify the church. It went well ʤyΰλf ΰKŜ [I·ΰλy˙ó ² ŜăΰŜℕyŭ /KʤzℕŎK I·ŘŘŜŘ ΰKŜ ǿ2ℕŘăƵ áI·yŘ ΰKŜ {2y€ ΰ2 ΰKŜ ŎfI·ʤžăŜƵ á ² Ŝ ōŜ₮ΰŜØŜ λy˙ΰKŜ I 2fè {LJλℕλΰXǿK2 LJℕ2ŎŜŜŘă ₮ℕ2Y˙ ΰKŜ CI·ΰKŜℕ℗ε ¢Kλă I·ŘŘλΰλ2y˙λă ˥y2ǿy˙I·ă ΰKŜ *filioque,* from the Latin ǿ2ℕŘ YŜI·yλyƎ áI·yŘ ₮ℕ2Y˙ ΰKŜ {2y℗ε Lΰ ǿI·ă I·y˙λY˙LJ2ℕΰI·yΰ ₮I·ŎΰƵℕ λy˙ΰKŜ ăLJfλΰ ōŜΰǿŜŜy˙ΰKŜ w2Y˙I·y˙ Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches in 1054.

After forty years of dialogue, the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission on Theological 5λI·f2ƎʤzŜ λăăʤŜŘ ΰKŜ á/2Y˙Y˙2y˙{ΰI·ΰŜY˙Ŝyΰ 2y˙ΰKŜ *Filioque*℗ε ¢Kλă λăăʤŜ ǿI·ă y2 f2yƎŜℕ ăŜŜy˙ΰ2 ōŜ church dividing. The ELCA Church Council at its Spring 2025 meeting recommended that this assembly prayerfully receive the 2024 Lutheran-hℕΰK2Ř2È á/2Y˙Y˙2y˙{ΰI·ΰŜY˙Ŝyΰ 2y˙ΰKŜ *Filioque*℗ε Some lessons from this: 1) words matter and 2) seemingly intractable disagreements lasting for nearly a thousand years can be reconciled if we are open to the Holy Spirit and each other. Keep that in mind during this assembly when we consider and debate the agenda items before us.

Ly˙±λŎŜ tℕŜăλŘŜyΰ LY˙ℕI·y˙{λŘŘλIjʤzλΩă ℕŜLJ2ℕΰ I·yŘ λy˙ăŜŎΰλ2y˙± 2₮ ΰKŜ *Bulletin of Reports* you will see a list of actions to come before this Churchwide Assembly. In section VII you will find the report of the Memorials Committee. Everything is important, and I want to highlight a few elements.

Season of Jubilee: In response to the social policy resolution, *Renewed Action Regarding Racism toward Lutherans of African Descent* (CA 16.05.17), and the *Explanation of the Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent,* on June 27, 2019, the ELCA Church Council adopted the ₮2ff2ǿλyƎ I·ŎΰƵλ2yϒ á¢2 ŜyƎI·ƎŜ λy˙ I·yΰƵλ-racism and racial justice work; work toward economic justice τ λyŎ₮ʤzŘλyƎ ΰKŜ ăΰʤzŘè 2₮ ℕŜLJI·ℕI·ΰƵλ2yã℗ε

These actions, in combination with a long-standing call by African Descent leaders, other ELCA synod memorials and resolutions, and the example provided by ecumenical partners already engaging in reparations, led to the launch of The Season of Jubilee initiative to assess perspectives on African Descent community reinvestment within the ELCA and to identify concrete steps for moving the ELCA beyond apology and into tangible actions of repair and reinvestment.

A preliminary report was prepared and presented to the Church Council Executive Committee in June. It combines preliminary research findings, community feedback, and strategic recommendations emerging from the study and a series of community dialogues facilitated by African Descent Ministries (ADM) and the Racial Justice Ministries (RJM) team.

The Season of Jubilee affirms this as a pivotal moment. African Descent communities have spoken τ clearly and courageously. The findings call for reinvestment in the following areas:

- ω Partner with Black churches and nonprofits of color
- ω Align funding with community-identified priorities
- ω Simplify access to financial resources and support
- ω Communicate transparently and consistently with impacted communities
- ω Set measurable goals and report progress publicly
- ω Maintain a sustained presence in community spaces

In June, the Executive Committee took action to forward the preliminary report and to request a more comprehensive report be presented to the Church Council in November. This final report will urge the Church Council to allocate funds to be invested strategically in cities across seventeen locations for continued engagement with African Descent communities. Yet, this call is about much more than money τ it is about presence, accountability, long-term transformation, and metanoia. To this end, the preliminary report has already recommended establishing a Reparations Task Force τ modeled after the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force τ with representatives from African Descent Ministries, Racial Justice Ministries, the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity Advisory Team, the Mission Investment Fund, Research and Evaluation, and other key stakeholders to advance the work.

Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery: In the mid- and late 15th century, Pope Nicholas V and Pope Alexander VI issued a series of papal bulls declaring that land not inhabited by Christians ø l·ă ădzō2ŜŎű ű2 άŘλăŎ2ØŜ№è£é l·yŘ Ŏ2yãÎljdzŜyűtê Ŏ2yljdzŜăű l·yŘ Ŏ2f2yλÎ l·ű λ2y ō è 9dz№2LJŜl·y /K№λăűλl·y powers. The Americas were divvied up between the Portuguese and Spanish. Later, the French and English got in on the act. The result was the systematic destruction of Native peoples including language, culture, spirituality, and ties to their ancestral land. You can read the 2016 Churchwide !ăăŜY ōfè⁰ă l·Ŏűλ2y ű2 №ŜLJdzŘλl·ű Ŝ űKŜ 52ŎűNλyŜ 2ŦŦ 5λăŎ2ØŜ№è λy {ŜŎűλ2y ±L 2Ŧ űKŜ *Bulletin of Reports*. Take time to read it. During the assembly there will be a presentation by the Task Force for the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery as well as an educational powwow on Tuesday evening.

God's Love Made Real: This is the umbrella term for the work we do to support congregations, worshipping communities, and current ministries. Using data from the Barna/Fuller team, the ά/KdzNŎK ¢Kl·ű Lăé ∃№2dzLJ øλff ō№λyE ŦŽŎdză ű2 ăű№ŜyE űKŜyλyE ŎdzN№ŜyűY λyλăű№λŜă¢ ¦ yŘŜ№ űKŜ ălYŜ D2Ř⁰ă [2ØŜ a l·ŘŜ wŜl·f dzY ō№ŜffI·Σ űKŜ ά/KdzNŎK ¢Kl·ű Lă . ŜŎ2YλyE ∃№2dzLJΣ ădzLJLJ2№ŰŜŘ ōè l· ∃ŜyŜ№2dză Ř2y2№ family, has launched four types of experiments aimed toward new ministries with people who would not typically enter one of our congregations and emphasizing lay leadership.

Church Property Resource Hub: The ELCA Church Property Resource Hub consists of a three-pronged approach with the goals of: 1) sharing resources to equip congregations and synods to make informed and mission-minded property decisions; 2) reaching out to and resourcing congregations at transitional moments; and 3) reconsidering churchwide organization policies l·№2dzyŘ ά l 2fè /f2ădz№Šăé λy fλ∃Kű 2Ŧ LJ№2∃№l·Y fŜl·№yλyEă¢

Social teaching: The assembly will consider editorial revisions to the 2009 social statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, and will also consider a new proposed ă2ŎλI·f ăűl·ű ŜY Ŝyű Σ άCl·λűK and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-ōŜλyE 2Ŧ !ff¢é ¢KŜ ŰŜÈűă 2Ŧ ō2űK ăűl·ű ŜY Ŝyűă l·№Ŝ λyŎfdzŘŜŘ λy {ŜŎűλ2y

V of the *Bulletin of Reports*. The new social statement is particularly timely in this church and in the United States. Please read both carefully.

Transitions: This assembly will elect a presiding bishop, secretary, Church Council members, and members to other churchwide committees and to the boards of the separately incorporated ministries. This is a time of transition for this church that requires prayerful discernment. Individuals have been pre-identified for both presiding bishop and secretary. These are not nominations. We will use the ecclesiastical ballot for both offices. This is a call process, not a campaign. We trust that, through the Holy Spirit, God will send us our new shepherd.

To paraphrase John the Evangelist, there are so many things that this church has done and that come to the assembly for consideration that if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the pages that would be written. I will spare you that and conclude with my gratitude to churchwide organization staff τ your staff, the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, all of you, and God. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, *Presiding Bishop*

Part Two: Churchwide Assembly Presentation

[Referring to an earlier sermon by Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, president and general secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA] ά I ƨ ø I·ō ƨ dzű ű K I·ű ă Ŝ N Y ƨ y this morning? *[applause]* In 2013, in Pittsburgh, I thought, and I was urged by a very frightening bishop from Alaska, that we all needed to have a conversation, and so I let my name stay. And I just thought I would have a conversation, and I started with these four emphases: We are Church; We are Lutheran; We are Church together; and We are Church for the sake of the world. And so, I am going to end that same way.

άI will touch briefly on ΨWe are Church,Ω because IΩm really going to emphasize that toward the end of my comments and report today. Two days ago, or a week ago, or whenever it was that we had our opening worship, I asked you to recite τ and you got the first sentence out τ [dzű K Ŝ N Ω ă Ŝ È L J f I·y I·ű λ ƨ y ƨ ƭ ű K Ŝ ű K λ N Ř I·N ú λ Ŏ f Ŝ ƭ ű K Ŝ ! L J ƨ ă ú f Ŝ ă Ω / N Ŝ Ŝ Ř. It was dismal after that. So, I mean, pastors and deacons, you need to catechize your people. But [dzű K Ŝ N Ω ă λ y ű Ŝ y ű λ ƨ y ø I·ă ű K I·ű Ŝ I·Ŏ K K ƨ dz ă Ŝ K ƨ f Ř would be responsible for this for everyone in their household. So, I think we have representatives from Augsburg Fortress here. They have a new edition of [dzű K Ŝ N Ω ă Small Catechism, with a lot of other helps, including prayers, table prayers, etc. And I am not kidding now, L J Ŝ ƨ L J f Ŝ Φ L ű Ω ă y ƨ ű ű K I·ű Lutherans are somehow better than other people or that we have a corner on the truth, but there is a particular witness that we have that is something we can give to the rest of the Church. If you I·N Ŝ y ƨ ű Ŏ f Ŝ I·N I·ō ƨ dzű ø K I·ű ű K I·ű λ ă Ɛ ű K Ŝ N Ŝ Ω ă I· L J N ƨ ō f Ŝ Y *[applause].*

ά h ƫ I·è Ɛ L Ω ff ă ú ƨ L J K I·N I·y Ǝ dz λ y Ǝ Φ ¢ K Ŝ N Ŝ I·N Ŝ I· y Ωz Y ō Ŝ N ƨ ƭ ű K λ y Ǝ ă ú K I·ű ø Ŝ ø λ ff ō Ŝ Ŏ ƨ y ã λ Ř Ŝ N λ y Ǝ ú ƨ Ř I·è and for the rest of the assembly, but they do fall, for me, into some discrete categories. We have heard a lot about the priesthood of all baptized, of all believers. It is not clear that Luther ever said the Ψpriesthood of all believers.Ω He probably said the Ψpriesthood of all baptized,Ω and we heard it from one of the nominees [for presiding bishop] who rightly explained: Every one of us, in our baptism, is now not only fully called and equipped by the Holy Spirit, but we are also charged with proclaiming the gospel wherever we are. Church, in the church, is only one place where the gospel is proclaimed.

άWhen they see us *[indicating her clerical garb]*, you know, dressed like this, they think, ΨHere ø Ŝ Ǝ ƨ Ƭ ű K Ŝ è Ω N Ŝ Ǝ ƨ λ y Ǝ ű ƨ ă ű I·N ú L J N Ŝ I·Ŏ K λ y Ǝ I·ú Y Ŝ X Φ Ω But you are undercover evangelists *[laughter and applause]*. I urge you to spend time reading Scripture, at least the Small Catechism, if not the Confessions. And, you know, take the time to read through the social statements and messages that this church has produced, because that will help you to explain how we, through Scripture, with prayer, through the Confessions, understand God speaking to us still. As our preacher said this morning, God is still speaking right now, and it is up to you to do that.

άSo, when we hear about clergy, this sort of hierarchy of clergy τ trust me, it is not a glamorous job τ but when we hear about that, I do not want you to think that, somehow, you have no role in this. It is not only up to those of us who are ordained as pastors or deacons. It is up to you, and you will have the most impact. You are the ones, wherever you work or play or go to school, or in your neighborhoods, you are the ƨ y Ŝ ă ø K ƨ I·N Ŝ Ŏ K I·N Ǝ Ŝ Ř ō è [dzű K Ŝ N Ω ă dz y Ř Ŝ N ă ú I·y Ř λ y Ǝ of the priesthood of all baptized to bring that message. So, church, we need to get busy *[applause]*.

άLutherans also, through the Augsburg Confession, which I encourage you to read τ you can just read that, and skip the Apology, that is a lot longer τ just read the Augsburg Confession, but we have a very succinct understanding of what really makes the Church the Church, and it is boiled down to this: That the word is preached, the gospel is preached in its purity, and the sacraments are administered according to the gospel. And also τ in Augsburg IV τ that we are justified by grace, through faith, apart from works of the law. And let me tell you, Lutherans are the least likely to accept grace. ¸ ƨ dz ƫ y ƨ ø Ɛ è ƨ dz N y Ŝ λ Ǝ K ō ƨ N λ ă ă λ Ŏ ƫ Ɛ ű K Ŝ N Ŝ λ ă ă ƨ Y Ŝ ű K λ y Ǝ Ǝ ƨ λ y Ǝ ƨ y Ɛ è ƨ dz Ω ff ō N λ y Ǝ

over a casserole, or a hot dish, or whatever they call it in your region. But will we accept help from others? Or do we really, truly believe that it is not up to us to be in a right relationship with God, but God has done that through Jesus Christ and keeps us there τ as you remember in the third I·NúλÕfŜ 2Ŧ úKŜ !LJ2ăúfŜăQ /NŜŜŘ τ keeps us there through the Holy Spirit? ThatQs different from a lot of ways we think we might imagine church. So, I think thatQs important for us to pay attention to that. ItQs very simple. It may not be easy all the time, but itQs simple.

άNow here, let me tell you a story. It is in the ΨWe are LutheranQ category. In the last parish I served, in Ashtabula, Ohio τ where is [the] Northeastern Ohio [Synod]? Thank you! A wonderful, wonderful parish. They were an Augustana Parish, actually, which is a Swedish tradition. And I thought that all Scandinavians were the same when I came there. I was quickly schooled. But one τ this is not part of the story τ one blessed thing about Augustana Lutheran was that, when they said that everyone is welcome, they meant it. And so, we had a new organist because our previous organist had quit during Holy Week, which is a little tense. But she, her dad was Filipino American, and her mom was European American. So, Debbie came and then her boyfriend, then fiancé, and now husband of twenty years was African American. Though the big problem was that his grandmother was Italian, so with the Swedes, that was a little ΨouchyQ in Ashtabula. And he was like Saint Andrew. He would just bring people to church, come on and see what we have here; come and see Jesus in this church! And so, by the grace of God, and through the incredible openness and humility τ well, the way, like, Swedes and Lutherans can be humble, like humble-bragging, okay, they can do that. By the time I left, we had mixed-race couples, African American couples, we had Native American people, we had gay couples with children, as well as all the good old Swedes. So, we could sing ΨWoke Up This Morning with My Mind Stayed on JesusQ *and* ΨChildren of the Heavenly Father.Q

άSo, here is this congregation, where I learned the difference, and when I got there, there was a flag inside the communion rail in the chancel. And they had rummaged through the Boy Scout closet and found this pole, a tent pole, to stick it on. And it was held up by bricks around the base, sort of excommunicating people at that corner of the communion rail, and it only had 48 stars *[laughter]*. How many of you have American flags in your chancel? How many of you are concerned about separation of Church and State? ¢KI·úQă ă2YŜúKλyƎ øŜ Ř2yQú I·tøI·ëă dzyŘŜNăúI·yŘ, and the First Amendment is not about the Church never speaking in the public square. In fact, Luther was very clear, and if you have read τ which I know you have τ the proposed social ăúI·úŜYŜyúΣ è2dz øλtf dzyŘŜNăúI·yŘ úKI·ú úKI·úQă LJI·Núú 2Ŧ 2dzN λŘŜyúλúè◆ So, we are not to be quiet, and particularly *you* are not to be quiet, but use your faith when you are trying to make decisions, or ø2N] λY´è2dzN Õ2YY´dzyλúèΣ 2N ŜØŜY´NdzY´Ŧ2N 2ŦŦλÕŜ◆ ¢KI·úQă λYLJ2NúI·yú Ŧ2N øKI·ú øŜ Ř2. And τ I guess LQY´ fŜI·ØλyƎΣ ă2 L ÕI·y´ƎŜú øλtŘ *[applause]* τ you do not have to be a U.S. American in order to be a Christian *[applause]*. And as we heard from Dr. Rimmer, there are 13 million Lutherans in Ethiopia. ² ŜQNŜ ăYI·ff Õ2YLJI·NŜŘ ű2 úKŜYΣ I·yŘ úKŜ I·ØŜNI·ƎŜ [dzűKŜNI·y´in the Lutheran World Federation is an African person, mostly women, from Tanzania and that part of sub-Saharan Africa *[applause]*. And also, the Nazis were famous for draping their swastika in ÕKdzNÕKŜăQ chancels. I love my country, I·yŘ Ř2yQú I·yè2yŜ úNè ű2 ăI·è úKI·ú L I·Y´ y2ú LJI·úNλ2úλÕ◆ 52yQú è2dz ŘI·NŜ◆ .dzú úKŜNŜQă I· ŘλŦŦŜNŜyÕŜ◆ ¢KI·y´] you. ¢KŜNŜΣ LQØŜ KI·NI·yƎdzŜŘ è2dz f2yƎ Ŝy2dzƎK *[applause].*

άI hope you have read the proposed social statement on civic life and engagement for the betterment of all. This is a profoundly Lutheran statement, profoundly Lutheran. And when you peruse the Large Catechism, after you finish reading the Small Catechism, you will find that when Luther is going through his explanation 2Ŧ úKŜ Ŧ2dzNúK LJŜúλúλ2y´2Ŧ úKŜ [2NŘQă Prayer, Ψgive us today our daily bread,Q he explains all of those things. It is good health, a good spouse, good colleagues, good government τ which we believe is one of the ways that God brings order to the world, that God uses government in order for us to live together in safety, peace and harmony, and justice.

But Luther said that the coat of arms of the prince, the government at that time, should be loaves of bread. Not lions, loaves of bread. ¢KI·úΩă LJI·ℕú 2ŦØKat we understand as good government and part of the work that we pray that our representatives, local all the way to the Congress, dzyŘŜℕăúI·yŘ úKI·ú úKI·úΩă úKŜℕℕ ℕ2fŜΦ And we ought to be praying for them daily. LúΩă I·y˝K2y2ℕI·ōfŜ thing to serve the country as a member of Congress, as a member of the state legislature, or of ŏλúě I·yŘ f2ŎI·f ∃2ØŜℕyY˝Ŝyű LúΩă I·y˝ honorable thing, but Luther says that the Church is called to ϽŜŜLJ úKŜ ∃2ØŜℕyY˝Ŝyű I·ŎŎ2dzyűI·ōfŜΦ {2 LJfŜI·ăŜ Y˝I·ϽŜ ădzℕŜ è2dzΩØŜ ℕŜI·Ř úKI·úΣ I·yŘ ØŜΩff τ listen, I think [the Rev.] Roger [Willer] and Ryan [Cumming] are going to be bringing that to us, I believe. Is it tomorrow? OkayΣ LΩØŜ KI·ℕI·y∃dzŜŘ è2dz úKŜℕŜ.

άOkay, ΨWe are Church together.Ω Does anyone, or do you all, know what *filioque* means and can you pronounce it? LŦ è2dz Ř2yΩúΣ úKŜℕŜ λă y2 ăKI·Y˝Ŝ λy˝úKI·ú Φ ² Ŝ Ř2yΩú dzădzI·ffè ōI·yŘè I·ō2dzű [I·úλy˝ words in our daily conversations, but a remarkable thing has happened. So, as we have already heard, at some point, in the year 325, Constantine, who was the emperor, decided that the Church needed to get together, it would make his kingdom a lot better if he could get them organized. And so, he called together a council that met in Nicaea τ we get the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed from there τ but they brought this together because there was not really one clear understanding of who Jesus was. The early Church was wide open; there was a lot of stuff going on. And these were not a bunch of shrinking violets when Constantine brought all these bishops together, and legend is that Saint Nicholas punched out Arius, who was bringing a heresy during that. So, think about that at Christmas *[laughter]*.

άBut later on, the Western Church, of which we are a part, decided to add, in the article about the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit proceeds Ψfrom the FatherΩ tKI·úΩă ØKŜℕŜ λú ŜyŘŜŘ τ and they added Ψand from the Son,Ω *filioque*Φ ¢KI·úΩă what that word means. And this has divided the Church for over 1,000 years, but, through diligent work τ and I see that Bishop Don McCoid is in the room, who is one of the co-chairs of the LutheranςOrthodox Dialogue τ through diligent prayer, through deep listening, the LutheranςOrthodox Dialogue has said this no longer needs to be a Church-dividing issue. And we may, when we are saying the Creed, say the Spirit proceeds Ψfrom the Father,Ω and leave off Ψand the Son.Ω And the Orthodox are not going to worry, should sometimes we say, Ψfrom the Father and the Son.Ω

άNow I know this seems arcane and all kinds of things τ a bunch of theologians, who, apparently, were quite physical τ but if you think about this, a division in the Eastern and Western Church, over 1,000 years old, and people would kill each other over these things. And we were able, with the power and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to come to an agreement on something that has been church-dividing for a millennium. How much more can the Holy Spirit do with the smaller things that we disagree with in this church? *[applause]*

á! yŘ ØŜ ØλffōŜ ăK2ØλyE I·ú ă2Y˝Ŝ LJ2λyű I· ØλŘŜ2 I·ō2dzű D2ŘΩă [2ØŜ a I·ŘŜ wŜI·f. Now, we had nine townhalls across all nine of the regions, and some of your bishops were the hosts τ I see some of them here τ and what we were doing is trying to explain this. We had a significant contribution that enabled us to do real research with the Barna-Fuller people to ask about, not what do we think, but really, what are the priorities for us? What difference do we make? They interviewed a lot of people who are either not churched or certainly not Lutheran, and they asked them, ΨWhat do you think of the ELCA?Ω And they said, ΨThe what?Ω

άBut working on that τ this overarching thing ØKŜℕŜ ØŜΩℕŜ ∃2λyE úž ŘŜØŜf2LJ work, the work that you are doing, and we had that wonderful occasion where people came up and they shared their stories about great things that are happening in your congregations and communities τ tKI·úΩă úKŜ ΨChurch that is.Ω There will be congregations until Jesus returns in glory τ and then we ØλffăŜŜ ØKλŎK 2yŜă KŜΩă I·ff2ØŜŘ λy˝*[laughter]*. But we know, and we found this out for sure during the pandemic, úKŜℕŜ I·ℕŜ úK2dzăI·yŘă 2Ŧ LJŜ2LJfŜΣ ŦλℕăúŽ 2Ŧ I·ffΣ ØK2 Ř2yΩú ŜØŜy˝ϽyØ úKI·ú úKŜè ySŜŘ úž

know Jesus. {ŜŎƨyŘΣ ŭKŜ WŜădză ŭKŜèƠNŜ KŜI·NƛyƎ I·ōƨdzŭ ƛă yƨŭ ŭKŜ WŜădză whom God has sent to be God for us.

άAnd we found out that through Zoom they would listen online. More people were hearing the gospel. There was a joke: The devil said, "I I·H LƠØŜ Ŏfƨ̌ŜŘ I·ff ƨŦ èƨdzN churches.Ơ And we said "Ha! ² ŜƠØŜ ƨLJSyŜŘ ƨyŜ ƛy ˇŜØŜNè Kƨdză̌Ŝ℗Ơ .dzŭ Kƨǿ Σ yƨǿ ŭKI·ŭ ǿŜƠØŜ Ǝƨŭ ƨ yˇƨØŜ ŌŜèƨyŘ ŭKI·ŭΣ Kƨǿ Řƨ we reach people, interact with people, get to know people who are likely not to become a part of our worshiping communities? And how do we use the secret, undercover power of the laypeople to be the ones to lead this effort? So, pay I·ŭŭŜyŭƛƨy ŭƨ ŭKI·ŭŤ ŭKI·ŭ ƛă ŎƨˇƛyƎ I·yŘ ǿŜƠff ŌŜ ǿƨN ƛyƎ on that now for the next τ well, Bishop Curry will have to say this τ but hopefully ǿŜƠff ˥ŜŜLJ dzLJ ƨyˇ ŭKI·ŭ ŦƨN èŜI·Nă ŭƨ ŎƨˇŜ℗ LúƠă I· ƎNŜI·ŭ ŭKƛyƎ, these experiments. How about having online communities? I know I have a little problem with that, but we already are doing that. We already have over 1,000 young adults in our Gather Communities who are ˇŜŜŭƛyƎ ƨyŭƛyŜ℗ ² Kè Řƨy℗ŭ ǿŜ establish groups who are nestled, living amongst people in communities and doing works of service while also praying? So, stay tuned for that.

άOkay, " ² Ŝ are Church for the sake of the world.Ơ Well, we have heard already τ thank you to Dr. Bullock and Treasurer Fedyk τ that we do a lot through ELCA World Hunger, whose 50th anniversary is this year. And if you haveyƠt ƎƛØŜyΣ ŭKŜNŜƠă ăŭƛff ŭƛˇŜ℗ {ƨˇŜƨyŜ ŦfI·ăK I· vw Ŏ2ŘŜ dzLJ there *[indicating the screen],* I·yŘ ǿŜƠff ăŭI·N℗ ŭI·˥ƛyƎ ŭKƛyƎă N℗ƎKŭ yƨǿ℗ I had a chance to meet in a ăŜy1·ŭ2N℗ă ƨŦŦƛŎŜ. We do that. They let us come in because we are not asking for money or votes, I·yŘ ŭKŜè ˥yƨǿ ǿŜ Řƨy℗ŭ KI·ØŜ I·yè Yˇƨy℗èΣ ăƨ ŭKŜè℗NŜ yƨŭ I·ŦNI·ŘŘ ƨŦ dză℗ But they were impressed. They said, "How much do you raise in a year?Ơ And I said, "At least 20 million dollars a year.Ơ And they were stunned by that. That is you doing thisŤ ŭKI·úƠă è2dzN ƎŜyŜN2ăƛúè *[applause]*. ! yŘ ƛúƠă ōI·ăŜŘ on the generosity of God, the abundance of God. Likewise with Lutheran Disaster Response. ² ŜƠNŜ ăŭƛff ƛyˇbŜǿ hNfŜI·yã I·ŦúŜN I dzN℗NƛŎI·yŜ {I·yŘè, and we will be staying in California and in Texas ŦƨN I·ă fƨyƎ I·ă ƛú ŭI·˥Ŝă℗ ! yŘ yƨǿ ƛúƠă Yˇƨ℗NŜ ŘƛŦŦƛŎdzfú ōŜŎI·dzăŜ úKŜ ŎdzN℗NŜyŭ I·ŘYˇƛyƛăúN℗I·ŭƛ2ˇ has decided that FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] is not necessary. And we can try as hard as we can, and hold as many bake sales and have as many car washes, but we are never going to make up for the kind of money that was available to us, entrusted to us by the government to administer to people in need, but LDR is there *[applause]*.

άAnd "Church for the sake of the world,Ơ which is also Church together and completely Lutheran. We are entering a project of Jubilee. We are going to have a season of Jubilee, and your colleagues at the churchwide expression, along with others, have been meeting with African American leaders throughout this church and with their communities, and they have been talking to them, saying, "What would Jubilee look like in your community?Ơ ² ŜƠNŜ yƨŭ ƎƨƛyƎ ŭƨ go there and tell them what it would look like in your community. What kind of Jubilee is that? "What would reparations, what kind of reparations would actually make a difference in your community?Ơ And this Year of Jubilee group, this task force, has identified 17 communities so far throughout the United States and the Caribbean where they say, "What we need is economic development, and our schools need help, and we yŜŜŘ ŭNI·ƛyƛyƎ ŦƨN fŜI·ŘŜN℗ă℗ ¢KI·úƠă ǿKI·ŭ ǿŜ yŜŜŘ℗ ² Ŝ Řƨy℗ŭ ySŜŘ hand-outs from any of èƠI·ff℗ ² Ŝ Řƨy℗ŭ ySŜŘ ŭKI·ŭΣ ăƨ Řƨy℗ŭ ăŜyŘ dză èƨdzN ƨfŘ Ŏfƨ̌ŭKŜă I·yŘ ŎI·yySŘ Ŧƨƨ̌Ř℗ ² Ŝ Řƨy℗ŭ ySŜŘ ŭKI·ŭ℗Ơ So that is something that we will be working on as the Church because we ŎI·yyƨ̌ŭ Řƨ ŭKƛă FNƨˇ ŭKŜ ŎKdzN℗ŎǿKŘŜ ƨŦŦƛŎŜ℗ LúƠă ƎƨƛyƎ ŭƨ KI·LJLJŜyˇƛyˇèƨdzN Ŏƨˇ Yˇdzyƛŭ̌ƛŜăΣ I·yŘ ƛŭ ǿƨy℗ŭ KI·LJLJŜyˇƛŦ èƨdz I·N℗Ŝy℗ŭ KŜfLJƛyƎ ƛŭ ŭƨ KI·LJLJŜy℗ And this means, dear ChurŎKΣ ƛúƠă yƨŭ dzLJ ŭƨ ŭKŜ people of color to be doing this, although they are the ones who will lead the way in this effort. But how do we who are white ally with that in a way that is actually helpful and not somehow deciding that we know best about everything we need to do? So, watch for that *[applause]*.

άSo, where is my dear brother, Bishop Curry? Are they making him do interviews? Oh, they let him back in? O˥I·è℗ bƨΣ KŜƠă I·fNŜI·Řè found out that his life has changed foreverΣ I·yŘ KŜƠff ySØŜN

go anywhere alone. I had some advice from Bishop Hanson when I first started, and I ordered chicken for my first dinner. And he said, ΨYou need to get busy, Church. So, give him your support and give him grace. You know, in my 12 years, there are many times when I have made wrong decisions, have said things I should not have said, have let people down, and have even hurt people. [illegible] me grace. Show Bishop Curry grace *[applause]*.

άAnd as I am not as technologically or [illegible] t[illegible] L KI·ØŜyQú fŜI·NyŜŘ ű2 Ř2 űKI·ű èŜűΣ I·yŘ LQY y2ű ∃2λy∃ ű2 fŜI·Ny´y2ø *[laughter]*. But your staff, throughout the entire churchwide organization and throughout this church, but particularly the staff of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, are remarkable, dedicated people. I did say this, in 2016, at my first Churchwide Assembly as presiding bishop, that you all think about *[sinister voice]* ΨHiggins RoadQ and Ψchurchwide.Q These are your siblings in Christ who come every day, through a pandemic, through reduced resources, because they love Jesus, they love this church, and they believe in the gospel proclamation that we hold *[applause]*. These are your staff; these are your colleagues, and, doggone it, I have heard too many times about ΨthemQ and how they are [illegible] I·yŘ űKŜè Ř2yQú I·yãøŜN dzăΣ I·yŘ űKŜèQNŜ y2ű Ř2λy∃ űKŜN ?2ō. Or they, and this is the one that really sets me off, they are only interested in institutional survival. ¢KI·ûQă [illegible] ¢KI·ûQă [illegible] {2Σ LQY ∃2λy∃ ű2 ōŜ [illegible] I·N2dzyŘ űKλă ŎKdzNŎK λyŎ2∃yΩű2Σ I·yŘ λF L KŜI·N one of you doing űKI·ű ă2Nú 2F űKλy∃X

άAlso retiring, we think, from the staff this year is my dear colleague, the Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock *[applause]*. Wyvetta has flunked retirement several times already, and I have this odd feeling she might flunk it again if Bishop Curry decides to call on her for some advice, *[addressing Pastor Bullock]* but thatQs up to you. But this job is impossible to do for any one person, but the staff, your staff that you have, not only are incredibly effective at governance, at finance, and theology, and mission, and, actually, all [illegible] going. But Wyvetta and other staff have been an important support for me and a confidant. And, [illegible].

άMy dear sister, Susan Johnson *[national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, ELCIC],* asked me before I started, what was I afraid of, and I said, [illegible] really, really big job with a lot of moving partsΣ I·yŘ LQY [illegible] and badø ! [illegible] which, [illegible] the hype.Q I have to remember that I inhabit the body of the presiding bishop. But people are quick to τ I mean, when I was a synod pastor, I would stand up at my desk when the bishop called τ and people show that kind of deference and respect for the office. But Wyvetta was a truth-teller to

me always, and would always say it like it was, in some words that we cannot repeat in front of family audiences *[laughter]*. She did not waste time.

áAlso finally retiring is my administrative assistant Violet Bonner *[applause]*. Can you imagine? This woman had to keep me organized for 12 years, and she has also served as a very important gatekeeper. Not that we are trying to exclude people, but the demands are overwhelming, and sometimes, well, in the words of the song from *Oklahoma!*, ΨLΩY ∂dzăΰ I· ∃ƛℕf ǿK2 ŎI·yΩΰ ăI·è áb2¢éΩ But bringing sanity to that, through incredible faithfulness. Violent is a very faithful, active Baptist, and she brings that part of her to the work. She came up here when Bishop Hanson asked her to come out τ how many? Was that 18 years ago, 20? SKŜΩŘ ōŜŜY'KŜℕŜ I· f2y∃ ΰƛY'ŜΣ ōdzΰ she said, ΨLΩY going to step out in faith.Ω That is how Violet has lived her ministry, and give her kudos. She had to train up, not one, but two presiding bishops. So, thank you to Violet.

áNow, back to ΨWe are Church.Ω ¢KI·ΰΩă I·fǿI·èă ₮ƛℕăΰ. And when we were going around with these emphases and trying to package them, they said, Ψ ² Ŝff Σ è2dz ăK2dzfŘyΩΰ ăΰI·ℕΰ ǿƛΰK ΰKI·ΰΣ because people might be put off.Ω .dzΰΣ 2ⅎI·èΣ ǿŜΩff ∃Ŝΰ ΰ2 ΰKI·ΰ later with them, ōdzΰ ₮2ℕ dzăΣ ǿŜΩŘ better be clear about this. We are Church. The unique τ and it is only given to the Church τ the only thing is the proclamation of the gospel in word and sacrament. That is why the Church exists. Everything else is either equipped by that, empowered by that, or, actually, not necessary. Yes, we are called to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give drink to the thirsty. Yes, yes, yes, but our first and foremost job and understanding is the proclamation of the word and the administration of the sacraments *[applause]*.

áI got in trouble one of my first meetings with τ then it was, I called it the Department of America; it became Domestic Mission, before that it was Evangelical Outreach and {èy2ŘƛÖI·fXwhatever we were back then τ and I was concerned about the emphasis that I hear very often when I am around this church or reading things about justice τ sibilant, Ψjusssstic*ccc*eΩ τ whose justice? And when we talk about justice, is it D2ŘΩă ∂dzăΰƛŎŜ I·yŘ ℕƛ∃KΰŜ2dzăyŜăă ΰKI·ΰ ƛă ă2 clearly demonstrated in the Hebrew Scriptures and lived, as we understand, by Jesus? Or is it our justice? And those of us who are in a position of privilege, and in the majority, do we just perpetrate our Ψjustice Ω on other people without asking them if they even want our help? That is not the primary mission of the Church.

áLuther did help us understand that we are freed in Christ to love and serve the neighbor, and Luther was very clear in that treatise that, in fact, the Christian is free and lord of all, but the Christian is also servant of all and bound. We are free because of the gospel, because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; we are free now to serve the neighbor. Not because weΩre going to earn our way into KŜI·ØŜyΣ y2ΰ ōŜŎI·dzăŜ ǿŜΩℕŜ ∃2ƛy∃ ΰ2 f22ⅎ ∃22ŘΣ y2ΰ ōŜŎI·dzăŜ ǿŜΩff ∃Ŝΰ plaques τ which, I know Gen Z does not like to get plaques anymore τ not because of any of that sort of stuff, but we have been set free by the gospel. I am concerned that this church is not always clear about that.

áAnd I remember, as I said in 2016, that our bishop then in Metro D.C., Dick Graham, said he lives in communities filled with justice-loving, compassionate atheists, and they are doing wonderful work. What makes us different? And if we cannot name the name, if we cannot put ourselves under, not only under the authority and power but also the protection and strength of Jesus, then we should just go out of business as a church, because weΩre not Church *[applause]*. And Luther, well, actually, it was Melanchthon, but in the Augsburg Confession, we said, in order to have these ecumenical relationships with others τ and we do, and our ecumenical full-communion partners are over there, and you will meet them this afternoon τ ƛΰΩă ōŜŎI·dzăŜ ΰKƛă ƛă K2ǿ ǿŜ ŘŜ₮ƛyŜ ΰKŜ /KdzℕÖK℗ LΰΩă ădz₮₮ƛÖΛŜyΰ ƛ₮ ΰKŜ word is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered according to the gospel, and, if we see that happening in other denominations, then we can work with them and should work with them. TKI·ΰΩă I·ff ƛΰ ΰI·ⅎŜă℗ L f2ØŜ fΰΰdzℕ∃èΣ ōdzΰ

ΰKI·ΰΩă I·y *adiaphoron*. L ΰKλyϒ λΰΩă I· ØŜℕè λY LJ2ℕΰI·yΰ 2yŜΣ ōŜŎI·dzăŜ 2ΰKŜℕøλăŜ øŜ ø2dzfŘ ∃2 øλfŘΣ I·yŘ it does link us with the Church across the centuries and around the world, but I am totally, really concerned τ and I said this in the sermon on Monday τ that Jesus has become wallpaper for a lot of us. Jesus is assumed. We need τ I·yŘ ΰKλă λăΣ LΩY ăLJŜI·ϒλyƎ ΰ2 Yèă Ŝf τ to make sure that we are grounded in Scripture and in prayer because, when we are grounded in that, we can, as our preacher said this morning, start to live that prayer.

ά{2Σ ŘŜI·ℕ ŎKdzℕŎKΣ LΩY ŎI·ffλyƎ è2dz. This is presumptuous, but I believe God is calling us back to the absolute basics. The basics that are illuminated in the Nicene Creed, about which we now can agree after a millennium. Those basics. Are you aware of those? Do you know those? Make sure you study them and live them. And τ this is one more little aside, okay τ as you can see, this is the 1,700th anniversary of Nicene Creed. Think about that. ! yŘ ΰKŜ ! LJ2ăΰfŜăΩ /ℕŜŜŘΣ ΰKI·ΰ ŘλŘyΩΰ ?dzăΰ pop up, so these are the creeds of our church along with τ øKŜℕŜΩă .λăK2LJ wλŜƎŜf? τ the Athanasian Creed, which is longer, but these are all the creeds of our church, and those who are deacons or pastors and bishops have vowed, in our ordination promises, to uphold the historic creeds, which are those creeds. ² ŜΩℕŜ ădzLJLJ2ăŜŘ ΰ2 Ř2 ΰKI·ΰΣ I·yŘ λΰΩă ØI·fdzI·ōfŜΦ ! yŘ øŜΩℕŜ y2ΰ ōŜλyƎ stodgy when we say, ΨThese are the creeds.Ω There are plenty of teaching moments to explore 2ΰKŜℕ ăΰI·ΰŜYŜyΰă 2Ŧ ŦI·λΰKΣ ōdzΰ è2dz ?dzăΰ Ř2yΩΰ ϒy2Ŏϒ 2dzΰ I· ŎℕŜŜŘ the night before on your laptop and bring it to church *[applause]*. ! yŘ øKŜY øŜ ăI·è λyƎΣ Ψ I believe this.Ω ² ŜΩℕŜ ăI·èλyƎ λΰ I·f2yƎ øλΰK нΣллл èŜI·ℕă 2Ŧ ŦI·λΰKŦdzf øλtnessT øŜΩℕŜ ăI·èλyƎ λΰ I·ŎℕŻăă ΰKŜ ø2ℕfŘΣ I·yŘ øŜΩℕŜ ăI·èλyƎ λΰ I·ă I· Ŧ2dzyŘI·ΰλ2Y Ŧ2ℕ ŦdzΰdzℕŜ ƎŜyŜℕI·ΰλ2yã, because this is how we understand God has chosen to be God for us. So there.

"So now, this is really τ Bishop Susan will chuckle at this τ I had a chance to be at [the 9[/L/Ωă] convention a couple of weeks ago, and without knowing, because I got in a day later, I used the same Luther quote that she had used in her report. And I was so impressed when your people were reciting it back to me. I was like, Ψ ² 2øΣ ΰKŜèΩℕŜ ℕŜI·ffè ∃22Ř dzLJ KŜℕŜΦΩ .dzΰ λΰΩă ΰKŜ ăI·YŜ 2yŜ that Chad Rimmer used, but I am still going to use itΦ LΰΩă I· ø2yŘŜℕŦdzf IjdzΩΰŜΦ ΨThis life, therefore, is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness. Not health, but healing. Not being, but becoming. Not rest, but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it. The process is not yet finished, but it is going on. This is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified.Ω

"Soli deo gloria [sustained applause]."

Exhibit D

Report of the Secretary

² KλfŜ ΰKŜ ΰKŜYŜ 2Ŧ ΰKλă ëŜI·ŊŒă /KdzŊŎKǿλŘŜ !ăăŜYōfè λă Ŧ2dzyŘ λy I· fλyŜ ŦŊ2Y ΰKŜ bλŎŜyŜ /ŊŜŜŘΣ λΰŒă I·y2ΰKŜŊ fλyŜ ŦŊ2Y ΰKŜ fλΰdzŊƎèΣ ΰKλă 2yŜ ŦŊ2Y ΰKŜ Yè℠ŜΣ ΰKI·ΰ KI·ă ōŜŜy I·y ŜI·ŊǿŊ2ŊY Ŧ2Ŋ Y Ŝ λy ǿŊλΰλyƎ ΰKλă ŊŜŁJ2ŊΰY άŦ2Ŋ ΰKŜ ǿŜff-ōŜλyƎ 2Ŧ ΰKŜ ŎKdzŊŎK 2Ŧ D2Řά€ ² Ŝ in the Office of the Secretary óh{ύ ăŜŜ] ΰ2 ōŜ LJI·Ŋΰΰ 2Ŧ ŎŊŜI·ΰλyƎ ΰKI·ΰ άǿŜff-ōŜλyƎé λyΎΰKŜ ØI·Ŋ2dză ǿI·èă ǿŜ fλØŜ 2dzΰ 2dzŊ ăŜyΎăŜ 2Ŧ ŎI·ff in this office. What follows is a summary of the highlights of the work of this office since the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

2025 Churchwide Assembly-related matters

Constitutional revisions

Official notice was sent to the synods in January 2025 of constitutional revisions the Church Council is proposing for possible action at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. The constitutional changes, as well as rationales for these changes, are available for voting members to review in the *Bulletin of Reports.*

Presiding bishop and secretary elections

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly will be electing both a presiding bishop and a secretary for six-year terms. In 2024, the following continuing resolution was adopted by the Church Council:

> 19.01.A24. *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 per office 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 30 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members.*

Early in 2025, voting members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly received a letter inviting them to identify the names of up to three persons who might be considered for election as presiding bishop; two weeks later they received a similar letter inviting them to identify up to three persons who might be considered for election as secretary. The deadline for submitting names was March 17. Those identified were asked to return a biographical information form if they were interested in having their names considered. The names and biographical information of those who returned forms by May 1 are included in the Guide app. We did not report the yΰzYŎŜŊ 2Ŧ ΰλYŜă I· LJŜŊă2yΰă yl·YŜ ǿI·ă λŘŜyΰλŦλŜŘΣ y2Ŋ ŘλŘ ǿŜ ăKI·ŊŜ ΰKŜ yl·YŜă 2Ŧ ΰK2ăŜ ǿK2 ŘλŘ not return biographical forms. The biographical information will remain available until the assembly convenes on July 28 and then will be removed from the online materials. The first ballot for presiding bishop will be an ecclesiastical ballot where voting members can vote for any rostered minister of Word and Sacrament, whether pre-identified or not. Similarly, the first ballot for secretary will be an ecclesiastical ballot where voting members can vote for any voting member (rostered minister or layperson) of a congregation of this church, whether pre-identified or not.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee has been at work for the past two years to provide election slates to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly for the Committee on Appeals, the Nominating Committee, the Committee on Discipline, and youth and at-large members of the Church Council, as well as nominations for the boards of the Separately Incorporated Ministries (SIMs). Nominations from the floor for these committees/boards that are the responsibility of the Nominating Committee may be submitted either electronically using the CWA Guide app or, if necessary due to failure of the electronic system, on paper forms, to the Nominations Desk of the assembly prior to the deadline of Tuesday, July 29, 12:15 p.m. The rules for nominations can be found in the *Bulletin of Reports*. We are grateful to the entire committee for its work, and particularly thank Jessica Potts for her willingness to serve as chair.

Memorials Committee

The Memorials Committee met June 21ç22, 2025, to review the 87 memorials submitted by synod assemblies during the past triennium and make appropriate recommendations for assembly action. The Report of the Memorials Committee is available as part of the *Bulletin of Reports*. The Memorials Committee has asked the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to separately consider four memorials. The remaining memorials will be acted upon *en bloc*, that is, in one group. Voting members present at the assembly have until Monday, July 28, 9:15 p.m., to request that memorials contained in the original report be pulled out of *en bloc*, motions responding to memorials be amended, or substitute motions be considered. We are grateful to the entire committee for its work, and particularly thank the Rev. Emily Hartner and Noah Roux for their willingness to serve as co-chairs.

Churchwide Assembly hearings

Prior to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, online hearings will be held to provide more time for voting members to become sufficiently informed regarding legislative business and other important matters before the assembly. Hearings are non-legislative sessions designed to share certain proposals scheduled for assembly action or for information sessions at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. In accordance with ELCA Constitution 12.31.A25., voting members, advisory members, resource members, and people who fall under other categories approved by the Church Council may attend with voice. Others may watch the hearing but shall not have voice.

Hearings will take place 6:00ç7:00 p.m., Central Daylight Time, on the following dates:

- Tuesday, July 15: Memorials concerning Palestine and Israel
- Thursday, July 17: Recommended proposed edits to the social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009)
- a2yŘl·èΣ Wdzfè нмY wŜŎ2YYŜyŘŜŘ LJN2LJ2ăŜŘ ă2ŎλI·f ăúI·úŜYŜyú ácI·λúK I·yŘ /λØλŎ [λŦŜε
- Tuesday, July 22: 2026ç2028 budget proposal
- Thursday, July 24: General memorials session

The presentation portion of each hearing will be recorded for later viewing. More information about registering for the hearings will be posted on ELCA.org/CWA.

Updates related to actions of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly

Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

The Office of the Secretary provided staff support to the Church Council for its process in forming the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC), which was called for by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. Members of this church were invited to serve on this commission, and the Office of the Secretary received more than 400 applications. The Executive Committee carefully

reviewed the applications, with a minimum of three selected from each region. The final slate of 35 was presented for discussion and subsequent approval by the Church Council. Once the commission was established, we provided resource staff and logistical support for its work, λyŎfdzŘλyƎ úKŜ /w[/ůă l·LJLJ№2ØŜŘ dzLJŘl·úŜă ú2 l· ŘŜŘλŎl·úŜŘ ǿŜōLJl·ƎŜ ǿλúKλy 9[/!℗2№Ǝ℗ ¢Kλă №ŜIjdz№ŜŘ staff to work with colleagues in Strategic Communications to translate the CRLC summary documents into Spanish for posting online. The commissi2y℗ă ŦλNăű YˆŜŜűλyƎ ǿl·ă λyˆWdzfè нлно l·yŘ its twelfth and final meeting was March 2025.

Task Force on OLFC and Specialized Ministry

The Task Force on On-Leave-from-Call and Specialized Ministry, mandated by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly to study and make recommendations concerning leave and specialized ministry, met a number of times over the past two years. The full report can be found in Section VI of the *Bulletin of Reports*. Some of the changes outlined in the report are being presented as constitutional amendments, while others will be made as policy revisions to the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* following the Churchwide Assembly.

The Task Force on Synod Nominations and Elections

The Task Force on Synod Nominations and Elections, mandated by the 2022 Churchwide !ăăŜYˆōfèΣ ǿl·ă Yˆl·ŘŜ dzLJ 2Ŧ ăŜØŜ№l·f]Ŝè fŜl·ŘŜ№ă ǿK2 ǿŜ№Ŝ λyØ2fØŜŘ λyˆ úKŜ№ äèy2Řă℗ ōλăK2LJ elections. They met for more than a year to share information with one another and to consider whether changes might need to be made to the constitutions. After discussion, it was determined that no such recommendations need to be made at this time. The task force decided instead to 2ŦŦŜ№ áōŜăű LJ№l·ŐűλŐŜáé Ŧ2№ äèy2Řă ú2 Ŏ2yăλŘŜ№ λyˆ LJ№ŜLJl·№λyƎ for and running an election, with a recommendation that these be incorporated into the Bishop Election Toolkit published annually.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Audit

In response to the action of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, the legal team retained and worked with outside counsel to complete the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) !dzŘλű 2Ŧ úKŜ 9[/!ůă Ǝ2ØŜ№yλyƎ Ř2ŎdzYˆŜyűă℗ The results of the audit were made available to the church following the November 2023 Church Council meeting.

Synod-related matters

Synod bishop elections

When we assemble in July, we will have opportunity to welcome 26 new bishops and bishops-elect since the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. Following is a summary of synod bishop elections in 2023, 2024, and 2025.

2023: Five new bishops elected and three bishops re-elected:

Bishop Jeff Johnson (Sierra Pacific Synod)
Bishop Meggan Manlove (Northwest Intermountain Synod)
Bishop Becca Middeke-Conlin (Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod)
Bishop Greg Busboom (Central/Southern Illinois Synod)
Bishop Phyllis Milton (Virginia Synod)
Bishop Don Kreiss (Southeast Michigan Synod), *re-elected*
Bishop Pedro Suárez (Florida-Bahamas Synod), *re-elected*
Bishop Katherine Finegan (Northern Great Lakes Synod), *re-elected*

2024: Eight new bishops elected and two bishops re-elected:

Bishop Tim Oslovich (Alaska Synod)

Bishop Meghan Johnston Aelabouni (Rocky Mountain Synod)
Bishop Jen Nagel (Minneapolis Area Synod)
Bishop Bryan Penman (Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod)
Bishop Tim Graham (Indiana-Kentucky Synod)
Bishop Nathan Pipho (New England Synod)
Bishop Martin Halom (Northwest Synod of Wisconsin)
Bishop Vivian Dávila (Caribbean Synod)
Bishop Sue Briner (Southwestern Texas Synod), *re-elected*
Bishop Deborah Hutterer (Grand Canyon Synod), *re-elected*

2025: Thirteen new bishops elected and eight bishops re-elected:
Bishop-elect Katrina Foster (Metropolitan New York Synod)
Bishop-elect Tracey Breashears Schultz (Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod)
Bishop-elect Julie Schneider-Thomas (North/West Lower Michigan Synod)
Bishop-elect Ben Quanbeck (Montana Synod)
Bishop-elect Emily Hartner (North Carolina Synod)
Bishop-elect Donna Simon (Central States Synod)
Bishop-elect Christa Compton (New Jersey Synod)
Bishop-elect Steve Herr (Lower Susquehanna Synod)
Bishop-elect Phil Hirsch (Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod)
Bishop-elect Keith Marshall (Southwestern Washington Synod)
Bishop-elect Scott Dalen (Western Iowa Synod)
Bishop-elect Kristen Papson (Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod)
Bishop-elect Melissa Stoller (Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod)
Bishop Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt (Southern Ohio Synod), *re-elected*
Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee (Northwest Washington Synod), *re-elected*
Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar (Oregon Synod), *re-elected*
Bishop Constanze Hagmaier (South Dakota Synod), *re-elected*
Bishop Bill Tesch (Northwestern Minnesota Synod), *re-elected*
Bishop Regina Hassanally (Southeastern Minnesota Synod), *re-elected*
Bishop Yehiel Curry (Metropolitan Chicago Synod), *re-elected*
Bishop Kevin Strickland (Southeastern Synod), *re-elected*

Allegheny Synod will elect a new bishop Oct. 31ςNov. 1, 2025. Bishop Barb Collins is serving as the interim bishop until that synod assembly.

New Bishops Formation 2025, Part 1, was held at the Lutheran Center in Chicago June 22ς25. Part 2 will take place in Minneapolis October 2ς3, 2025, prior to the installation of the new presiding bishop and the Fall gathering of the Conference of Bishops.

We are abundantly grateful to the 65 synod bishops who are part of the Conference of Bishops for their faith-filled service to their individual synods and to this whole church.

Synod vice presidents

The synod vice presidents met in person at the Lutheran Center in Chicago March 7ς9, 2024. That event provided rich opportunity for the vice presidents to renew and form new relationships as well as focused time for orientation/overview of the responsibilities and role of the synod vice president. Several members of the Office of the Secretary presented information regarding constitutions, roster matters, legal concerns, and bishop elections. The synod vice presidents look forward to gathering in-person at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly and taking steps to implement the recent action taken by the Church Council at its Spring 2025 meeting to create an Association of Synod Vice Presidents.

Other Office of the Secretary activity in the past triennium

Legal Team update

[λΰΛΞΙ·ΰΛ2γ˙Ŏ2γΰΛγ℻ŜŘ ΰ2 2ŎŎ℻LJè Ι· ăΛΞγ⅄ŦΛŎΙ·γΰ LJ2ℕΰΛ2γ˙2Ŧ ΰKŜ fŜΞΙ·f ΰŜΙ·Υℚă ΰΛΥŜΣ LJℕΛΥΙ·ℕΛfê Ř℻Ŝ ΰ2 the relaxation or elimination of statutes of limitations on lawsuits for sexual abuse in several states, resulting in many lawsuits based on allegations of decades-old abuse. The ELCA also joined a number of *amicus* briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court and other courts.

¢KŜ fŜΞΙ·f ΰŜΙ·Υ KŜfŘ ΰø2 ădzŎŎŜăăŦdzf ΥŜŜΰΛγΞă 2Ŧ ΰKŜ 9[/! !ΰΰ2ℕγŜèă℺ !ăă2ŎΛΙ·ΰΛ2γΣ 2γŜ ΛΥ{Ι·Υ Diego in 2022 and one in Atlanta in 2024, gathering synod attorneys and others for continuing education and fellowship.

Finally, we said farewell to Associate General Counsel Aja Favors and welcomed Paul Irwin to the same position.

Research and Evaluation developments

The ELCA churchwide organization renewed its commitment to research and evaluation with new leadership, staff, and strategic goals. Adam DeHoek now serves as Senior Director for Research and Evaluation, joined by Tim Snyder and Destiny Hisey to complete the three-person team. Their mission is to provide high-quality data collection, analysis, and interpretation to enable stakeholders across the ELCA to make better-informed decisions around practice and policy.

Since ΰKŜ ℕŜăŜΙ·ℕŎK ΰŜΙ·Υℚă inception in early 2024, major initiatives have included:

- Annual Congregation Report Revamp: Redesigned for clarity and ease of use in 2023, the report achieved its highest response rate since 2011 (78%). For the 2024 report, it moved to a new electronic platform offering multilingual access, embedded instructions, pre-populated data, the ability to update contact information, and real-time dashboards for synods. Ongoing conversations with synod leaders will continue to shape future improvements.
- Congregation Pulse Surveys: Introduced in place of the former Form C, these quarterly surveys gather the perspectives of congregations and worshiping communities on congregation vitality as well as their insights on specific topics of interest to key stakeholders. A comprehensive report on congregation vitality information will be released in fall 2025. Preparations for the second year include evaluating and refining methodology, logistics, and communications.
- Synod Data Toolkits: Based on synod feedback, the data toolkits provided to synods each year now include visual trends graphs, contextual breakouts, and growth/decline data. Plans are in place to add narrative analysis in future editions.
- Key Research Projects: The team has conducted in-depth studies on the future need for pastoral leaders in the ELCA, synod-authorized ministry, and ministers of Word and Service. Additionally, they have partnered with various teams across the ELCA ecology to evaluate specific programs and activities.

Through these efforts, Research and Evaluation is building internal capacity, fostering strong partnerships, and championing a culture of data literacy and data-informed decision-making throughout the ELCA.

Webinars and training

The Office of the Secretary, in response to the pandemic, organized webinars for synod secretaries that have now become a fall tradition. Each September, following synod assembly

elections, we host a webinar gathering for synod secretaries as an opportunity to get to know one another and to review the important responsibilities of this office. Those resources, along with many others that OS provides, are available on ELCA.org. In addition, OS has arranged various regional and synod training sessions on such topics as Constitution 101, recordkeeping, and roster management.

No report of the secretary would be complete without words of appreciation for the dedicated staff of this office. Weekly meetings of my direct reports (Dana Adams, Deanna Brend, Tom Cunniff, Adam DeHoek, Keith Fry, MaryAnn Schwabe, and Jodi Slattery) are opportunities for us to attend to the well-being not only of this church, but of one another as we build a sense of collaboration and community as a leadership team. In many and various ways, the whole staff of the Office of the Secretary attends to the well-being of this church, and I am deeply grateful to: Dan Eppley, Lauren Gioe, Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig, Destiny Hisey, Paul Irwin, Cathy Lundeen, Rosa Pérez, Jennifer Place, Christina Ptack, Joseph Schmidt, Tim Snyder, Rob Thoma, Emma Volk, and Natalie Young. And we are grateful for the ongoing support and wisdom of those who have served as secretaries of this church: the Rev. Lowell Almen, David Swartling, and the Rev. Chris Boerger.

These next days will be extraordinarily busy ones for the Office of the Secretary. I invite your prayers and your patience as we attempt to respond as quickly and helpfully as possible to the many communications we receive as we do our best to attend to the well-being of this church I·yŘ ůKŜ ǿI·èă ƛƴǿǿKƛǑK ƛű ǑI·₦₦₦ƛŜă ƻdzű D2ŘΩă Ƴ'ƛăăƛ2ƴ₮2₦ ůKŜ ftŦŜ 2₮ ůKŜ ǿ2₦tŘΦ

Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, *secretary of the ELCA*, together with
Mr. Dana Adams, *director, meeting management*
Mr. Thomas Cunniff, *general counsel for the ELCA*
Mr. Adam DeHoek, *senior director, research and evaluation*
The Rev. Keith Fry, *executive for Office of the Secretary administration*
Deacon MaryAnn Schwabe, *executive for synod relations*
Ms. Jodi Slattery, *executive for governance*

Part Two: Churchwide Assembly Presentation

á41 years ago this Friday, August 1, I began my public ministry in this church as lay campus minister at Iowa State University of Science and Technology. The mission statement for campus ministry at that time read, ΨTo assist those in academic settings to discover and fulfill their vocation as disciples.Ω I know some of you are thinking at this very moment, Ψ!ΚΧă2 űΚΙ·úΩă Κ2ø and when her preoccupation with the word áØ2ŎΙ·ûλ2yɛ began!Ω And you would be right! It was watching those faculty and students in engineering, agriculture, science, home economics, higher education, business, information technology, veterinary medicine, and other fields living out their sense of vocation in the academy, in their communities of faith, on campus and in the local community, and with their families and friends that assisted me in better understanding the ōℕŜΙ·ŘűΚ Ι·yŘ ŘŜLJúΚ 2Ŧ [dzűΚŜℕΩă Ŏ2yŎŜLJú 2Ŧ Ø2ŎΙ·ûλ2yΦ

á¢2ŘΙ·èΣ LΩŘ fλ]Ŝ ű2 Ŏ2yűλyűzŜ Ι· úℕΙ·Řλűλ2y΄ōŜ∃dzy΄ōè Y΄è LJℕŜŘŜŐŜăă2ℕΣ /ΚℕλăΙ·yŘ dzăŜ úΚλă final verbal report to you as secretary of this church to discuss how we in the ELCA understand the vocation of this office of secretary. And it should come as no surprise to you that I begin with how the Office of Secretary is described in the constitution of this church.

áAs the recording officer of this church, the secretary shall be responsible for the minutes and records of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Executive Committee, and Conference of Bishops and provide for the publication of official documents and policies of this church, assembly reports, and assembly minutes. All 676 pages of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly minutes are Ι·ØΙ·λfΙ·ōfŜ 2yűλyŜ Ι·yŘ λy΄Ι· ōŜΙ·dzűλŦdzffè ō2dzyŘ ō2ƨ]ű ΚΙ·ű LΩY΄ ădzℕŜ è2dzΩℕŜ ∃2λy∃ ű2 ø Ι·yű ű2 ăŜŜ úΚŜ ySÈű time you visit the Office of the Secretary. In preparing for this Churchwide Assembly, we are hopeful that you have read most of the more than 900 pages in the Bulletin of Reports, pages that have indeed been carefully read, edited, reread, and formatted by Office of the Secretary staff Dan Eppley and Keith Fry *[applause]*.

áIn addition to documentation, Keith has direct oversight of two other areas of responsibility named in the constitution. The first: be responsible for the archives of this church and implement and operate a records management system for the churchwide organization. Cathy Lundeen and Emma Volk ably attend to the ELCA Archives, located in a temperature-controlled building chock-full of the history of this church and its predecessor bodies. The folks at the Archives, aided by volunteers, are engaging in the vital work now of digitizing and cataloging documents and photographs related to the Indian boarding schools. Our history matters for our future. Secondly: the secretary shall maintain the rosters of ministers, congregations, and synods. This work is meticulously cared for by Lauren Gioe who works closely with synods to maintain the integrity of the database and information related to rostered ministers, congregations, and synods. You will find detailed information on the rosters in the appendices of my written report. Executive Assistant Deanna Brend dedicatedly supports the administrative work of these areas.

áAnother significant area of responsibility in the Office of Secretary is to oversee the general counsel and coordinate the use of legal services by the churchwide organization. General Counsel Tom Cunniff, Associate General Counsel Paul Irwin, and Legal Assistant Natalie Young offer their expertise to the churchwide organization and synod bishops in everything ranging from litigation and issues of misconduct to contracts and 501c3 status for congregations. Our Risk Manager Rob Thoma also serves on that team and has been diligently managing and supporting the increasingly challenging area of insurance coverage for the churchwide organization, synods, and congregations.

áMany of you have been in touch with members of our Meetings Team, Dana Adams, Christina Ptack, Rosa Perez, and Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig, who hospitably carry out the constitutional mandate to arrange for and manage churchwide meetings, including the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Conference of Bishops, and others. From travel and hotel arrangements to

ordering abundant urns of coffee, this crew is also on hand to provide hospitality for not only the gatherings I just mentioned but also for most of the meetings that take place through the Lutheran Center in Chicago and beyond. Needless to say, life has not been dull for them these past several months!

άAnd speaking of life not being dull, while the constitution has long stated that the secretary shall provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Executive Committee, and Conference of Bishops, in collaboration with the presiding bishop and the leadership of each group, it has only been in my term as secretary that the area of governance has been part of the Office of the Secretary. Jodi Slattery, supported by Joseph Schmidt *[applause]*, chairs the Churchwide Assembly Planning Team and has been conscientiously consumed with creating agendas, drafting scripts, and all matters related to preparing for this assembly and the Church Council meeting which occurred prior to this assembly.

άWhile my predecessors and I have often spoken of the Office of the Secretary as being largely concerned with ΨsynodΩ relations,Ω during my term as secretary, synod relations officially became part of the office. MaryAnn Schwabe and Jennifer Place faithfully fulfill the constitutional charge to coordinate the relationships between the churchwide organization and synods, render support for synod bishops, and provide staff services for the Conference of Bishops. In response to a recommendation from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, the Church Council took action at its Spring meeting to establish an Association of Synod Vice Presidents *[applause]*, with constitutional language stating that staff services for meetings of the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall be provided by the synod relations staff in the Office of the Secretary.

άSince the beginning of the ELCA, it has been the role of the secretary to receive the annual report of the congregations in a form devised by the secretary, summarize the information, and make the summary available to this church. Just prior to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly we were delighted to have the work of research and evaluation transferred to the Office of the Secretary in the person of Adam DeHoek. As you read in my written report, since our last assembly the churchwide organization has renewed its commitment to research and evaluation, expanding the team to three members with Tim Snyder and Destiny Hisey bringing their skill and expertise to this work.

άWhile the team is now involved in many research projects, as described in my written report, ύNdzŜ ύ2 ύKŜ Ŏ2yãύλύdzύλ2yl·f Y l·yŘl·ύŜΣ 2yŜ 2Ŧ ύKŜ ύŜl·Y ΩăLJNλY l·Nè NŜăLJ2yãλōλŧŧλύλŜă λă 2ØŜNăŜŜλyΞ ύKŜ Annual Congregation Report. Before we get to the numbers, we want to begin with heartfelt words of gratitude for the dedicated work of congregational and synod leaders like you in gathering important information and sending in your annual reports. Give yourselves a hand *[applause]*! Thanks to you, we are able to answer important questions about how many we are as Ψchurch togetherΩ and how we are changing.

άAs of 2024, there are 8,357 organized congregations in the ELCA and nearly 2.7 million baptized members. From 2021 to 2024, both of these numbers declined steadily τ congregations by about one to two percent per year, and baptized members by around four percent per year. It is important to note that these declines are consistent with trends seen before the pandemic.

άTwo other metrics of congregation size τ average weekly worship attendance and number of active participants τ have shown different patterns. In 2024, 525,000 ELCA Lutherans gathered weekly in person for worship at ELCA congregations and worshiping communities, not including those joining online. That number is lower than what we saw before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it represents an increase of more than 130,000 attendees since 2021 *[applause]*.

άLooking more broadly at active participation in ELCA congregations and communities, about 1.5 million people were involved in 2024. After seeing steep drops in participation during the

pandemic, this figure has decreased approximately three percent annually since 2021, matching trends seen before the pandemic.

áIn short, while we continue to see gradual declines in membership and participation, the data shows a return to long-term patterns τ not a sharp or unexpected drop-off. And we are seeing signs of renewed engagement, especially in weekly worship. On a personal note, I can say that is most certainly true for my urban congregation, Immanuel, in Chicago.

áWhile the constitution has more to say about the Office of Secretary, those are some of the highlights. I am known for saying that while the Office of Secretary often is associated with rules and regulations, I want it also to be known for its cultivation of relationships. And it is those relationships that I want to not only highlight, but celebrate, in these final minutes of my report.

áI begin with the Conference of Bishops. A constitutional tidbit of which not everyone is aware is that the secretary is the one non-bishop member of the Conference of Bishops. Colleagues, friends, I am so grateful for the relationships that we have built during my years in the conference and during my days in the Office of the Secretary prior to becoming secretary. It was a joy to be part of many of your election processes and to witness firsthand the ways in which you discerned this unique sense of call. I have learned so much from the ways in which the 65 of you faithfully live out this vocation of bishop and for the many and various ways in which you serve this church. Thank you *[applause]*.

á¢2 ŭK2ăŜ LΩØŜ ø2ℕ⌉ŜŘ øλűK 2y˙2dzℕ ŎKdzℕŎKΩă ØI·ℕй2dză Ŏ2Y˙Y˙λúűŜŜăΣ ō2I·ℕŘăΣ úI·ă⌉ ₮2ℕŎŜăΣ 2ℕ 2ŭKŜℕ bodies, thank you for living out your vocation as volunteers who serve this church. I want to give a particular shout-out to Portico and Augsburg Fortress and thank Bishop Eaton for, according to 2dzℕ Ŏ2yãúλűdzúλ2yΣ ŘŜăλƎyl·úλyƎ Y˙Ŝ ŭ2 ăŜℕØŜ I·ă ŭKŜ ōλăK2LJΩă representation to those boards.

á!yŘ øKλŧŜ LΩY˙ ălJŜI·⌉λyƎ 2₮ Ø2ŧdzyűŜŜℕă øK2 ăŜℕØŜ ă2 ₮I·λűK₮dzffèΣ I also want to honor and recognize synod secretaries. We had an opportunity to join together for lunch, and I am always so grateful for the ways in which the folks who live out that sense of vocation so carefully serve this church. Thank you *[applause].* !yŘ λ₮ è2dzΩŘ ăűI·yŘ 2ℕ øI·ØŜΣ you know, øKŜyŜØŜℕ LΩY˙ mentioning any of these names, please stand or wave.

áTo members of the Church Council, I am grateful to have served alongside you for the past six years as we, according to our constitution, ψexercised interim legislative authority and served as the board of directors of the churchwide organization.Ω It has been a delight to see you use your gifts in service to this church as you embrace this sense of your vocation *[applause]*.

áIt has been my privilege to serve as an officer of this church together with Presiding Bishop Eaton, Treasurer Lori Fedyk, and three vice-presidents: Bill Horne, Carlos Peña, and Imran Siddiqui. You each have lived out your sense of vocation in unique and faithful ways as we faced the challenges of learning and leading through a pandemic and now find new and meaningful ways, in those oft-quoted words of Bishop Eaton, of being Church, being Lutheran, being Church together, and being Church for the sake of the world *[applause]*.

áTo my additional colleagues on the Administrative Team, Wyvetta Bullock, Phil Hirsch, Khader El-Yateem, Iain Chester, Rhondean Johnson, and Rachel Wind, thanks for the ways in which we have been able to work together to assist the presiding bishop, as our constitution calls us to do, in providing leadership, planning, oversight, management, supervision, and coordination in the operation of the churchwide organization *[applause]*.

á!yŘ ŭo my colleagues in the churchwide organization who are present in this building and, I know, some who are watching online, the relationships we have cultivated over these past 30 years are near and dear to my heart. Thanks for the many ways in which you have nurtured me in the various roles and senses of vocation that I have been honored to live out these many years.

áTo my predecessors who served in this role, Pastor Lowell Almen, David Swartling, and Pastor Chris Boerger, you all lived out your vocation as secretary so faithfully. Two of you were my

supervisors, and all three have been my mentors. Thank you for the many ways in which you have demonstrated your care and support for me in this role during these past six years. I am forever grateful *[applause]*.

And last, but certainly not last, heartfelt thanks to my dear colleagues in the Office of the Secretary. You all have been named in this report, but those of you who are present in the room, I invite you to be "seen" as well as you join me on stage. To a person, you use your unique, God-given gifts to serve this church so whole-heartedly and so competently. You model for me what it means to live out your sense of vocation in Church and world. Thank you for being you in such wonderful ways.

Churchwide Assembly: you called me into this role six years ago. Little did we know the challenges that our church and world would experience in the following six years. Thank you for calling forth this sense of vocation in me then and for all that I have learned and experienced since. With a 66th birthday on the near horizon, I am now ready to learn from and experience the vocation of retirement *[applause]*. It, too, is a calling, and I look forward to the ways in which I ŸλƎKű ōŜ l·ō2ʤű D2ŘûăØ2ℕ'ļλy˝űKŜ Ø2ℕfŘλy˝yŜØ l·yŘ Y˝Ŝl·yΛyƎ₮ʤf Ø l·èăΦ

During the course of writing this report, a familiar hymn from the ELW has been a frequent earworm, and I close with these words:

"How clear is our vocation, Lord, when once we heed your call
To live according to your word and daily learn, refreshed, restored,
That you are Lord of all and will not let us fall.

In what you give us, Lord to do, together or alone,
in old routines or ventures new, may we not cease to look to you,
the cross you hung upon, all you endeavored done."

Thanks be to you for supporting me in this vocation. Thanks be to God who supports all our senses of vocation *[applause]*.é

Appendices

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

CONGREGATION REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2022 FORM A

This report should be filed online. Connect to the website (ELCA.org/congregationreport) and enter your congregation's **ID and password (printed below).** If you are unable to file electronically, complete this paper form and return it to your synod office by **March 1, 2023.**

Latest report on file:

Congregation ID#: **Online Password** (2022 only):

Synod:

Conference:

1. Baptized membership at end of 2021	
2. Baptized members received during 2022	
a. By baptism: children (15 yrs. and younger)	
b. By baptism: adults (16 yrs. and older)	
c. By affirmation of faith	
d. By transfer	
e. From other sources and statistical adjustment	
f. Total members received this year	+
3. Baptized members removed during 2022	
a. By death	
b. By transfer	
c. For other reasons and statistical adjustment	
d. Total members removed this year	-
4. Baptized membership, end of 2022	=

5. Total confirmed membership, end of 2022 _____

6. Number of baptized youth who were confirmed in 2022 _____

7. In 2022, the number of weeks this congregation worshipped:
- a. On-site (in person) _____
- b. Online (via streaming) _____

8. Average weekly worship attendance in 2022:
- a. On-site (in person) _____
- b. Online (via streaming) _____

9. Total number of people (including children) actively participating in the life of the congregation in 2022 _____

10. Race/ethnic origin of ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS. Must equal active participants on line 9:

African American/ Black	African National/ African Caribbean	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Arab/ Middle Eastern	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Latino/ Hispanic	Multi-racial	White	TOTAL

Verify the following congregation information; correct as necessary. Corrections can be made online at ELCA.org/tools/updatecongregation.

11. Phone: **12. Fax:**

13. Email: **14. Website:**

15. Location address describes where the church or place of worship is physically located. This may differ from the mailing address, but must identify a street name. Corrections should be made below:

16. Please tell us how each phrase describes this congregation:

	Hardly at all		Some-what		Very well
a. There is excitement about the future here.	○	○	○	○	○
b. This congregation is a positive force in the community.	○	○	○	○	○
c. This congregation is always ready to try something new.	○	○	○	○	○

17. Please tell us how this congregation is at the following:

	Poor		Mod-erately good		Great
a. Seeking out and using the gifts of members of all ages.	○	○	○	○	○
b. Helping members live out their faith in their daily lives.	○	○	○	○	○

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CONGREGATION'S FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

18. Receipts during 2022
- a. Regular giving $ _____
- b. Designated giving $ _____
- c. Earned income (any source) $ _____
- d. Grants (any source) $ _____
- e. All other receipts $ _____
- f. **TOTAL RECEIPTS** $ _____

19. Assets as of December 31, 2022
- a. Church real estate $ _____
- b. Endowment and memorial funds $ _____
- c. Cash, savings, bonds, etc. $ _____
- d. All other assets $ _____
- e. **TOTAL ASSETS** $ _____

20. Total indebtedness as of Dec. 31, 2022 $ _____

21. Budgeted/projected 2023 Mission Support $ _____

22. Gifts from the estates of deceased individuals received during 2022
- a. Number of gifts received _____
- b. **TOTAL VALUE** of gifts received $ _____

23. Disbursements during 2022
- a. Current operating expenses $ _____
- b. Capital improvements $ _____
- c. Payments on debts $ _____
- d. Mission Support (regular synod benevolence) $ _____
- e. Other benevolence sent directly to the synod (for any synod OR churchwide appeal including ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, etc.) $ _____
- f. Other benevolence sent directly to the churchwide office (for any churchwide appeal including ELCA World Hunger, Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, etc.) $ _____
- g. Benevolence sent directly to any of the following:
  1. An activity in another country including a missionary, a congregation, a companion synod, a hunger program, disaster response, etc. $ _____
  2. Camps $ _____
  3. Campus ministry $ _____
  4. Colleges $ _____
  5. Seminaries $ _____
  6. Social service group, agency or institution $ _____
- h. All other benevolence sent directly to the recipient $ _____
- i. Other expenses and realized losses $ _____
- j. **TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS** $ _____

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CONGREGATION'S PROGRAMS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 2022

Congregation ID Number:
Online Password:
Synod:

FORM C

30. Did this congregation have Christian education
(Sunday school, Bible studies, confirmation) in 2022 on-site? ☐ Yes ☐ No Online? ☐ Yes ☐ No How many total participants? ____
Did this congregation have vacation Bible school in 2022 on-site? ☐ Yes ☐ No Online? ☐ Yes ☐ No How many total participants? ____

31. Languages in which this congregation regularly conducts liturgies (make 1 the most-used language, 2 the next most-used language, etc.). Do not include languages used for special services or by others using the building.

1) _____ 3) _____

2) _____ 4) _____

32. What assistance does this congregation provide to people with disabilities? ***(check all that apply)***

☐ Wheelchair access throughout the building(s)
☐ Braille worship materials and signage
☐ Large print worship materials
☐ Assistive devices for the hard of hearing
☐ Sign language interpreters
☐ Mental health ministries
☐ Ministry with people with developmental/intellectual disabilities
☐ Specialized faith formation for children or adults (ADHD, autism, dyslexia, etc.)

	Definitely untrue	Hardly true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Definitely true	Unsure
33. As part of the worship service, this congregation provides written or verbal instructions to help visitors fully participate.						
34. Someone in this congregation follows up with first-time visitors within one week.						
35. Visitors who worship in this congregation typically attend more than once.						
36. In the past year, this congregation has discussed how to remain active in the local community.						
37. In the past year, this congregation has implemented strategies for engaging new people.						
38. This congregation displays a public statement of inclusion (in the bulletin, banner and/or website).						

39. This congregation's **website** contains current information (for example, staff and worship times).	Yes	No	This congregation does not have a **website**
40. This congregation's **social media profile** contains current information (for example, staff and worship times).	Yes	No	This congregation does not have a **social media profile**

41.	Never	Less than once a month	Once a month	Several times a month	Every week
How often did this congregation offer online worship (live/posted) in 2022?					
How often does this congregation intend to offer online worship in 2023?					

42. In the past year, online worship has been an effective way to engage new people in the life of this congregation.	Definitely untrue	Hardly true	Somewhat true	Mostly true	Definitely true	Unsure

43. The ELCA is engaged in an intentional effort to "activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love." How familiar are most members of this congregation with this effort?	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely

Congregation's mailing address
(corrections can be made below or emailed to congrinfo@elca.org)

If you do not file electronically, return Forms A and C to the synod office at:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

CONGREGATION REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023

FORM A

This report should be filed online. Connect to the website (ELCA.org/congregationreport) and enter your congregation's ID and password (printed below). If you are unable to file electronically, complete this paper form and return it to your synod office by March 1, 2024.

Latest report on file:

1.	**Baptized membership at end of 2022**		
2.	**Baptized members received during 2023**		
	a. By baptism: children (15 yrs. and younger)		
	b. By baptism: adults (16 yrs. and older)		
	c. By affirmation of faith		
	d. By transfer		
	e. From other sources and statistical adjustment		
	f. Total members received this year	+	
3.	**Baptized members removed during 2023**		
	a. By death		
	b. By transfer		
	c. For other reasons and statistical adjustment		
	d. Total members removed this year	-	
4.	**Baptized membership, end of 2023**	=	

Congregation ID#:

Online Password (2023 only):

Synod:

Conference:

5. Total confirmed membership, end of 2023 _____

6. Number of baptized youth who were confirmed in 2023 _____

7. In 2023, the number of weeks this congregation worshipped:

a. On-site (in person) _____ b. Online (via streaming) _____

8. Average weekly worship attendance in 2023:

a. On-site (in person) _____ b. Online (via streaming) _____

9. Total number of people (including children) actively participating in the life of the congregation in 2023 _____

10. Race/ethnic origin of ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS. Must equal active participants on line 9:

African American/ Black	African National/ African Caribbean	American Indian/Alaska Native	Arab/Middle Eastern	Asian/Pacific Islander	Latino/Hispanic	Multiracial	White	**TOTAL**

Verify the following congregation information (items 11-15 and the congregation's mailing address). Corrections can be made below or online at ELCA.org/tools/updatecongregation.

11. Phone:

12. Fax:

13. Email:

14. Website:

15. Location address describes where the church or place of worship is physically located. This may differ from the mailing address, but must identify a street name.

Congregation's mailing address

If you do not file electronically, return Form A to the synod office at:

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16. Languages in which this congregation regularly conducts liturgies (make 1 the most-used language, 2 the next most-used language, etc.). Do not include languages used for special services or by others using the building.

1) _____ 3) _____

2) _____ 4) _____

17. What assistance does this congregation provide to people with disabilities? (*check all that apply*)

- ☐ Wheelchair access throughout the building(s)
- ☐ Braille worship materials and signage
- ☐ Large print worship materials
- ☐ Assistive devices for the hard of hearing
- ☐ Sign language interpreters
- ☐ Mental health ministries
- ☐ Ministry with people with developmental/intellectual disabilities
- ☐ Specialized faith formation for children or adults (ADHD, autism, dyslexia, etc.)

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CONGREGATION'S FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP *(Please round all figures to nearest dollar. Omit cents. The Financial Stewardship Worksheet included in the packet provides specific descriptions of each line item.)*

18. Receipts during 2023

a. Regular giving ..... $ _____
b. Designated giving ..... $ _____
c. Earned income (any source) ..... $ _____
d. Grants (any source) ..... $ _____
e. All other receipts ..... $ _____
f. **TOTAL RECEIPTS** ..... $ _____

19. Assets as of December 31, 2023

a. Church real estate ..... $ _____
b. Endowment and memorial funds ..... $ _____
c. Cash, savings, bonds, etc. ..... $ _____
d. All other assets ..... $ _____
e. **TOTAL ASSETS** ..... $ _____

20. Total indebtedness as of Dec. 31, 2023 ..... $ _____

21. Budgeted/projected 2024 Mission Support ..... $ _____

22. Gifts from the estates of deceased individuals received during 2023

a. Number of gifts received ..... _____
b. **TOTAL VALUE** of gifts received ..... $ _____

23. Disbursements during 2023

a. Current operating expenses ..... $ _____
b. Capital improvements ..... $ _____
c. Payments on debts ..... $ _____
d. Mission Support (regular synod benevolence) ..... $ _____
e. Other benevolence sent directly to the synod (for any synod or churchwide appeal including ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, etc.) ..... $ _____
f. Other benevolence sent directly to the churchwide organization (for any churchwide appeal including ELCA World Hunger, Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, etc.) ..... $ _____
g. Benevolence sent directly to any of the following:
   1. An activity in another country including a missionary, a congregation, a companion synod, a hunger program, disaster response, etc. ..... $ _____
   2. Camps ..... $ _____
   3. Campus ministry ..... $ _____
   4. Colleges ..... $ _____
   5. Seminaries ..... $ _____
   6. Social service group, agency, or institution ..... $ _____
h. All other benevolence sent directly to the recipient ..... $ _____
i. Other expenses and realized losses ..... $ _____
j. **TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS** ..... $ _____

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

CONGREGATION REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024 FORM A

This report should be filed online. Connect to the website (ELCA.org/congregationreport) and enter your congregation's ID and password (printed below). If you are unable to file electronically, complete this paper form and return it to your synod office by March 1, 2025.

Latest report on file:

1.	**Baptized membership at end of 2023**		
2.	**Baptized members received during 2024**		
a.	By baptism: children (15 yrs. and younger)		
b.	By baptism: adults (16 yrs. and older)		
c.	By affirmation of faith		
d.	By transfer		
e.	From other sources and statistical adjustment		
f.	Total members received this year	+	
3.	**Baptized members removed during 2024**		
a.	By death		
b.	By transfer		
c.	For other reasons and statistical adjustment		
d.	Total members removed this year	-	
4.	**Baptized membership, end of 2024**	=	

Congregation ID#:

Online Password (2024 only):

Synod:

Conference:

5. Total confirmed membership, end of 2024 _____

6. Number of baptized youth who were confirmed in 2024 _____

7. In 2024, the number of weeks this congregation worshipped:

a. On-site (in person) _____ b. Online (via streaming) _____

8. Average weekly worship attendance in 2024:

a. On-site (in person) _____ b. Online (via streaming) _____

9. Total number of people (including children) actively participating in the life of the congregation in 2024 _____

10. Race/ethnic origin of ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS. Must equal active participants on line 9:

African American/ Black	African National/ African Caribbean	American Indian/Alaska Native	Arab/Middle Eastern	Asian/Pacific Islander	Latino/Hispanic	Multiracial	White	**TOTAL**

11. Languages in which this congregation regularly conducts liturgies (make 1 the most-used language, 2 the next most-used language, etc.). Do not include languages used for special services or by others using the building.

1) _____ 3) _____

2) _____ 4) _____

12. What assistance does this congregation provide to people with disabilities? (*check all that apply*)

- ☐ Wheelchair access throughout the building(s)
- ☐ Braille worship materials and signage
- ☐ Large print worship materials
- ☐ Assistive devices for the hard of hearing
- ☐ Sign language interpreters
- ☐ Mental health ministries
- ☐ Ministry with people with developmental/intellectual disabilities
- ☐ Specialized faith formation for children or adults (ADHD, autism, dyslexia, etc.)

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CONGREGATION'S FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP *(Please round all figures to nearest dollar. Omit cents. The Financial Stewardship Worksheet included in the packet provides specific descriptions of each line item.)*

13. Receipts during 2024

a. Regular giving ..... $ _____
b. Designated giving ..... $ _____
c. Earned income (any source) ..... $ _____
d. Grants (any source) ..... $ _____
e. All other receipts ..... $ _____
f. **TOTAL RECEIPTS** ..... $ _____

14. Assets as of December 31, 2024

a. Church real estate ..... $ _____
b. Endowment and memorial funds ..... $ _____
c. Cash, savings, bonds, etc. ..... $ _____
d. All other assets ..... $ _____
e. **TOTAL ASSETS** ..... $ _____

15. Total indebtedness as of Dec. 31, 2024 ..... $ _____

16. Budgeted/projected 2025 Mission Support ..... $ _____

17. Gifts from the estates of deceased individuals received during 2024

a. Number of gifts received ..... _____
b. **TOTAL VALUE** of gifts received ..... $ _____

18. Disbursements during 2024

a. Current operating expenses ..... $ _____
b. Capital improvements ..... $ _____
c. Payments on debts ..... $ _____
d. Mission Support (regular synod benevolence) ..... $ _____
e. Other benevolence sent directly to the synod (for any synod or churchwide appeal including ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, etc.) ..... $ _____
f. Other benevolence sent directly to the churchwide organization (for any churchwide appeal including ELCA World Hunger, Disaster Response, Missionary Sponsorship, etc.) ..... $ _____
g. Benevolence sent directly to any of the following:
   1. An activity in another country including a missionary, a congregation, a companion synod, a hunger program, disaster response, etc. ..... $ _____
   2. Camps ..... $ _____
   3. Campus ministry ..... $ _____
   4. Colleges ..... $ _____
   5. Seminaries ..... $ _____
   6. Social service group, agency, or institution ..... $ _____
h. All other benevolence sent directly to the recipient ..... $ _____
i. Other expenses and realized losses ..... $ _____
j. **TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS** ..... $ _____

Verify the following congregation information. Corrections can be made below.

Phone: **Fax:**

Email: **Website:**

Location address: (This address indicates the physical location of the congregation's place of worship.)

Congregation's mailing address:

If you do not file electronically, return Form A to the synod office at:

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Appendix B
Summary of Congregation Statistics

Summary of Congregation Statistics as of Dec. 31, 2022

Summary of Membership Statistics	2021	2022	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Avgs./Congregation
Total Number of Congregations	8,781	8,640	-141	-1.61	
Baptized Members	3,035,615	2,904,686	-130,929	-4.31	338
Confirmed Members	2,377,298	2,291,170	-86,128	-3.62	267

Analysis of Membership Gains and Losses

Baptized Members τ Accessions	2021	2022	Changes	Percent
By Baptism τ Children under Age 16	24,184	23,641	-543	-2.25
By Baptism τ Adults Age 16 and Older	2,117	2,152	35	1.65
By Affirmation of Faith	17,091	20,935	3,844	22.49
By Transfer	19,782	25,624	5,842	29.53
From Other Sources and Statistical Adjustments	8,700	9,996	1,296	14.90
Total Accessions τ Baptized Members	71,874	82,348	10,474	14.57

Baptized Members τ Losses	2021	2022	Changes	Percent
By Death	37,040	35,657	-1,383	-3.73
By Transfer	20,828	21,020	192	0.92
For Other Reasons and Statistical Adjustments	121,643	124,679	3,036	2.50
Total Losses τ Baptized Members	179,511	181,356	1,838	1.02

Baptized Members τ Confirmed	2021	2022	Changes	Percent
Confirmed	26,754	21,606	-5,148	-19.24
Active Participants	1,652,605	1,581,120	-71,485	-4.33

Congregation Description (average based on scale of 1ς5)	
a. Excitement about the future	3.86
b. Positive force in the community	4.12
c. Ready to try something new	3.62

Congregation Strengths (average based on scale of 1ς5)	
a. Seeking/using member gifts	3.57
b. Live out faith in their daily lives	3.72

Summary of Congregation Statistics as of Dec. 31, 2022

Summary of Financial Statistics

Totals τ End of Year	2021	2022	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Avgs./Congregation
Total Receipts	2,443,693,788	2,349,711,656	-93,982,132	-3.85	273,190.52
Total Disbursements	2,339,664,664	2,421,469,506	81,804,842	3.50	281,141.24
Total Indebtedness on Dec. 31	1,053,151,509	993,494,419	-59,657,090	-5.66	470,404.55
Average Total Giving per Baptized Member	645.37	660.78	15.41	2.39	
Average Total Giving per Confirmed Member	824.08	837.72	13.64	1.66	Congregations with no debt
Projected Mission Support	121,193,276	113,751,273	-7,442,003	-6.14	75.64%

Detail of Financial Statistics

Receipts for Regular Operation	2021	2022	Change	Percent
Regular Giving by Members	1,678,135,116	1,647,165,617	-30,969,499	-1.85
Designated Giving by Members	280,957,054	272,196,125	-8,760,929	-3.12
Earned Income (Any Source)	207,269,564	188,824,486	-18,445,078	-8.90
Grants (Any Source)	64,120,660	50,371,329	-13,749,331	-21.44
All Other Receipts	213,211,394	191,154,099	-22,057,295	-10.35

Disbursements for Regular Operation	2021	2022	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Percent of Total Disbursements
Current Operating Expenses	1,754,453,386	1,812,241,887	57,788,501	3.29	74.85
Capital Improvements	175,596,243	185,520,951	9,924,708	5.65	7.66
Payment on Debts	148,030,395	123,900,790	-24,129,605	-16.30	5.12
Mission Support	89,245,413	87,110,284	-2,135,129	-2.39	3.60
Non-Mission Support Benevolences	106,365,825	112,666,055	6,300,230	5.92	4.65
Other Expenses	65,581,108	99,674,900		51.99	4.12

Summary of Congregation Statistics as of Dec. 31, 2022

Worship Services	2021 (on-site)	2021 (online)	2022 (on-site)	2022 (online)
Total Average Worship Attendance	392,170	488,470	483,640	358,089
Average Attendance per Congregation	57	89	66	65
Percentage of Baptized Members Attending Worship	12.92	16.09	16.65	12.33

Congregations Reporting Ethnic Group Participants	2021	2022	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Percent of Congregations Reporting Ethnic Active Participants
African American/Black	2,866	2,790	-76	-2.65	32.29
African National/ African Caribbean	869	833	-36	-4.14	9.64
American Indian and Alaska Native	784	752	-32	-4.08	8.70
Arab/Middle Eastern	500	481	-19	-3.80	5.57
Asian/Pacific Islander	2,239	2,207	-32	-1.43	25.54
Latino/Hispanic	2,510	2,433	-77	-3.07	28.16
Multiracial	2,519	2,438	-81	-3.22	28.22
White	8,225	8,057	-168	-2.04	93.25

Total Ethnic Active Participants	2021	2022	Change	Percent	Percent Ethnic Active Participants
African American/Black	25,232	24,875	-357	-1.41	1.62
African National/ African Caribbean	6,598	6,244	-354	-5.37	0.41
American Indian and Alaska Native	3,953	3,728	-225	-5.69	0.24
Arab/Middle Eastern	1,997	2,037	40	2.00	0.13
Asian/Pacific Islander	14,118	13,494	-624	-4.42	0.88
Latino/Hispanic	27,507	25,951	-1,556	-5.66	1.69
Multiracial	24,440	22,564	-1,876	-7.68	1.47
White	1,503,401	1,437,839	-65,562	-4.36	93.55

Summary of Congregation Statistics as of Dec. 31, 2023

Summary of Membership Statistics	2022	2023	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Avgs./Congregation
Total Number of Congregations	8,640	8,498	-142	-1.64	
Baptized Members	2,904,686	2,793,899	-110,787	-3.81	330
Confirmed Members	2,291,170	2,203,448	-87,722	-3.83	261

Analysis of Membership Gains and Losses

Baptized Members τ Accessions	2022	2023	Changes	Percent
By Baptism τ Children under Age 16	23,641	23,008	-633	-2.68
By Baptism τ Adults Age 16 and Older	2,152	2,655	503	23.37
By Affirmation of Faith	20,935	23,987	3,052	14.58
By Transfer	25,624	25,353	-271	-1.06
From Other Sources and Statistical Adjustments	9,996	10,134	138	1.38
Total Accessions τ Baptized Members	82,348	85,137	2,789	3.39

Baptized Members τ Losses	2022	2023	Changes	Percent
By Death	35,657	33,445	-2,212	-6.20
By Transfer	21,020	19,067	-1,953	-9.29
For Other Reasons and Statistical Adjustments	124,679	125,218	539	0.43
Total Losses τ Baptized Members	181,356	177,730	-3,644	-2.01

Baptized Members τ Confirmed	2022	2023	Changes	Percent
Confirmed	21,606	19,874	-1,732	-8.02
Active Participants	1,581,120	1,546,313	-34,807	-2.20

Summary of Congregation Statistics as of Dec. 31, 2023

Summary of Financial Statistics

Totals τ End of Year	2022	2023	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Avgs./Congregation
Total Receipts	2,349,711,656	2,429,181,338	79,469,682	3.38	286,967.67
Total Disbursements	2,421,469,506	2,432,027,805	10,558,299	0.44	286,863.39
Total Indebtedness on Dec. 31	993,494,419	904,305,249	-89,189,170	-8.98	457,644.36
Average Total Giving per Baptized Member	660.78	691.41	30.63	4.64	
Average Total Giving per Confirmed Member	837.72	876.68	38.96	4.65	Congregations with no debt
Projected Mission Support	113,751,273	114,108,068	356,795	0.31	76.80%

Detail of Financial Statistics

Receipts for Regular Operation	2022	2023	Change	Percent
Regular Giving by Members	1,647,165,617	1,662,110,369	14,944,752	0.91
Designated Giving by Members	272,196,125	269,612,259	-2,583,866	-0.95
Earned Income (Any Source)	188,824,486	227,543,013	38,718,527	20.51
Grants (Any Source)	50,371,329	44,249,903	-6,121,426	-12.15
All Other Receipts	191,154,099	225,665,794	34,511,695	18.05

Disbursements for Regular Operation	2022	2023	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Percent of Total Disbursements
Current Operating Expenses	1,812,241,887	1,859,621,078	47,379,191	2.61	76.47
Capital Improvements	185,520,951	185,603,404	82,453	0.04	7.63
Payment on Debts	123,900,790	115,811,740	-8,089,050	-6.53	4.76
Mission Support	87,110,284	85,451,850	-1,658,434	-1.90	3.51
Non-Mission Support Benevolences	112,666,055	106,257,946	-6,408,109	-5.69	4.37
Other Expenses	99,674,900	78,962,374	-20,712,526	-20.78	3.25

Summary of Congregation Statistics as of Dec. 31, 2023

Worship Services	2022 (on-site)	2022 (online)	2023 (on-site)	2023 (online)
Total Average Worship Attendance	483,640	358,089	522,343	336,323
Average Attendance per Congregation	66	65	70	64
Percentage of Baptized Members Attending Worship	16.65	12.33	18.70	12.04

Congregations Reporting Ethnic Group Participants	2022	2023	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Percent of Congregations Reporting Ethnic Active Participants
African American/Black	2,790	2,787	-3	-0.11	32.80
African National/ African Caribbean	833	851	18	2.16	10.01
American Indian and Alaska Native	752	772	20	2.66	9.08
Arab/Middle Eastern	481	492	11	2.29	5.79
Asian/Pacific Islander	2,207	2,207	0	0.00	25.97
Latino/Hispanic	2,433	2,539	106	4.36	29.88
Multiracial	2,438	2,440	2	0.08	28.71
White	8,057	7,976	-81	-1.01	93.86

Total Ethnic Active Participants	2022	2023	Change	Percent	Percent Ethnic Active Participants
African American/Black	24,875	23,780	-1,095	-4.40	1.55
African National/ African Caribbean	6,244	6,430	186	2.98	0.42
American Indian and Alaska Native	3,728	4,477	749	20.09	0.29
Arab/Middle Eastern	2,037	2,150	113	5.55	0.14
Asian/Pacific Islander	13,494	14,496	1,002	7.43	0.94
Latino/Hispanic	25,951	27,529	1,578	6.08	1.79
Multiracial	22,564	25,018	2,454	10.88	1.63
White	1,437,839	1,416,830	-21,009	-1.46	92.22

Summary of Congregation Statistics as of Dec. 31, 2024

Summary of Membership Statistics	2023	2024	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Avgs./Congregation
Total Number of Congregations	8,498	8,386	-112	-1.32	
Baptized Members	2,793,899	2,677,239	-116,660	-4.18	321
Confirmed Members	2,203,448	2,120,543	-82,905	-3.76	254

Analysis of Membership Gains and Losses

Baptized Members τ Accessions	2023	2024	Changes	Percent
By Baptism τ Children under Age 16	23,008	21,964	-1,044	-4.54
By Baptism τ Adults Age 16 and Older	2,655	2,486	-169	-6.37
By Affirmation of Faith	23,987	22,575	-1,412	-5.89
By Transfer	25,353	22,491	-2,862	-11.29
From Other Sources and Statistical Adjustments	10,134	11,722	1,588	15.67
Total Accessions τ Baptized Members	85,137	81,238	-3,899	-4.58

Baptized Members τ Losses	2023	2024	Changes	Percent
By Death	33,445	32,087	-1,358	-4.06
By Transfer	19,067	15,640	-3,427	-17.97
For Other Reasons and Statistical Adjustments	125,218	124,657	-561	-0.45
Total Losses τ Baptized Members	177,730	172,384	-5,346	-3.01

Baptized Members τ Confirmed	2023	2024	Changes	Percent
Confirmed	19,874	18,210	-1,664	-8.37
Active Participants	1,546,313	1,502,984	-43,329	-2.80

Summary of Congregation Statistics as of Dec. 31, 2024

Summary of Financial Statistics

Totals τ End of Year	2023	2024	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Avgs./Congregation
Total Receipts	2,429,181,338	2,470,889,909	41,708,571	1.72	295,631.72
Total Disbursements	2,432,027,805	2,453,902,501	21,874,696	0.90	293,248.39
Total Indebtedness on Dec. 31	904,305,249	774,351,179	-129,954,070	-14.37	419,475.18
Average Total Giving per Baptized Member	691.41	729.05	37.64	5.44	
Average Total Giving per Confirmed Member	876.68	920.45	43.77	4.99	Congregations with no debt
Projected Mission Support	114,108,068	95,132,456	-18,975,612	-16.63	78.02%

Detail of Financial Statistics

Receipts for Regular Operation	2023	2024	Change	Percent
Regular Giving by Members	1,662,110,369	1,660,860,495	-1,249,874	-0.08
Designated Giving by Members	269,612,259	290,983,885	21,371,626	7.93
Earned Income (Any Source)	227,543,013	251,668,537	24,125,524	10.60
Grants (Any Source)	44,249,903	36,107,754	-8,142,149	-18.40
All Other Receipts	225,665,794	231,269,238	5,603,444	2.48

Disbursements for Regular Operation	2023	2024	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Percent of Total Disbursements
Current Operating Expenses	1,859,621,078	1,885,418,485	25,797,407	1.39	76.83
Capital Improvements	185,603,404	185,884,100	280,696	0.15	7.58
Payment on Debts	115,811,740	116,623,490	811,750	0.70	4.75
Mission Support	85,451,850	84,847,874	-603,976	-0.71	3.46
Non-Mission Support Benevolences	106,257,946	103,072,824	-3,185,122	-3.00	4.20
Other Expenses	78,962,374	77,775,241	-1,187,133	-1.50	3.17

Summary of Congregation Statistics as of Dec. 31, 2024

Worship Services	2023 (on-site)	2023 (online)	2024 (on-site)	2024 (online)
Total Average Worship Attendance	522,343	336,323	525,792	328,315
Average Attendance per Congregation	70	64	69	62
Percentage of Baptized Members Attending Worship	18.70	12.04	19.64	12.26

Congregations Reporting Ethnic Group Participants	2023	2024	Change	Percent	*Statistical Analysis* Percent of Congregations Reporting Ethnic Active Participants
African American/Black	2,787	2,830	43	1.54	33.75
African National/ African Caribbean	851	858	7	0.82	10.23
American Indian and Alaska Native	772	802	30	3.89	9.56
Arab/Middle Eastern	492	486	-6	-1.22	5.80
Asian/Pacific Islander	2,207	2,226	19	0.86	26.54
Latino/Hispanic	2,539	2,611	72	2.84	31.14
Multiracial	2,440	2,510	70	2.87	29.93
White	7,976	7,693	-283	-3.55	91.74

Total Ethnic Active Participants	2023	2024	Change	Percent	Percent Ethnic Active Participants
African American/Black	23,780	24,062	282	1.19	1.65
African National/ African Caribbean	6,430	6,054	-376	-5.85	0.41
American Indian and Alaska Native	4,477	4,477	0	0.00	0.31
Arab/Middle Eastern	2,150	2,120	-30	-1.40	0.14
Asian/Pacific Islander	14,496	14,439	-57	-0.39	0.99
Latino/Hispanic	27,529	28,981	1,452	5.27	1.98
Multiracial	25,018	25,870	852	3.41	1.77
White	1,416,830	1,355,926	-60,904	-4.30	92.74

Appendix C
Roster Statistics

The secretary is responsible for maintaining the official rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. These include the rosters of congregations, ministers of Word and Service and ministers of Word and Sacrament.

Roster of Congregations

The ELCA counted 8,386 congregations on Dec. 31, 2024, including 29 congregations under development.

The record of those added to the roster of congregations is indicated in Table 1.

The record of removals from the roster of congregations by categories is shown in Table 2.

The process for withdrawal of a congregation is specified by constitutional provisions 9.62. and 9.71. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

ά a ŜℕƎŜŘɛ ƛă ŘŜŦƛyŜŘ Ɩ·ă ƛyØƨfØƛyƎ Ɩ· Ŏƨ2yƎℕŜƎƖ·ύƛ2y˝ ƎƛØƛyƎ ȡzLJ ƛύă ăŜLJƖ·ℕƖ·ύŜ ƛŘŜŷύúùè Ɩ·yŘ ȡzyŕύƛyƎ with an already existing congregation (i.e., being *merged* into an existing congregation).

ά/2yăƨfƛŘƖ·ύŜŘɛ ƛă ŘŜŦƛyŜŘ Ɩ·ă ƛyØƨfØƛyƎ úøƨ2 2ℕ Y˝2ℕŜ Ŏƨ2yƎℕŜƎƖ·ύƛ2yă úKƖ·ú ȡ2ƛy˝ ú2ƎŜúKŜℕ ú2 become a new entity with a new name and a new congregation identification number (i.e., the congregations are *consolidated* to become a new congregation).

The roster of congregations is published online in the ELCA directory. Congregations that have been received into this church or that have been consolidated, merged, withdrawn, disbanded, or removed are listed online in the digital directory.

Table 1

Congregations	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Received by synod action	12	12	16	22	11	2	6	11	13	18
Resulting from consolidations	1	5	5	10	7	4	7	4	7	3
Totals	13	18	21	32	18	6	13	15	20	21

Table 1 *(continued)*

Congregations	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Received by synod action	13	9	6	5	6	4	2	2	5	2	8
Resulting from consolidations	5	2	5	8	4	5	3	1	4	5	2
Totals	18	11	11	13	10	9	5	3	9	7	10

Table 2

Congregations	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Withdrawn	26	22	18	7	13	16	299	292	43	18
Disbanded	40	31	38	29	24	38	43	53	38	39
Merged	7	3	10	2	5	9	1	5	5	5
Consolidated	2	5	12	12	8	9	14	8	16	6
Removed	4	1	0	0	1	2	5	8	4	4
Totals	79	62	78	50	51	74	362	366	106	72

Table 2 *(continued)*

Congregations	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Withdrawn	13	9	12	16	9	17	14	25	27	18	24
Disbanded	45	42	43	44	40	50	36	36	71	75	47
Merged	6	8	2	2	6	6	5	4	14	4	7
Consolidated	11	4	12	17	8	12	6	2	9	14	4
Removed	2	5	1	2	2	5	6	6	4	2	5
Totals	77	68	70	81	65	90	67	73	125	113	87

Change of Synod Relationship

!yê ŎKI·yƎŜ ƛy˝ I· Ŏ2yƎℕŜƎI·úƛ2yℤă ăèyƵŘ ℕŜfI·úƛ2yãKƛLJ ƛă ű2 ōŜ ℕŜLJ2ℕúŜŘ ű2 úKŜ /KdzℕŎKøƛŘŜ Assembly. As provided by ELCA bylaw 10.01.03ΦΣ á!yê Ŏ2yƎℕŜƎI·úƛ2y˝ƛy˝I· ō2ℕŘŜℕ I·ℕŜI· ŘŜăƛℕƛyƎ ű2 change its synod relationship may do so upon approval of the synods Ŏ2yŎŜℕyŜŘΣ øKƛŎK ăKI·ff ℕŜLJ2ℕú I·yê ădzŎK ŎKI·yƎŜ ű2 úKŜ /KdzℕŎKøƛŘŜ !ăăŜY˝ōfè¢€ During the 2022ς 2024 triennium, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Westby, Mont., transferred its synod relationship from the Montana Synod (1F) to the Western North Dakota Synod (3A); Christ the King Lutheran Church, Milton Freewater, Ore., transferred its synod relationship from the Oregon Synod (1E) to the Northwest Intermountain Synod (1D).

Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

As of December 31, 2024, the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church listed a total of 14,743 minsters of Word and Sacrament. Included in that number were 4,860 women, 17 who did not identify on the gender binary, and 828 persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.

Additions to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament take place only in the ways defined by the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA. Those specific ways are:

1. Individuals who are ordained in accord with the constitution and bylaws of this church in effect at the time of their ordinations, after having been approved by a duly constituted synod candidacy committee and having received and accepted a regular, attested Letter of Call to be a pastor.
2. Individuals received:
   a. Individuals approved by a synod candidacy committee who previously were ordained in another Lutheran church body or another Christian church body, under bylaw 7.31.04., whose ordination is recognized by this church under the policy that addresses such recognition. Others would be ordained by this church under the policy of such reception.
   b. Individuals received, under churchwide bylaw 8.63.05.c., through the candidacy process for the roster of ordained ministers who were ordained in a full-communion partner church body.
3. Individuals reinstated to the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament, under churchwide bylaw 7.31.05., who previously were ordained in this church or one of its predecessor church bodies.

Table 3a: Additions to the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Additions	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Ordained	270	279	283	295	327	294	288	279	266	225
Reinstated	22	11	8	15	2	9	13	13	11	14
Received	9	9	8	18	14	10	22	14	7	15
Totals	301	299	299	328	343	313	323	306	284	254

(continued)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ordained	251	247	202	211	196	142	158	212	194	190	136
Reinstated	10	11	8	5	7	10	8	3	6	5	3
Received	6	10	7	15	5	11	7	7	6	5	9
Totals	267	268	217	231	208	163	173	222	206	200	148

Table 3b: Removals from the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Removals by	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Death	223	226	208	227	226	274	293	262	281	273
Resignation	63	62	78	48	44	65	300	265	98	65
Removal	50	48	62	45	33	29	108	154	58	42
Transfer to ELCIC*	1	2	3	5	3	0	0	4	0	5
Totals	337	338	351	325	306	371	701	685	437	385

(continued)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Death	282	322	293	270	320	329	377	372	361	338	350
Resignation	49	36	29	47	34	35	30	38	31	48	30
Removal	45	26	35	41	27	33	26	23	24	35	36
Transfer to ELCIC*	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	380	385	358	358	382	397	433	433	416	422	416

The names of people added to and removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament are listed in the digital directory. The numbers of additions to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and removals from that roster are shown in Table 3. In addition to the statistics listed in the above table, the ELCA received two transfers from the ELCIC in 2022, one transfer in 2023, and one transfer in 2024.

Percentages of pastors who are women as part of the whole roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament for 2001 through 2024 appear in Table 4.

Table 4: Percentage of ministers of Word and Sacrament who are women

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Whole roster	14.9	15.6	16.5	17.0	17.7	18.3	19.1	19.9	21.3	21.8	23.1	23.5

(continued)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Whole roster	25.1	25.5	25.9	26.5	26.7	28.2	29.9	30.1	30.3	32.5	32.9	32.9

Roster of Ministers of Word and Service

As of December 31, 2024, the roster of Ministers of Word and Service numbered 1,155 people, including 951 women, 1 who did not identify on the gender binary, and 27 persons of color or whose primary language is other than English. In addition to the statistics listed in Table 5, the ELCA received no transfers from the ELCIC in 2022ς2024.

Additions to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service take place only in the ways defined by the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA. Those specific ways are:

1. Individuals who are ordained in accord with the constitution and bylaws of this church in effect at the time of their ordinations, after having been approved by a duly constituted synod candidacy committee and having received and accepted a regular, attested Letter of Call to be a deacon.
2. Individuals reinstated to the roster of ministers of Word and Service, under churchwide bylaw 7.61.07., who previously were rostered in this church or one of its predecessor church bodies.

The names of those approved by the ELCA for admission to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service τ as well as the names of those removed from the roster τ are also listed in the digital directory.

Table 5a: Additions to the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service

Additions	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Ordained	40	47	39	45	48	43	66	43	47	30	26	30
Reinstated	2	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0
Totals	42	48	42	45	49	44	67	44	47	32	26	30

(continued)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ordained	28	33	21	32	29	17	22	19	20	20	28	23
Reinstated	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	29	34	21	32	29	18	22	19	20	20	28	23

Table 5b: Removals from the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service

Removals by	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Death	6	12	16	14	13	12	12	16	23	21	15	16
Resignation	3	5	2	2	7	6	5	5	9	9	11	3
Removal	18	17	16	10	9	18	12	7	11	9	8	10
Totals	27	34	34	26	29	36	29	28	43	39	34	29

(continued)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Death	18	13	17	17	15	25	15	15	15	20	35	21
Resignation	3	5	6	4	6	2	1	4	1	3	3	3
Removal	10	5	4	10	3	5	6	3	3	4	5	4
Totals	31	23	27	31	24	32	22	22	19	27	43	28

*ELCIC = Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Appendix D
Additions to the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Name	City	State/Country	Date	Synod	Type of addition other than ordination
Aakre, Alex M.	Hager City	Wisconsin	11/11/2023	5H	
Abelsen, Mark J	Excelsior	Minnesota	4/21/2024	3G	
Adams, Janet E.	Madelia	Minnesota	2/19/2022	3F	
Addison, Tanyce J.	Bucyrus	Ohio	8/27/2022	6D	
Adkins, Nathaniel P.	Fairfield	Iowa	8/19/2023	5D	
Allport-Cohoon, Heather G.	Warren	Pennsylvania	11/11/2023	8A	
Alvarez, Veronica	Phoenix	Arizona	10/30/2022	2D	
Ames, Devin P.	Wheeling	West Virginia	9/29/2024	8H	
Anas, Timothy M.	Lewiston	New York	9/11/2022	7D	Received from Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
Anderson Trust, Melissa A.	Olympia	Washington	1/15/2022	1C	
Anderson, Janet K.	Louisville	Nebraska	8/5/2023	4A	
Anderson, Katherine E.	Marshfield	Wisconsin	6/25/2022	5H	
Anderson, Kyle B.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	6/21/2024	3G	
Anderson, Stephen R.	San Bernardino	California	3/12/2022	2C	
Angellis, Gail E.	Falmouth	Maine	6/16/2024	7B	
Antley, Joel W.	Christiansburg	Virginia	5/14/2024	9A	
Aparicio Ortez, Edwin A.	Waukesha	Wisconsin	6/25/2023	5J	
Arendt, Callie C.	Brodhead	Wisconsin	10/5/2023	5K	
Argus, Rita L.	Conifer	Colorado	2/3/2024	2E	
Arnold, Justin J.	Fall Creek	Wisconsin	6/29/2024	5H	
Bachelder, Heather B.	Winston Salem	North Carolina	11/9/2022	9B	
Baird, Rebecca V.	Allison	Iowa	6/24/2023	5F	
Baker-Mikesell, Elizabeth	Gettysburg	Pennsylvania	5/5/2024	8D	
Banister, Virginia U.	Henrico	Virginia	4/15/2023	9A	
Barkus, Brittany M.	Bessemer	Michigan	10/25/2024	5G	
Barron, Johnel R.	Hawthorne	California	12/2/2023	2B	
Bartholomew, Mindelle K.	Shamokin Dam	Pennsylvania	10/8/2023	8E	
Bartleson Balcam, Amy A.	Indianapolis	Indiana	1/13/2024	6C	
Basil, Michael	Walnut Creek	California	9/29/2024	2A	
Batchelor, Donna	Venice	Florida	11/12/2023	9E	
Batesmith, Lindsay M.	Denver	Colorado	11/6/2022	2E	
Beadle, Patricia C.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	5/22/2022	3G	
Beall, Laura L.	Hot Springs	South Dakota	11/4/2022	3C	
Becerra-Huerta, Ana L.	New Brighton	Minnesota	8/14/2022	3H	
Becker, Dana S.	Norwood	Minnesota	9/8/2024	3G	
Beers, D. Andrew	Derby	Kansas	10/4/2022	4B	
Belfrey Johnson, Christine K.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	8/19/2023	3G	
Benz, Paul A. O.	Mercer Island	Washington	6/18/2022	1B	
Bergen, Richard H.	Ferndale	Pennsylvania	9/10/2022	7F	
Bergh, Oliver J. M.	Fairbanks	Alaska	7/16/2022	1A	
Bergman, Ethan A.	Ellensburg	Washington	10/9/2022	1D	
Bey, Zachary Alan	Conroy	Iowa	12/9/2022	5D	Reinstated
Binja, Emillie	Clackamas	Oregon	5/28/2023	1E	
Blackmon, Cogan R.	New Palestine	Indiana	1/21/2023	6C	
Boatwright, Rebekah S.	Fort Collins	Colorado	11/17/2023	2E	
Bockbrader, Hannah M.	Loveland	Ohio	8/10/2024	6F	
Boland, Kristin M.	Washburn	Wisconsin	6/22/2024	5H	

Bonneville DeNaples, Andrea V.	Nashwauk	Minnesota	1/15/2023	3G	
Bravinder, Paul E.	Annandale	Minnesota	8/21/2022	3F	
Breslin, Dane A.	Wenatchee	Washington	12/14/2022	1D	
Brondyke, Lillian C.	Escanaba	Michigan	10/29/2022	5G	
Brown, Emily E.	Rockford	Minnesota	4/20/2024	3G	
Brown, G. Alan	Woodville	Ohio	4/13/2024	6D	Received from The United Methodist Church
Bryerwell, Erica A.	New Hope	Minnesota	11/16/2024	3G	
Burbank, Madeline M.	Woodbury	Minnesota	4/2/2022	5K	
Bursh, Richard J.	Deforest	Wisconsin	10/9/2022	5K	
Butler, Kathleen Y.	Richmond	Michigan	6/10/2023	6A	
Button, Mary E.	Kingston	New York	5/7/2022	7C	
Bye, Aaron M.	Grand Forks	North Dakota	1/7/2022	3B	
Calderon, Ismael J.	Waukegan	Illinois	12/11/2022	9E	
Callen, Elizabeth L.	Anchor	Illinois	9/22/2023	5C	
Carlson, Julie A.	Foxhome	Minnesota	7/24/2022	3D	
Carnes, Carolyn M.	Galesburg	Illinois	11/3/2024	5B	Received from The United Methodist Church
Carr, Elizabeth S.	Bendena	Kansas	9/6/2024	4B	
Carter, Lori H.	Salisbury	North Carolina	2/26/2022	9B	
Casola, Grace M.	Dale City	Virginia	1/6/2024	8G	
Cavender, Lori L.	Langley	Washington	11/4/2023	1B	
Chacon, Angela C.	Price	Utah	10/7/2023	2E	
Chatelaine, David J., III	Kenyon	Minnesota	10/6/2024	3I	
Chavis, Stacy L.	Ephrata	Pennsylvania	3/16/2024	8D	
Cheung, William	Bellevue	Washington	1/13/2024	1B	
Chipman, Tiffany J.	Exeland	Wisconsin	7/22/2023	5H	
Cho, Khai	Indianapolis	Indiana	8/31/2024	6C	
Christensen, Evan R.	Genoa	Nebraska	10/7/2022	4A	
Christensen, Hillary J.	Stromsburg	Nebraska	10/7/2022	4A	
Christianson, Susan L.	Hector	Minnesota	5/22/2022	3F	
Christman, Tricia A	Ritzville	Washington	5/29/2022	1D	
Cira, Susan H.	Mason City	Iowa	3/19/2023	5F	
Cochran, Lucas M.	Virginia Beach	Virginia	1/28/2024	9A	
Cochrane, Rebekah A.	Missoula	Montana	6/24/2023	1F	
Collins, Amelia P.	Charles Town	West Virginia	11/26/2022	8H	
Collins, Daniel R.	Martinsburg	West Virginia	11/26/2022	8H	
Colon-Brown, Carmen	West Chester	Ohio	5/21/2022	6F	
Cook, Wylie M.	Denver	Colorado	3/26/2022	2E	
Cooley Higgs, Amy	Brighton	Michigan	4/19/2024	6A	
Copps, Charles K.	Baldwinsville	New York	3/25/2023	7D	
Correa Vazquez, Emmanuel J.	Hingham	Massachusetts	11/19/2023	7B	
Cortez, Carlos A.	Gardena	California	8/24/2024	2B	
Cram, Marc	Merrillville	Indiana	2/19/2023	6C	
Crawford, Myron V.	Oconomowoc	Wisconsin	7/1/2023	5J	
Culkin, Lynne D.	Danforth	Illinois	11/16/2024	5C	
Cummings, Holly B.	Blountville	Tennessee	7/15/2023	9D	
Cunningham, Johnene L.	Victoria	Texas	10/8/2022	4E	
Cuyatti-Chavez, Patricia V.	Chicago	Illinois	6/2/2023	5A	Received from Peruvian Evangel. Lutheran Church
Czutor, Veronika A.	Dallas	Texas	9/10/2022	4D	
Dahl, James A.	Taylorsville	North Carolina	7/15/2023	9B	

Dahlseng-Monroe, Amanda R.	Loves Park	Illinois	6/5/2022	5B	
Dais, Clairessa	Mobile	Alabama	1/23/2022	9D	
Dalen, Emily J.	Treynor	Iowa	10/2/2022	5E	
Danner, Cody M.	Westminster	Maryland	9/3/2022	8F	
Darla, Anandarao	Fremont	California	8/24/2024	2A	
Davis, Jonah S.	Lancaster	Pennsylvania	6/5/2022	8D	
Day, Shawna L.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	5/14/2022	3C	
De Windt-Smith, Angelina M.	Atlanta	Georgia	7/28/2022	9D	
Dean, Zachary D.	Hauppauge	New York	5/7/2022	7C	
Del Risco-Nolla, Dafne	Evanston	Illinois	8/26/2023	5A	
Demarest, Pepe D.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	1/13/2024	3H	
Denton, Elizabeth	Glendale	California	4/24/2022	2B	
DiBiaso, Samantha N.	Rockville	Maryland	11/3/2023	8G	
Dillard, Bernice	Cedar Rapids	Iowa	8/17/2024	5D	
DiPasquale, Hannah	Las Cruces	New Mexico	8/20/2023	2E	
Disbro, Jill I.	Richmond	California	5/19/2024	2A	
Dixon, Llewellyn S.	Chicago	Illinois	8/26/2023	5A	
Dluehosh, Gavin D.	Sherwood	Oregon	1/22/2022	1E	
Doan, Ethan	Montgomeryville	Pennsylvania	11/19/2022	7F	
Doegen, Joseph A., Jr.	Wisconsin Dells	Wisconsin	9/10/2023	5K	
Dougherty, Jean M.	Smithtown	New York	4/20/2024	7C	
Drummond, Christopher L.	Northbrook	Illinois	2/11/2024	5A	
Duff, Kyle A.	Grand Rapids	Michigan	11/11/2023	6B	
Duffy, Chad A.	Slayton	Minnesota	6/25/2023	3F	
Dunasky, Danielle R.	Fargo	North Dakota	9/24/2022	3B	
Dunkel, Steven	Fargo	North Dakota	11/1/2024	3B	
Dybdal, Kristin E.	Plymouth	Minnesota	2/13/2022	3G	
Dyrhaug, Benjamin C.	Parkers Prairie	Minnesota	12/30/2023	3D	
Echandía, Luis I	Hempstead	New York	9/23/2022	7C	Reinstated
Edelman, Jamie L.	Easton	Pennsylvania	10/9/2022	7E	
Ehlert, Katherine L.	Mount Prospect	Illinois	9/18/2022	5A	
Eickhoff, Bergen A. N.	Olympia	Washington	1/7/2023	1C	
Elkin Ziehr, Kathryn A.	Durham	North Carolina	9/20/2024	9B	
Elliott, Madeline M.	Alexandria	Minnesota	4/30/2023	3D	
Ellis, Jodi L.	Dalmatia	Pennsylvania	1/29/2023	8E	
Ellison, Jonas	Aptos	California	10/14/2023	2A	
Elton, Terri M.	Maplewood	Minnesota	10/8/2022	3H	
Engum, Matthew S.	Detroit Lakes	Minnesota	7/17/2022	3D	
Enriquez, Elena	San Diego	California	7/15/2023	2C	
Epler, Dillon J.	Tamaqua	Pennsylvania	1/28/2024	7E	
Erickson, Micheal S.	Clermont	Iowa	2/3/2024	5F	
Erickson, Myron M.	Evanston	Illinois	10/8/2022	5A	Received from Evangelical Covenant Church
Erisman, Emily C.	Palm Desert	California	10/7/2023	2C	
Esala, Nathan A.	Springfield	Ohio	8/24/2024	6F	Received from Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
Esterby, Meagan C.	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	6/11/2022	7F	
Estrada Cepero, Ignacio, Sr.	Santurce	Puerto Rico	4/20/2024	9F	
Faret, Eric B.	Clinton	Maryland	7/10/2022	8G	
Faulkner, Clayton S.	Dubuque	Iowa	6/11/2022	5K	
Faust, Michael P.	Camp Hill	Pennsylvania	10/29/2022	8D	
Ferro, Anna M.	Rochester	Minnesota	11/23/2024	3I	
Fields, Daniel L.	Perth Amboy	New Jersey	8/10/2024	7A	
Fischer, Jared M.	Lockhart	Texas	7/26/2024	4E	

FitzGerald, James C.	Fulton	Maryland	10/1/2023	8F	
Folkemer-Leonard, Matthew S.	York	Pennsylvania	8/20/2022	8D	
Forgey, Chavaleh C.	University Place	Washington	2/5/2022	1C	
Fowler, Reed N.	Apple Valley	Minnesota	11/4/2023	3H	
Franco, Nicholas J. R.	Zimmerman	Minnesota	1/29/2023	3G	
Franks, Edward M.	Overland Park	Kansas	6/25/2022	4B	
Frauens, Lisa K.	Geneseo	New York	7/29/2023	7D	
Frekot, Charles M.	Brunswick	Maryland	9/24/2022	8F	
Fry, Jonathan R.	Champaign	Illinois	6/4/2023	5C	
Frye, David K.	Toledo	Ohio	5/29/2022	6D	
Fryman, Sarah E.	Bayonne	New Jersey	7/23/2023	7A	
Fugate, Jason A.	Lakeside Park	Kentucky	7/23/2022	6C	
Fuller, Lori A.	Silver Springs	Florida	2/27/2022	9E	
Fulton, Benjamin D.	Smolan	Kansas	1/8/2022	4B	
Funkhouser, Sara A.	Seattle	Washington	6/25/2022	1B	
Garing, Wilma	Garden City	Georgia	12/3/2022	9D	
Gautieri, Bridget C.		Germany	8/12/2023	7A	
Gelerter, Deborah A.	Petersburg	Alaska	2/12/2023	1A	
Gerike, Katherine R.	Hitterdal	Minnesota	2/5/2022	3D	
Gerrish, Julie K.	Sedona	Arizona	8/24/2024	2D	
Giermann, Kyle D.	Kindred	North Dakota	3/27/2022	3B	
Gillespie, Sandra	Chicago	Illinois	11/10/2024	5A	
Gillespie, Walter, Jr.	Chicago	Illinois	11/10/2024	5A	
Glass, Sharon	Frederick	Maryland	7/22/2023	8F	
Goehring, Elizabeth A.	Albion	Nebraska	10/15/2022	4A	
Goertz, Heather D	Omaha	Nebraska	8/6/2023	4A	
Goetz, James M.	Spirit Lake	Iowa	10/8/2023	5E	
Gordon, Lori A.	Talmoon	Minnesota	7/16/2022	3E	
Gossett, Stephanie E.	Jamestown	North Dakota	11/13/2022	3B	
Gosteli, Brett A.	Quincy	Illinois	11/6/2022	5C	
Gould, Veronica J.	Loveland	Colorado	3/5/2023	2E	
Graff, Emily C.	Angier	North Carolina	8/18/2024	9B	
Grafstrom, Marilyn	Roseau	Minnesota	10/8/2023	3D	
Graham, K. Ann	Mc Dade	Texas	10/12/2024	4E	
Greeneway, Jacob J.	Madison	Wisconsin	1/13/2023	5K	
Grinde, Emma C.	Mindoro	Wisconsin	7/16/2022	5L	
Grinvalds, Gary V.	Filley	Nebraska	7/27/2024	4A	
Gunderson, Sarah Christine	Superior	Wisconsin	7/16/2023	5H	
Gunthoti, Manoj K.	Chicago	Illinois	10/8/2022	5A	Received from South Andhra Lutheran Church
Hagbo, Taylor J.	Arcata	California	1/7/2022	2A	
Hahn, Mason A., Jr.	Pitman	New Jersey	4/23/2022	7A	
Haider, Dustin D.	Kenyon	Minnesota	2/18/2023	3I	
Halaas, Per W.	Bloomington	Minnesota	1/28/2023	3G	
Hallquist, Jeremy M.	Worthington	Minnesota	5/7/2022	3F	
Hamblen, R. Andrew	Twin Falls	Idaho	10/19/2024	1D	
Hamm, Tamara J.	Minot	North Dakota	6/5/2022	3A	
Hammer, Deborah L.	Concord	Nebraska	8/12/2023	4A	
Hammesfahr, Colette M.	Savannah	Georgia	8/26/2023	9D	
Hansen, Janelle L.	Abercrombie	North Dakota	7/25/2024	3B	
Hansen, Matt	Andrews	North Carolina	5/9/2024	9B	
Hanson Fairchild, Miriam B.	Glen Burnie	Maryland	8/31/2024	8F	
Hardie, Lucy A.	New Lisbon	Wisconsin	1/14/2023	5L	
Hartfield, Debra L	Kenosha	Wisconsin	6/17/2023	5J	
Hartnett, Cassandra B.	Westborough	Massachusetts	5/14/2022	7B	

Hawe, Lisa A.	Rochester	Minnesota	11/19/2022	3I	
Hawkins, David A.	Homer	Nebraska	6/12/2022	4A	
Hawkins, Elizabeth C.	Nashville	Tennessee	10/6/2023	9D	
Heckman, Ryan D. M.	Avon	Connecticut	5/11/2024	7B	
Hedger, Vicki L.	Belton	Missouri	1/14/2023	4B	
Heinrich, Eric H.	Manchester	Connecticut	8/28/2022	7B	
Helfrich, Matthew	Florissant	Missouri	1/1/2023	4B	Received from Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
Henry, H. Denise	Winston Salem	North Carolina	2/11/2023	9B	
Hensley, L. Mark	Columbus	Ohio	9/13/2024	6F	Received from American Baptist Churches Post '72
Hensley, Laurie E.	Woodhull	Illinois	7/29/2023	5B	
Her, Jua J.	Brooklyn Park	Minnesota	4/16/2023	3H	
Herb, Joseph E., Jr.	Emmitsburg	Maryland	5/5/2023	8F	
Herreid, Cheryl A.	Allen	Texas	9/23/2023	4D	
Hession-Sigmon, Melody P.	Catonsville	Maryland	7/2/2023	8F	
Hider, Lon M.	Manistique	Michigan	1/15/2023	5G	
Hill, Erick	Omaha	Nebraska	1/27/2024	4A	
Hinkle, Candice A.	Reynolds	Indiana	12/16/2023	6C	
Hoff, Carrie A.	Oakland	Maryland	7/14/2024	8H	
Hoff, Suzanne H.	Moline	Illinois	1/6/2024	5B	
Holeman, Katrina M.	Cameron Park	California	5/7/2022	2A	
Holloway-Nilsen, Leah D.	Calamus	Iowa	8/5/2022	5D	
Hopgood, Kayla J.	Newtown	Pennsylvania	9/9/2023	7F	
Hopkins, Darlene C.	Lubbock	Texas	1/7/2023	4D	
Houstin, Nathan A.	Chicago	Illinois	10/29/2023	5A	
Hrdlicka, Melissa L.	Prescott	Wisconsin	10/29/2022	5H	
Humphrey, Sarah N.	East Northport	New York	4/20/2024	7C	
Hynek, Elise M.	Rudyard	Michigan	7/8/2023	5G	
Ines, Kaylie H.	Olsburg	Kansas	5/7/2022	4B	
Jackson, Julie T.	Plainfield	Pennsylvania	11/23/2024	8D	
Jacob, Sharai J.	Chicago	Illinois	2/11/2024	5A	
James, Meghan H.	North Tonawanda	New York	1/14/2023	7D	
Janak, Frantisek	South Plainfield	New Jersey	4/23/2022	7A	
Jensen, Sara O.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	8/14/2022	3G	
Jeske, Kendall	Pleasanton	California	4/13/2024	2A	
Jewell, Matthew D.	Capac	Michigan	9/7/2024	6A	
Johanson, Sarah M.	Wayzata	Minnesota	10/15/2023	3G	
Johnson, Amanda M.	Hillsboro	North Dakota	5/18/2024	3B	
Johnson, Amy E.	Farmington	Minnesota	7/24/2022	3H	
Johnson, Carol E.	Williamsport	Pennsylvania	6/11/2023	8E	
Johnson, Christina B.	Cloquet	Minnesota	6/19/2024	3E	
Johnson, George H.	Yankton	South Dakota	2/2/2022	3C	Transferred from ELCIC
Johnson, Hope	Leland	Illinois	11/5/2022	5B	
Johnson, Kelsey L.	Hinsdale	Illinois	10/29/2023	5A	
Johnson, Kyle E.	Lansing	Illinois	7/10/2022	5A	
Johnson, Leif O.	Howard	South Dakota	5/24/2023	3C	
Johnson, Robin S.	Wilmington	North Carolina	8/26/2023	9B	
Johnston, Thomas G.	Rockwell	North Carolina	11/10/2024	9B	
Jones, Andrew L.	Oaklyn	New Jersey	11/9/2024	7A	
Jones, Sarah C. E.	Cosmos	Minnesota	10/22/2022	3F	
Jordan, Michael A.	Yankton	South Dakota	2/5/2022	3C	
Jorgensen, Joseph M.	Faribault	Minnesota	2/17/2024	3I	
Kaley, Patrick	Troy	Idaho	3/11/2023	1D	
Kane, Esthel M.	Brunswick	Georgia	4/23/2022	9D	

Karas, Pamela R.	Everett	Washington	6/18/2022	1B	
Katari, Janet	San Francisco	California	10/8/2022	2A	
Kathol, Joanna C.	Falls City	Nebraska	12/2/2023	4A	
Kelly, Amy E.	Moorhead	Minnesota	6/11/2023	3D	
Kilens, Terence R.	Clarendon Hills	Illinois	8/26/2023	5A	
Kimball, Wesley A.	Cottage Grove	Minnesota	1/6/2024	3H	
Kim-Chung, Chong Im	Federal Way	Washington	8/21/2022	1C	
Kincaid, Kristine H.	Preston	Minnesota	11/19/2023	3I	
Kinsinger, Mitchell	Saint Paul	Minnesota	8/1/2024	3H	Received from Reformed Church in America
Klinker, Adam J.	Avoca	Nebraska	6/14/2022	4A	
Knauss, Mark A.	Strongsville	Ohio	6/25/2023	6E	
Knoppel, Joy B.	Lakeville	Minnesota	9/17/2022	3H	
Knouse, Holly A.	Monticello	Iowa	8/13/2022	5D	
Koopman, Amy J.	Hopkins	Minnesota	10/8/2023	3G	
Kowalski, Jessica R.	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	9/9/2023	5J	
Kragerud, Andrea	Cheyenne	Wyoming	11/11/2023	2E	
Kramer, Rachel S.	Hillsboro	Oregon	2/11/2023	1E	
Krampien, Zachary T.	Gillespie	Illinois	7/30/2023	5C	
Kratzke Nelson, Leif K.	Barnum	Minnesota	5/28/2022	3E	
Krich, Ellen L.	Baltimore	Maryland	10/22/2022	8F	
Krohnke, Austin J.	Marshall	Minnesota	12/3/2022	3F	
Krolak, Sarah E.	Waseca	Minnesota	8/20/2022	3I	
Krueger, Donna J.	Brenham	Texas	8/20/2023	4F	
Krueger, Jacob W.	Lincoln	Nebraska	12/3/2022	4A	
Kuan-Yang, Michelle	Anaheim	California	7/21/2024	2C	
Kuster, Elizabeth	Andover	Illinois	10/27/2024	5B	
Kwiatkowski, Richard A	Coral Gables	Florida	6/30/2024	9E	Transferred from ELCIC
Laabs, Rebecca A.	Thiensville	Wisconsin	3/9/2024	5J	
LaCross, Scott L.	Portland	Oregon	6/12/2022	1E	
Lang, Michael T.	Ayden	North Carolina	1/23/2022	9B	
Langford, Andrew M.	Eugene	Oregon	5/21/2022	1E	
Langset, Karole J.	Commerce Township	Michigan	2/26/2022	6A	
Langston, Katherine L.	Saint George	Utah	2/4/2022	2D	
Larson, Paul M.	Salinas	California	1/22/2023	2A	
Larson, Sherri K.	Kandiyohi	Minnesota	7/30/2022	3F	
Larson-McLoone, Jaime L.	Wauwatosa	Wisconsin	2/19/2022	5J	
Lawrence, Carolyn S.	Catonsville	Maryland	9/18/2022	8F	
Ledford, William J., Jr.	Logan	Utah	3/3/2024	2E	
Lehr, Ernest F., III	Fallston	Maryland	8/20/2022	8F	
Leister, Samuel J.	Mifflintown	Pennsylvania	7/3/2022	8E	
Leppin, Volker	Hamden	Connecticut	9/30/2023	7B	Received from Ev (Reformed) Church in Germany
Lewis, Dianne L.	Jersey City	New Jersey	6/4/2022	7A	
Lichtfuss, Ellen E.	Manchester	Maryland	1/14/2023	8F	
Linberry, Juniper	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	9/16/2023	5J	
Linde, Wyatt	Oro Valley	Arizona	8/9/2023	2D	
Linke, Baird J.	Bonner	Montana	9/7/2024	1F	
Lippke-Ganzel, Elizabeth A.	Madison	Wisconsin	3/20/2022	5K	
Liss, Louis	Tucson	Arizona	7/25/2024	2D	
Lloyd, Brianna	Waianae	Hawaii	2/20/2022	2C	
Locke, Eric J.	Pensacola	Florida	7/29/2023	9E	
Locke, Janice D.	Milan	Michigan	6/5/2022	6A	
Lopez, Juan De Dios	El Paso	Texas	6/12/2022	2E	

Luong, Jennifer M.	Little Canada	Minnesota	1/15/2023	3H	
Luschen, Tifani G.	Glyndon	Minnesota	12/1/2024	3D	
Lutz, Charles W.	Sturtevant	Wisconsin	9/3/2022	5J	
Lyke, Nathan	Lakeville	Minnesota	11/3/2024	3H	
Lys, Jonathan E.	Corpus Christi	Texas	6/25/2023	4E	
Mackey, Ryan L.	Huntley	Illinois	7/23/2022	5B	
Maloy, David A.	Yutan	Nebraska	1/22/2022	4A	
Marlowe, Lynn A.	Carrollton	Georgia	2/4/2023	9D	
Marousek, Linda A.	Vancouver	Washington	4/30/2023	1C	
Martin, Charles A.	Rochester Hills	Michigan	9/18/2022	6A	
Martin, Ernest P.	Mauldin	South Carolina	6/18/2022	9C	
Massa, Kristen M.	Winona	Minnesota	9/1/2023	3I	
Matthews-Risley, Kathi	Sauk City	Wisconsin	7/10/2022	5K	
Mattson, Alexis M.	Maple Grove	Minnesota	4/13/2024	3G	
Mayen, David Y.	Omaha	Nebraska	3/13/2022	4A	
McCall, Anne R.	Chicago	Illinois	2/11/2024	5A	
McCammon, James P	Healdsburg	California	5/19/2023	2A	Reinstated
McConathy, Sean T.	Lockney	Texas	5/20/2023	4D	
McDonough, Andrea L.	Maple Heights	Ohio	2/3/2024	6E	
McElaney, Clare M.	Berkeley	California	5/7/2023	2A	
McFarland-Pollock, DaMisha A.	Burlington	Iowa	5/24/2024	5D	
McNeal, Kathryn E.	Mars	Pennsylvania	4/24/2022	8B	
McNett, Mycah L.	Devon	Pennsylvania	10/14/2023	7F	
McSorley, Toni L.	Greeneville	Tennessee	9/17/2023	9D	
Meester, Christopher J.	Owatonna	Minnesota	2/3/2024	3I	Received from Reformed Church in America
Melchior, Lynn R. B.	Battle Lake	Minnesota	11/20/2022	3D	
Melecio, Carmen M.	Springfield	Massachusetts	12/9/2023	7B	
Melton-Hill, Samm N.	Denver	Colorado	4/3/2022	2E	
Meyenburg, Laurel D.	Clarkfield	Minnesota	7/22/2023	3F	
Mhanga, Ruthie S.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	4/20/2024	3H	
Mickelson, Jory	Bellingham	Washington	8/19/2023	1B	
Miles-Wallace, Kathryn E.	Seguin	Texas	6/18/2022	4E	
Miller-Sanchez, Kelly R.	Newark	California	3/16/2024	2A	
Mills, Jason M.	Ishpeming	Michigan	8/27/2022	5G	
Mills, Mariah L.	Boise	Idaho	7/8/2023	1D	
Modrow, Susan	Circle Pines	Minnesota	10/22/2022	3H	
Moeller, Brian S.	Flanagan	Illinois	12/17/2022	5C	
Mohorko Ortiz, Jade D.	Oxnard	California	7/1/2023	2B	
Mokren, Jane	Doylestown	Ohio	6/17/2023	6E	
Molina, Alex R.	Waukegan	Illinois	8/21/2022	5A	
Molla, Rode S.	Alexandria	Virginia	12/3/2022	8G	
Monke-Gervais, Anna E.	Pelican Rapids	Minnesota	9/10/2023	3D	
Monnin, Deborah	Minster	Ohio	2/10/2024	6D	
Montgomery, Christina M.	Chicago	Illinois	7/23/2022	5A	
Moore, Sarah A.	Ashtabula	Ohio	6/22/2024	6E	
Moothart, Callie R.	Federal Way	Washington	11/16/2024	1C	
Moquin, Tyler S.	Cincinnati	Ohio	11/13/2022	6F	
Moran, Kathryn L.	Lewisburg	Pennsylvania	4/27/2024	8E	
Moraska, Krystle J.	Warner Robins	Georgia	7/29/2023	9D	
Morris, Mallory C.	Dallas	Texas	9/9/2023	4D	
Mosbo, Thomas J.	Lena	Illinois	1/6/2024	5B	
Mueller, Katherine A.	Crystal Lake	Illinois	12/8/2024	5B	
Mueller, Raphaela	Cambridge	Massachusetts	1/15/2022	7B	

Mulfinger, Don W.	Burnsville	Minnesota	12/31/2022	3H	Received from Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
Mullins, McIver	Davenport	Iowa	6/17/2023	5D	
Myers, David T.	Minot	North Dakota	2/27/2022	3A	
Nagle, Cassandra M.	The Woodlands	Texas	4/22/2023	4F	
Natalini, Thomas G.	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	2/24/2024	7F	
Nelson, Benjamin J.	Woodville	Wisconsin	8/20/2022	5H	
Nelson, David	Lake Lillian	Minnesota	12/10/2022	3F	
Nelson, Rebekah K. W.	Fort Bragg	North Carolina	12/30/2023	2B	
Nelson, Troy R.	Le Center	Minnesota	9/12/2022	3I	
Nelson-Bittle, Marietta C.	Port Orchard	Washington	6/5/2022	1C	
Nerdig, Jonathan W.	Brookings	South Dakota	12/3/2022	3C	
Nesslage, Christina N.	Durham	North Carolina	10/26/2024	9B	
Neuharth, Colin J.	Wishek	North Dakota	7/30/2022	3A	
Newman, Stephanie A.	Rochester	Michigan	8/19/2023	6A	
Nickodemus, Benjamin J.	Eugene	Oregon	6/9/2022	1E	
Nies, Karen A.	Bottineau	North Dakota	8/24/2024	3A	
Nieuwlandt, Kaari A.	Loveland	Colorado	10/2/2022	2E	
Nilsen, Stephen P.	Bettendorf	Iowa	7/23/2022	5D	
Nkambule, Menzi R.	Jersey City	New Jersey	9/18/2022	7A	
Norem, Hannah C.	Hickory	North Carolina	6/29/2024	9B	
Novelli-Angrisano, German F., Sr.	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	5/11/2022	5J	
Noya, Courtney L.	Estero	Florida	11/7/2024	9E	
Nunn, Clifford	Richmond	Indiana	5/5/2024	6C	
O'Brien, Daniel T.	Madison	Wisconsin	11/25/2023	5K	
Ogonowski, Jeffery D.	Riverview	Michigan	1/15/2022	6A	
Ohman, Alexander G.	Pelican Rapids	Minnesota	1/10/2022	3D	
Ohman-Rodriguez, Jennifer G.	Rock Island	Illinois	2/25/2023	5B	
Olson Kopp, Gretchen R.	Spokane	Washington	6/9/2024	1D	
Olson Popp, Jenna L.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	8/2/2024	3G	
Olson, Hannah D.	Rochester	Minnesota	4/3/2022	3I	
Olson, Lourdes	Henderson	Nevada	1/15/2022	2D	
Olson, Matthias R.	Plover	Wisconsin	9/10/2023	5I	
O'Rear, Matthew D.	Atlanta	Georgia	8/14/2022	9D	
Ortiz, Edwin, Sr.	Naranjito	Puerto Rico	8/31/2022	9F	
Ossefoort, Robert J.	Hadley	Minnesota	10/14/2023	3F	
Ouji, Margarette S.	Montclair	New Jersey	4/23/2022	7A	
Ozbun, Paul T.	Hastings	Nebraska	2/25/2023	4A	
Pagel, Melissa A.	Green Bay	Wisconsin	6/1/2024	5I	
Palacios, Kristina N.	San Antonio	Texas	9/14/2023	4E	
Parrish, Andrew D.	Alexandria	Virginia	8/12/2023	8G	
Patty, Andrew C.	New York	New York	1/22/2023	7C	
Pauly, Katie L.	Toronto	South Dakota	9/17/2022	3C	
Pearson, Matthew J.	Papillion	Nebraska	2/3/2024	4A	
Pease, Edward W. H.	Moville	Iowa	7/28/2024	5E	
Pedersen, Marcia A.	Hartland	Minnesota	4/23/2023	3I	
Penumaka, Hephzibah N.	Round Rock	Texas	8/26/2023	4E	
Penza, Amy D.	Wautoma	Wisconsin	8/18/2024	5I	
Perger, Andrew J.	Columbus	Wisconsin	6/29/2024	5K	
Perlick, Timothy J.	Tempe	Arizona	5/13/2023	2D	
Perna, Jamie	Marietta	Ohio	7/30/2023	6F	
Perry, Seth J.	Scandia	Minnesota	8/22/2022	3H	Transferred from ELCIC
Peterson, Curtiss J.	Crookston	Minnesota	6/9/2024	3D	
Peterson, Karen M.	Glenville	Minnesota	11/10/2024	3I	

Peterson, Montgomery S.	South Milwaukee	Wisconsin	5/14/2022	5J	
Phillips, Marlene S.	Myersville	Maryland	1/29/2022	8F	
Pickering, Melissa E.	Audubon	Minnesota	8/5/2022	3D	
Pingilley, Robin L.	Clarksville	Tennessee	11/11/2023	9D	
Poeschl, Michael J.	Finland	Minnesota	12/10/2023	3E	
Porsch-Ortega, Damaris E.	Jersey City	New Jersey	6/15/2024	7A	Received from United Church of Christ
Potaznick, Daniel M.	Phoenix	Arizona	3/18/2023	2D	
Potuznik, Melanie L	Elk Grove Village	Illinois	9/1/2022	5A	Reinstated
Pratt, Nathan M.	Racine	Wisconsin	12/21/2024	5J	
Pretorius, Carol	Delphos	Ohio	8/20/2022	6D	
Psomas-Jackloski, MaryAnne F.	Parsippany	New Jersey	4/15/2023	7A	
Pyeatt, Dylan D.	Pontiac	Michigan	10/9/2022	6A	
Quagliata, Daniel P.	Pinckney	Michigan	5/12/2023	6A	
Queen, Heath G.	Le Center	Minnesota	9/16/2023	3I	
Raatz, Dale M.	Gainesville	Florida	10/29/2022	9E	
Rabell-Gonzalez, Nelson H.	Lodi	California	9/30/2023	2A	Reinstated
Raman, Christopher R.	Viroqua	Wisconsin	2/3/2024	5L	Received from Church of South India
Ramsey, Sean	Frankfort	Illinois	8/26/2023	5A	
Randolph, Eric T.	Waldorf	Maryland	8/20/2022	8G	
Randolph, Wilmus R., III	Upper Darby	Pennsylvania	7/1/2023	7F	
Reeder, Rachel A.	Redlands	California	1/7/2024	2C	
Reedstrom, David A.	Mankato	Minnesota	12/18/2022	3I	
Remer, Victoria A.	Roseville	Minnesota	9/24/2022	3H	
Repsholdt, Claire	Patchogue	New York	1/28/2023	7C	
Restrepo, Oscar M., Sr.	Davie	Florida	3/13/2022	9E	
Rheinfrank, Elizabeth S.	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	2/24/2024	8B	
Rhude, Kristofer S.	San Jose	California	2/4/2023	2A	
Richter, Trixie D.	Umatilla	Florida	7/16/2022	9E	
Rieke, Nancy C.	Wessington Springs	South Dakota	10/15/2022	3C	
Rinker, Harold W., Jr.	Renovo	Pennsylvania	4/9/2022	8E	
Riter, Drew D.	Gayville	South Dakota	7/9/2022	3C	
Roal, Linda M	Bloomington	Minnesota	5/21/2024	3G	Reinstated
Robertson, Spence	Hickory	North Carolina	8/24/2024	9B	
Robison, Lisa A.	Wellsburg	Iowa	6/8/2024	5F	
Robson, Nichole J.	Dubuque	Iowa	2/26/2024	5F	
Rockwood, David H	Clarksburg	West Virginia	8/3/2024	8H	Reinstated
Rode, Katie	Comfort	Texas	5/20/2023	4E	
Rodenberg, Dennis E.	Mount Vernon	Iowa	1/8/2022	5D	
Rodger, Brenda	Hays	Kansas	9/23/2023	4B	
Rogers, Rex N.	Tekamah	Nebraska	3/20/2023	4A	
Rohde, Nicholas J.	Valley City	North Dakota	5/25/2024	3B	
Rojas Martinez, David	Minneapolis	Minnesota	10/7/2023	3G	
Romo, Margarita	Dade City	Florida	6/15/2024	9E	
Rosa Fuentes, Eddie A.	Chicago	Illinois	10/29/2023	5A	
Rossler, Matthew W. G.	Decorah	Iowa	10/14/2023	5F	
Roth, Stephanie K.	Shoemakersville	Pennsylvania	2/18/2024	7E	
Roth, Tauna M.	Fremont	Wisconsin	2/11/2023	5I	
Rothgeb, Douglas A.	Council Bluffs	Iowa	10/5/2024	5E	
Rothschild, Randolph A.	Vilas	North Carolina	12/18/2022	9B	
Ruble, Edward T.	Battle Creek	Michigan	10/14/2022	6B	
Ruen, Michelle A.	Nisswa	Minnesota	8/28/2022	3E	
Rundman, Jonathan N.	Prior Lake	Minnesota	8/14/2022	3G	

Ruppel-Doan, Eileen A.	Media	Pennsylvania	1/28/2023	7F	
Rush, Scott W.	New Brunswick	New Jersey	4/20/2024	7A	
Sadowy, Kayla J.	Broomall	Pennsylvania	6/25/2022	7F	
Saenger-Heyl, Kurt M.	Centerbrook	Connecticut	9/2/2023	7B	
Saenz, Alicia	Chula Vista	California	6/10/2023	2C	
Salminen, Melissa A.	Marquette	Michigan	10/28/2023	5G	
Salvador, Jose F., Sr.	Irving	Texas	6/4/2023	4D	
San Diego, Rachel	Renton	Washington	3/8/2024	1B	
Sanders, Brian K.	Wilmington	Delaware	4/6/2024	8F	
Schaefer, Anne L.	Elk River	Minnesota	9/1/2022	3G	
Schaefer, Gina R.	Conover	North Carolina	10/12/2024	9B	
Schaeffer, Dawn P.	Charlotte	North Carolina	11/26/2023	9B	
Schenk, Ole A.	Oak Park	Illinois	2/18/2023	5A	
Schneider, Shawn M.	Galion	Ohio	10/14/2023	6D	
Scholl, Timothy	Elyria	Ohio	2/6/2022	6E	
Schoob, Nicholas D.	Valdez	Alaska	2/26/2023	1A	
Schrader, Glenn	Tucson	Arizona	10/22/2023	2D	
Schramm, Tania L.	Adel	Iowa	8/14/2022	5D	
Schulte, Michael J.	Atlanta	Georgia	7/15/2023	9D	
Schultz, Christina K.	Saginaw	Michigan	6/17/2023	6B	
Schultz, Daryl L.	Castalia	Iowa	9/25/2022	5F	
Schurz, Maeve E.	Feasterville Trevose	Pennsylvania	12/10/2022	7F	
Schwantes, Karoline F.	Wausau	Wisconsin	8/3/2022	5I	
Scott, Corey H.	Garretson	South Dakota	1/8/2022	3C	
Scott, Susan E.	Bendersville	Pennsylvania	8/20/2022	8D	
Sergeon, Justina Q.	Laurel	Maryland	10/29/2023	8F	
Shade, Ann M.	Sellersville	Pennsylvania	5/11/2024	7F	
Shimon, Daniel J.	New Richmond	Wisconsin	5/20/2023	5H	
Shingledecker, Charles P.	Hendricks	Minnesota	7/9/2022	3F	
Shingledecker, Sara J.	Westbrook	Minnesota	1/21/2024	3F	
Short, Jackie L.	Grand Meadow	Minnesota	8/14/2022	3I	
Shumaker, Stephani J.	Boulder	Colorado	5/13/2022	2E	
Shurson, Lucas J.	Caldwell	Idaho	9/18/2022	1D	
Sianipar, Esther K.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	11/18/2023	3G	
Siburg, Tamara D.	Clinton	Iowa	9/9/2022	5D	
Sieg, Alana S.	Carthage	Illinois	8/17/2024	5C	
Sieg, Micah E.	Carthage	Illinois	8/31/2024	5C	
Simmelink, Lisa M.	Hutchinson	Kansas	10/5/2024	4B	
Skorburg, Trevor J.	Buffalo	Minnesota	12/9/2023	3G	
Slepecki, Stephen P.	Zelienople	Pennsylvania	10/8/2023	8B	
Small, Robin K.	Bowling Green	Ohio	9/10/2022	6D	
Smart, Frank E.	Takoma Park	Maryland	2/4/2023	8G	Received from African Methodist Episcopal Church
Smith, Amy R. T.	Zieglerville	Pennsylvania	2/25/2023	7F	
Smithies, John	Newport	Oregon	4/29/2023	1E	
Sonessa, Wondimu	Lino Lakes	Minnesota	9/10/2023	3G	
Song, Kara H.	Allendale	New Jersey	8/10/2024	7A	
Sorrwar-Randall, Naomi S.	Barneveld	New York	4/14/2022	7D	Reinstated
Sosinski, Jennifer K.	Antigo	Wisconsin	4/29/2023	5I	
Stall, Alexander P., Jr.	Arlington	Virginia	8/27/2022	8G	
Stansbery, Isaiah W.	West Union	Iowa	6/2/2024	5F	
Steinle, Lexy R.	Fargo	North Dakota	10/8/2022	3B	
Stephens, Lisa M.	Poughkeepsie	New York	1/28/2023	7C	
Stevensen, Grant M.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	11/8/2023	3G	Reinstated
Stewart, Teresa	Hudson	Florida	6/26/2022	9E	

Stiles, Carrie J.	Lindstrom	Minnesota	8/25/2023	3H	
Stolba, Emily W.	Johnston	South Carolina	11/23/2024	9C	
Stone, Jordan R.	Overland Park	Kansas	9/30/2023	4B	
Stonebraker, Dana M.	Lagrange	Indiana	10/7/2022	6C	
Storlie, Vanessa L.	York	Pennsylvania	12/3/2023	8D	
Strackbein, John P	Lexington	Nebraska	2/5/2022	4A	
Strand, William F.	Prosperity	South Carolina	7/10/2023	9C	
Strike, Logan M.	Grants Pass	Oregon	4/24/2022	1E	
Stringer, Philip D	Madison	North Carolina	12/11/2022	9B	Reinstated
Suknaic, Cecilia L.	Spicewood	Texas	10/1/2023	4E	
Summers, Jaren D.	Tipp City	Ohio	8/24/2024	6F	
Swanson, John E.	Mahtomedi	Minnesota	4/24/2022	3H	
Swanson, Luke M. C.	Gilbert	South Carolina	6/18/2023	9C	
Swanson, Rebekah V.	Middletown	New York	3/15/2023	7C	Transferred from ELCIC
Swanson, Stefan J.	St Louis Park	Minnesota	8/19/2023	3G	
Swindall, Sarah E.	Naperville	Illinois	5/8/2022	5A	
Tarkka, Susan M.	Kansas City	Missouri	10/22/2022	4B	
Taylor, Christine V.	Jackson	Mississippi	10/27/2023	9D	
Taylor, Isaac G.	Brandon	Mississippi	10/27/2023	9D	
Tessitore, Breanna L.	Palmyra	New Jersey	5/20/2023	7A	
Thomas, Jason C.	Katy	Texas	12/4/2022	4F	
Thompson, Andrew J.	Pepin	Wisconsin	5/18/2024	5H	
Thompson, Andrew R.	Fairborn	Ohio	8/20/2023	6F	
Thompson, Kathryn S.	La Crosse	Wisconsin	11/23/2024	5L	
Thornton, Jacqueline E.	Larned	Kansas	10/15/2022	4B	
Tomlanovich, Katy D.	Oconto Falls	Wisconsin	7/8/2023	5I	
Toney, Sarah E.	East Wenatchee	Washington	2/24/2024	1D	
Topinka, Jeffrey S.	Charlotte	North Carolina	1/15/2023	9B	
Toulson, Hillary J.	Amery	Wisconsin	1/14/2023	5H	
Trivedi, Aneel	Park Ridge	Illinois	11/13/2022	5A	
True, Kerri L.	Bradenton	Florida	8/12/2023	9E	
Tyler, Judi A.	Phoenix	Arizona	1/21/2024	2D	
Ulrich, Bethany R.	Chicago	Illinois	5/7/2022	5A	
Ungs, Alisha	Melbourne	Florida	8/6/2023	9E	
Urban, Daphne M.	Blackduck	Minnesota	1/8/2022	3D	
Van Vliet-Snyder, Amanda D.	Nome	Alaska	12/4/2022	1A	
Vanden Heuvel, Sawyer J.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	10/27/2023	3C	
Vander Wal, Joel E.	Naperville	Illinois	6/27/2024	5B	Received from Reformed Church in America
Vanosdol, Kathryn L.	Indianapolis	Indiana	6/3/2023	6C	
Varpness, Mollie F.	Prior Lake	Minnesota	5/11/2024	3G	
Vasquez, Julio, Sr.	Eagle Pass	Texas	3/11/2023	4E	
Vesco, Melissa M.	Anchorage	Alaska	2/25/2022	1A	
Vigesaa, Amy L.	Bayport	Minnesota	9/9/2023	3H	
Volkmann, Daniel J.	Phoenix	Arizona	9/13/2024	2D	
Wadley, Sara G.	Columbus	Ohio	3/12/2022	6F	
Wagner, Katie E.	Lake Nebagamon	Wisconsin	5/21/2023	5H	
Walker, Morgan M.	Wadsworth	Ohio	9/17/2023	6E	
Walker, Taylor J.	Spring City	Pennsylvania	7/27/2024	7F	
Walker-Clark, Lea B.	Austin	Texas	3/20/2022	4E	
Walls, Amy M.	Box Elder	Montana	9/21/2024	1F	
Waring, Jasmine K.	Fullerton	California	12/17/2022	2C	
Washington, Dianne E.	Lompoc	California	2/18/2023	2B	
Weatherford, Keith R.	Helena	Montana	12/10/2022	1F	

Weichart, Daniel P.	Granbury	Texas	12/10/2022	4D	
Weltzin, Dayna L.	Clear Lake	South Dakota	7/23/2022	3C	
Wendt, Jon L	Wabasso	Minnesota	3/12/2022	3F	
Westaby, Maggie A.	Wausau	Wisconsin	6/28/2022	5I	
West-Estell, Rebecca L.	Toledo	Ohio	9/25/2022	6D	
Whately, Bridget A.	Sparta	Michigan	8/24/2024	6B	
White, Matthew J.	Austin	Minnesota	11/2/2024	3I	
Whitney, Kathryn A	Stuttgart	Kansas	1/28/2023	4B	Reinstated
Willey, Paul S.	Elgin	Illinois	4/30/2023	5A	
Williams, Anne H.	Vinton	Iowa	10/15/2022	5D	
Williams, Jason L.	Chicago	Illinois	8/26/2023	5A	
Williamson, Robert A.	Sacramento	California	11/23/2024	2A	
Willis, Michael C.	Saint Charles	Illinois	7/20/2022	5A	
Wills, Molly B.	Lester Prairie	Minnesota	1/7/2024	3F	
Witt, Jamie A. B.	Douglasville	Georgia	7/8/2023	9D	
Wolfe, Jeremy J.	Farmersburg	Iowa	7/28/2024	5F	
Wuerffel, Kristin N.	White Plains	New York	1/28/2023	7C	
Wyatt, Marty L.	Roseville	Minnesota	3/26/2022	3H	
Wyman, Joshua J.	Hardin	Montana	1/16/2022	1F	
Yarkpazuo, Varney X., Sr.	Columbus	Ohio	5/31/2022	6F	Received from Lutheran Church of Liberia
Yerion-Keck, Heather R.	Two Rivers	Wisconsin	11/4/2022	5I	
Yero, Carmelita A.	Flat Rock	Michigan	5/6/2023	6A	
Yesenko, Michael L.	Harrisburg	Pennsylvania	10/29/2022	8D	
Zender, Sarah	Luverne	Minnesota	12/9/2023	3F	
Zgheib, Charbel	Sacramento	California	5/6/2023	2A	
Zima, Jennifer E	Burlington	North Carolina	6/29/2024	9B	Reinstated
Zimmerman, Gerald E.	Olean	New York	7/8/2023	7D	

Appendix E
Removals from the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Name	City	State/Country	Date	Synod
Adams, Scott L.	Kingston	New York	3/22/2022	7C
Antonio, Melvin Q.	Mico	Texas	11/15/2022	4E
Arroyave, Jhon J.	Katy	Texas	11/12/2022	4F
Ballan, Anna L.	Helsingborg	Sweden	8/18/2023	4B
Ballenger, Brett W.	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	5/15/2023	7A
Bancroft, Leo C.	Portland	Oregon	10/20/2022	1E
Beatty, Mark S.	Marietta	Georgia	9/29/2024	9D
Bekedam, Mahlon J.	Burnsville	Minnesota	7/14/2024	3F
Blank, David M.	Rockford	Michigan	11/1/2023	6B
Boehnke-Becker, Caroline A.	Cumming	Iowa	10/31/2024	5D
Bohls, Kent L.	Bastrop	Texas	4/30/2024	4E
Bost, John P.	Livermore	California	11/20/2024	2A
Brauner, Steven A.	Cypress	Texas	8/17/2023	4D
Brechler, Kristen M.	Woodbury	Minnesota	10/27/2023	3G
Brown, David L.	Allentown	Pennsylvania	10/28/2023	7E
Brown, R. Michael	Fitchburg	Wisconsin	10/10/2023	5K
Brueckner, Timothy M.	Gold Beach	Oregon	8/5/2024	1E
Burke-Romarheim, Kari L.	Seim	Norway	9/15/2024	5H
Buzzard, Paul E.	Orwigsburg	Pennsylvania	1/15/2022	7E
Castañeda Carrera, Joseph A.	North Hollywood	California	5/18/2024	2B
Charlton, David A.	Niceville	Florida	4/16/2023	9E
Christensen, Amanda K.	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	12/20/2023	5J
Chutimapongrat, Pongtep P., Sr.	Forest Park	Illinois	11/1/2023	5A
Clark, Sarah C.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	1/18/2022	3H
Collins, Nicholas J.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	2/28/2022	3C
Connolly, Adam W.	Chanhassen	Minnesota	8/18/2023	5C
Cordle, Ryan	Lafayette	Ohio	9/21/2024	6D
Cotner, Beverly D.	Turbotville	Pennsylvania	7/1/2023	8E
Counts, Steven B.	Chapin	South Carolina	9/13/2023	9C
Curriel, Marco A.	Willmar	Minnesota	9/1/2023	3F
Cutter, Lester H., Jr.	Gilbert	South Carolina	4/4/2022	9C
Daiker, Joseph J.	Nevada	Iowa	4/14/2024	5G
Dalzell, David C.	Kittery	Maine	3/28/2023	7B
Diaz, Filemon	San Jose	California	6/4/2023	2A
Dietzler, Stephen W.	Combined Locks	Wisconsin	1/16/2024	5I
Dohrmann, Kristine M.	Davenport	Iowa	5/31/2023	5D
Donnelly, Scott F.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	9/1/2022	3H
Dougherty, Stacie E.	Santa Fe	New Mexico	4/17/2023	2E
Duncan, Leonard A., Jr.	Portland	Oregon	12/23/2022	1C
Dunham, James A.	Miami Springs	Florida	7/15/2024	9E
Eberhardt, Rodney L.	Cumming	Georgia	5/25/2022	9D
Ettlemyer, Gary V.	Belvidere	New Jersey	7/31/2022	7A
Evans, Carl E.	Menasha	Wisconsin	10/25/2023	5I
Faltin, Natalie M.	Great Falls	Montana	3/14/2024	1F
Fleck, Tara L.	Proctor	Vermont	10/2/2024	9B
Flesher, Nels B.	Poulsbo	Washington	6/25/2022	1C
Forni, Keith L.	Joliet	Illinois	5/8/2023	5B
Fricke, Jeffrey R.	Cortland	Illinois	8/16/2022	5I
Genck Morton, Tasha K.	Beeston Nottingham	United Kingdom	6/15/2023	8D
Gerjets, Travis S.	Minot	North Dakota	8/31/2023	3A
Glod, Deborah A.	Horsham	Pennsylvania	8/1/2023	7F
Godshall-Miller, Amy J.	Du Bois	Pennsylvania	1/22/2023	8C
Gordon, Wendi C.	Cypress	Texas	1/18/2024	4E

Graul, Douglas E.	Irmo	South Carolina	12/5/2023	9C
Griep, Allen K.	Tonawanda	New York	3/23/2023	7D
Gronberg, Karl A E	Austin	Texas	4/30/2024	4E
Gruenstern, William P.	Van Dyne	Wisconsin	6/4/2024	5I
Gullickson, Erin L.	Benedict	North Dakota	7/11/2023	3A
Hall, Natalie L.	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	10/4/2022	8B
Hanson, Craig H.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	1/1/2024	3H
Hanson, Dana E.	Columbia	Tennessee	6/26/2022	2B
Hatcher, Edgar W.	Chesterfield	Missouri	1/26/2023	4B
Heller, W. Ralph, Jr.	Chesapeake Beach	Maryland	7/12/2023	8G
Helsing, Dana M.	Genesee	Idaho	5/17/2022	1D
Henderson, Thomas L.	Berea	Ohio	3/15/2024	6E
Hermanson, Andrew L.	Grimes	Iowa	10/31/2024	5D
Herren, Noah O.	Greenville	South Carolina	5/9/2024	9D
Hill, Ian A.	State College	Pennsylvania	3/21/2022	7A
Holland, Toby R.	Johnstown	Pennsylvania	12/6/2022	8C
Holst, Heidi R.	Gaffney	South Carolina	8/21/2023	6E
Housholder, Daniel E.	Ames	Iowa	10/31/2024	5D
Housholder, Michael J.	West Des Moines	Iowa	10/31/2024	5D
Hughes, Michael William	Perrysburg	Ohio	2/18/2024	6D
Huseby, Nicholas	Minneapolis	Minnesota	8/16/2022	3F
Hutson, Travis K.	Urbandale	Iowa	10/31/2024	5D
Jackson, Emmanuel B.	Katy	Texas	3/30/2023	4F
Jahn, Stephen A.	Wayzata	Minnesota	11/22/2023	2A
Jenkins, Jonathan L.	Marietta	Pennsylvania	4/15/2023	8D
Jerke, Larry L.	Mitchell	South Dakota	3/10/2023	3C
Johns, Danette E.	Omaha	Nebraska	2/15/2022	4A
Johnson, Jeremy M.	West Des Moines	Iowa	10/31/2024	5D
Johnson, Mark D	State College	Pennsylvania	2/1/2022	7A
Johnson, Timothy A.	Burnet	Texas	4/29/2024	4E
Jurich, Israel S.	Coos Bay	Oregon	1/6/2024	1E
Kastner, Richard M.	Richmond	Texas	1/1/2023	4F
Keefer, Edward C., Jr.	Dover	Pennsylvania	3/25/2022	8B
Kelly, Paul H.	Cole Camp	Missouri	4/27/2022	4B
Kieckhafer, Tina T.	Sheboygan	Wisconsin	7/22/2023	5J
Kline, Chad	Franklin	Wisconsin	4/11/2023	5J
Klingensmith, Shelly G.	Great Bend	Kansas	1/1/2023	4B
Knutson, Leslie B.	Granite Falls	Minnesota	8/3/2024	3F
Koutsopoulos, Gary G.	Snohomish	Washington	8/28/2023	1B
Kuempel, Kristen E M	Richland	Washington	9/9/2024	1D
Kumissa, Samuel S.	Cincinnati	Ohio	8/14/2024	2C
Kwiecien, Stanley D.	Moorhead	Minnesota	4/1/2023	3B
Lampson, Kristina M.	Sunnyvale	Texas	6/14/2024	4D
Lawson, Jacquelin L.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	3/31/2023	3G
Lengel, Michael W.	Harrisburg	Pennsylvania	4/1/2023	7B
Lichtenberg, Melanie J.	Buffalo	Minnesota	11/27/2024	3G
Lillejord, Hans James	Manor	Texas	11/25/2024	4E
Longworth, John M.	Rutland	Vermont	8/16/2024	7B
Loy, Kelly L.	Boise	Idaho	3/14/2024	1D
Luong, Nathan V. A.	Redmond	Washington	6/2/2022	3I
Manz, Matthew L.	Humboldt	Iowa	9/1/2023	5E
Martin, Stephen W.	Marana	Arizona	7/1/2022	2D
Mason, Benjamin M.	West Des Moines	Iowa	10/31/2024	5D
Mattson, Ari D.	Waukesha	Wisconsin	4/23/2024	5J
McCarthy, Stephanie Jean	Gig Harbor	Washington	6/1/2022	1C
McCay, Alvin D., Sr.	Reynoldsburg	Ohio	9/7/2024	6F
McDivitt, Jay M.	Waukesha	Wisconsin	2/1/2022	5J

McInnis, Joseph E.	Eugene	Oregon	7/17/2023	1E
McLaughlin, Patrick J.	Tuckasegee	North Carolina	1/19/2022	4F
McNamara, Kevin H.	Gettysburg	Pennsylvania	1/31/2024	8C
McQuillan, Emily A. P.	Alton	Illinois	5/2/2023	4B
Megill-Cobbler, Thelma I.	South Bend	Indiana	9/14/2023	6C
Meier, Christian B.	Le Mars	Iowa	1/31/2022	5E
Meier, Corey L.	Mesa	Arizona	2/4/2023	2D
Merrell, Judson F.	Lexington	South Carolina	12/31/2022	9C
Merritt, Lucas C.	Akron	Ohio	5/1/2022	6E
Metz, Tony Alan	Quincy	Illinois	1/21/2023	5C
Meyer, Dennis H.	La Porte	Indiana	5/2/2022	6C
Miller, John D.	Du Bois	Pennsylvania	1/22/2023	8C
Moreno, Adam B.	San Francisco	California	9/30/2024	5J
Nairn, Roland E., III	Keyser	West Virginia	9/7/2024	8H
Nerheim, Steven J.	Minnetrista	Minnesota	12/1/2023	3G
Niemi, Jason R.	Mariposa	California	7/5/2023	2A
Ninke, Rebecca M.	Cottage Grove	Wisconsin	5/3/2024	5K
Nygard, Mark W.	Elgin	Texas	11/15/2022	4E
Oaks, Jennifer M.	Johnstown	Pennsylvania	9/30/2024	7G
O'Berg, Michael C.	Fargo	North Dakota	2/21/2022	3B
O'Donnell, Pamela J.	Ormond Beach	Florida	1/13/2022	9E
Payne, Stacy A.	Sanford	North Carolina	5/21/2024	2E
Payne, Todd A.	Sanford	North Carolina	5/21/2024	2E
Perkins, Karen D S	Juneau	Alaska	9/21/2024	1A
Peterson, Scott E.	Redwood Falls	Minnesota	6/21/2024	9D
Pezzi, Ginamarie L.	Beaverton	Oregon	4/14/2023	1E
Phelps, Daniel C.	La Crescent	Minnesota	3/16/2023	7F
Pilman, Sonja	Piedmont	South Dakota	4/17/2023	3C
Pratt, Heather L.	Hagerstown	Maryland	1/15/2023	4C
Propst, J. Austin	Asheville	North Carolina	10/25/2023	9A
Prosser-Gebhardt, Meggan J.	Prairie Village	Kansas	2/17/2022	4B
Quaid, Patrick K.	Urbandale	Iowa	10/31/2024	5D
Rainis, Robert M.	Deer Park	New York	9/24/2022	7C
Raymer, Richard R.	Beloit	Kansas	8/28/2023	4B
Reinsburrow, Joshua Lee	Turbotville	Pennsylvania	1/31/2022	8E
Reynolds, Timothy G.	Defiance	Ohio	8/15/2022	6D
Rhoades, Thomas L.	Baton Rouge	Louisiana	3/14/2024	4F
Rios Concepcion, Sharon M.	Dorado	Puerto Rico	7/31/2024	9F
Robbins, Pollyana P	La Vergne	Tennessee	2/4/2022	4D
Robison, Kit Clifford	Miami Beach	Florida	8/15/2022	9E
Rodriguez, Miguel A.	Phoenix	Arizona	5/8/2023	2D
Rohrer, Megan M.	San Francisco	California	6/21/2023	2A
Rosenholtz, Cathy E.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	3/8/2022	8G
Rueckert, Michael V.	Champlin	Minnesota	9/1/2023	3G
Schrimpf, Jay M.	Baldwin	Michigan	3/21/2024	6B
Schulz, Matthew J. T.	Montreal-Ouest	Canada	7/2/2023	7B
Searl, Scott H.	Spring Park	Minnesota	7/1/2022	3G
Sherman, Michael R., Jr.	Simpsonville	South Carolina	3/15/2024	9C
Shouse, Richard H.	Tacoma	Washington	3/21/2023	1C
Simon, Andrew D.	Barrington	Rhode Island	8/5/2024	7B
Smith, Kevan F.	Lacey	Washington	8/21/2024	3B
Smith, Todd W.	Townsend	Wisconsin	8/8/2023	5J
Snyder, Lyle A.	Marshall	Minnesota	11/26/2024	3F
Speiser, Peter G.	Emerson	Nebraska	11/13/2023	4A
Spicer, Robert M.	Bowling Green	Ohio	2/9/2023	6D
Spies, Daniel R.	Woodbury	Minnesota	9/23/2023	5H
Stabe, Matthew C.	Berea	Ohio	7/15/2023	8B

Starr, Stephen P.	Webster Groves	Missouri	10/8/2022	4B
Steele-Steeber, Jeffrey B.	Avon Lake	Ohio	9/4/2023	6E
Steffenson, David L.	Rochester	Minnesota	1/25/2022	1C
Stephens, Anthony H. T.	Poughkeepsie	New York	4/22/2023	7C
Stout, Rachel L.	Parkers Prairie	Minnesota	2/28/2023	3D
Strickland, Donald R.	Alvarado	Texas	1/27/2022	4D
Swanson, Javen D.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	2/1/2023	3H
Sweet, Stephen E.	Jackson	New Jersey	9/9/2024	7A
Swenson, Jana K.	Bloomington	Minnesota	9/16/2023	3D
Swenson, Jonathan P.	Bloomington	Minnesota	9/16/2023	3D
Telyea, John B.	Camas	Washington	8/22/2022	1D
Thasiah, Victor	Thousand Oaks	California	4/14/2022	2B
Thien, Bridget C.	Georgetown	Texas	7/4/2024	4E
Thoren, Amy C.	Champaign	Illinois	1/1/2022	5C
Thorson, Jay R	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	7/21/2022	5J
Tillberg, Julie M.	Mayville	North Dakota	6/30/2023	3B
Tizazu, Melaku M	Kansas City	Missouri	7/1/2023	4B
Van Der Duim, Dirk	Youngstown	Ohio	1/10/2024	6E
van Wakeren, Kari Casper	Alexandria	Minnesota	8/18/2023	3D
Vickstrom, Britt C.	Davenport	Iowa	2/1/2024	5D
Voelker, Eric J.	Dallas Center	Iowa	9/15/2022	5D
Webb, Richard M.	West Des Moines	Iowa	10/31/2024	5D
Weber, Robert E.	Boerne	Texas	9/16/2024	7C
Weber, Terrence L.	Land O Lakes	Florida	1/25/2022	7C
Wegner, David William	Forest Park	Illinois	1/19/2023	5A
Weist, Carol A.	Darrouzett	Texas	8/4/2024	4C
Welshonse, Jay E.	Mass City	Michigan	6/15/2023	5G
Wenhold, Gregory R.	Queen Creek	Arizona	10/26/2024	5A
Wenrich, Alan C.	Mechanicsburg	Pennsylvania	10/24/2023	8D
Whitener, C. Phillip	Melbourne	Florida	3/28/2023	9E
Williams, Gerald A.	Frederiksted	Virgin Islands	3/11/2023	9F
Wilson, James A.	Plymouth	Wisconsin	9/7/2023	5I
Wind, Laura M.	Winston Salem	North Carolina	11/17/2023	9B
Winter, Jeremy H.	Boyden	Iowa	6/12/2023	5E
Witt, Jared F.	New Albany	Ohio	10/1/2024	9E
Woolly, D. Rhodes	Salisbury	North Carolina	9/14/2022	9B
Zelie, Matthew D.	Everett	Washington	5/2/2024	1B
Zell, Jeffrey S.	South Bend	Indiana	4/13/2022	6C

Appendix F
Additions to the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service

Name	City	State	Date	Synod	Type of addition other than ordination
Allen, Kari A.	Chippewa Falls	Wisconsin	3/24/2023	5H	
Augustin, Ann J.	Toledo	Ohio	2/18/2024	6D	
Bakken, Macy K.	Cape Coral	Florida	9/24/2023	9E	
Barker, Jennifer J.	San Diego	California	9/14/2024	2C	
Beckman, Katharine W.	Providence	Rhode Island	7/29/2023	8F	
Black, Eric V.	Fort Wayne	Indiana	10/26/2024	6C	
Bowman, Stephanie	Manitowoc	Wisconsin	4/13/2024	5I	
Bridges, Sharon M.	Miltona	Minnesota	8/20/2023	3D	
Broam, D'Etta P.	Lexington	South Carolina	9/29/2024	9C	
Carroll, Charissa L.	Tacoma	Washington	12/11/2022	1C	
Corson, Donald L.	Port Angeles	Washington	7/9/2023	1C	
Davis, Jill D.	Rockford	Minnesota	1/16/2022	3F	
De Jong, Brooke M.	Winston Salem	North Carolina	1/11/2023	9B	
Diana, Lisa A.	San Antonio	Texas	6/25/2022	4E	
Diehm, Gavin R.	Sharonville	Ohio	10/22/2023	6F	
Dollarhide, Jj	San Francisco	California	8/13/2022	2A	
Dornfeld, Erika D.	Chicago	Illinois	11/10/2024	5A	
Eggleston, Lewis J.	Alexandria	Virginia	8/8/2022	8G	
Elles, Aimee L.	Pearland	Texas	4/28/2023	4F	
Elliott, Leanne N.	Mechanicsburg	Pennsylvania	10/29/2022	8D	
Elsenbroek, Jennifer J.	Marquette	Michigan	6/18/2023	5G	
Engel, Stephanie M.	Ferryville	Wisconsin	7/1/2023	5L	
Erie, Sara	Chicago	Illinois	4/30/2023	5A	
Fleming, Hannah M. C.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	7/30/2022	3C	
Haitz, Eric N.	Storm Lake	Iowa	2/26/2023	5E	
Hamren, Dustin T.	Edmonds	Washington	4/30/2022	1B	
Handel-Johnson, Brenda L.	Saint Peter	Minnesota	8/20/2022	3F	
Hernandez, Annette	Elk Grove Village	Illinois	4/30/2023	5A	
Hickey, Joanne	Wichita	Kansas	10/21/2023	4B	
Jensen Kerr, India R.	Beaverton	Oregon	6/25/2023	1E	
Jones, Elizabeth A.	Houston	Texas	5/26/2024	4F	
Katamay, Karen	Des Plaines	Illinois	8/19/2022	5A	
Kutzer, Angela D.	Bismarck	North Dakota	3/16/2024	3A	
Larkin, Natalie N.	Camarillo	California	8/27/2023	2B	
Larsen, Andrew W.	Spanaway	Washington	10/15/2023	1C	
Lindberg, Katherine C.	N Saint Paul	Minnesota	11/5/2023	3H	
Lindquist, Amanda K.	Anchorage	Alaska	4/23/2023	1A	
Lisi, Kellie L.	Dubuque	Iowa	10/9/2022	2E	
Mambu, Amy M. S.	Hanover	Pennsylvania	12/3/2023	8D	
McCarty, Jessica M. H.	Verona	Wisconsin	12/9/2023	5K	
Montoya, Lidixe A.	Mondovi	Wisconsin	7/16/2022	5H	
Noonan, Jessica	Katy	Texas	8/19/2023	4F	
Norberg, Jennifer E.	Onalaska	Wisconsin	11/9/2024	5L	
Norton, Karen M.	Vancouver	Washington	6/12/2022	1C	
O'Brien, Kimberly R.	Okemos	Michigan	7/27/2024	6A	
Olaphson, Savannah S.	Eden Prairie	Minnesota	2/19/2023	3G	
Orner, Emily S.	Baltimore	Maryland	2/19/2022	8F	
Painter, Brandi J.	Galveston	Texas	10/12/2024	4F	
Peregrine, Peter N.	Appleton	Wisconsin	10/17/2024	5I	
Perry, Brittany	Concord	North Carolina	7/5/2024	9B	
Perwo, George E.	Manasquan	New Jersey	4/20/2024	7A	
Peterson, Kayla	Hilliard	Ohio	5/15/2022	6D	

Prinzivalli, Alyssa K.	Fairfax	Virginia	7/17/2022	8G	
Pyskaty, Michelle L.	Rock Falls	Illinois	12/8/2024	5B	
Pysz, Daneen R.	Dana Point	California	5/5/2024	2C	
Roop, Nicole P.	Littlestown	Pennsylvania	10/8/2022	8F	
Sanchez, L. Rose	Elma	Washington	4/9/2022	1C	
Sanders, Mary J.	Oakland	Maryland	6/3/2023	8H	
Schilling, Jackie K.	Nashua	Iowa	5/18/2024	5F	
Schmuck, Amy C.	Los Alamos	New Mexico	2/24/2024	2E	
Schultz, Jason	Tinley Park	Illinois	2/11/2024	5A	
Smrt, Kayla E.	Oak Park	Illinois	8/17/2024	5A	
Soderberg, Kyle	St Anthony	Minnesota	3/19/2023	3G	
Spaccarotelli, Carla J.	Olympia	Washington	11/4/2023	1C	
Swagler, Sarah A.	Oak Park	Illinois	10/29/2023	5A	
Talley, Dawn L.	Lake Ariel	Pennsylvania	5/1/2022	7E	
Talluri, Shirley	Princeton	New Jersey	8/10/2024	7A	
Uppendahl-Alba, Debra K.	Cherry Hills Village	Colorado	10/15/2023	2E	
Valentine-Derrer, Ashley J.	Fishers	Indiana	7/31/2024	6C	Received from The United Methodist Church
Watson, Jennifer C.	Milton	Wisconsin	4/27/2024	5K	
Wright, Diana R.	Moorhead	Minnesota	11/3/2024	3D	
Zimmerle, Jessica A.	Seattle	Washington	10/22/2022	1B	

Appendix G
Removals from the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service

Name	City	State	Date	Synod
Beckman-Yetzer, Laurie L.	Bloomington	Minnesota	7/1/2022	3G
Bunger, Jessica R.	Fort Myers	Florida	7/1/2023	9E
Demaree, Hannah E.	Indianapolis	Indiana	10/9/2022	6D
Frederick, Richard A.	Elberta	Alabama	10/3/2023	8B
Goldhammer, Jill M.	Peoria	Illinois	10/6/2023	5C
Hiltner, Harry Erwin	Wilmington	Delaware	4/19/2023	8F
Langdon, Andy S.	Ellisville	Missouri	4/23/2022	5D
Larsen, Christine M.	Bryan	Texas	2/1/2024	4F
Mankivsky, Laura L.	Longmont	Colorado	12/6/2024	5A
Nelson, Julia E.	Kaleva	Michigan	5/1/2023	6B
Peterson, Debra L.	Saint Cloud	Minnesota	9/28/2023	3F
Reynolds, Mindy L.	Waynesboro	Virginia	11/1/2022	9A
Rigg, Suzanne M.	State College	Pennsylvania	6/1/2022	7F
Smith, Heather R.	Marion	Ohio	8/1/2022	6D
Viegut, Jennifer S.	Panama City	Florida	6/25/2024	2E
Volfa, Julija	Columbus	Ohio	12/7/2022	6F
Wagner, Anna M.	Spokane	Washington	4/17/2024	1D
Whitley, Amanda T.	Greenville	South Carolina	11/5/2024	9C
Wilkens, Nicholas T.	San Antonio	Texas	4/14/2023	4E
Wood Kay, Marla A.	Wadsworth	Ohio	10/31/2024	6E
Wyatt, Heidi M.	Bethel	Minnesota	10/20/2023	3G
Ziebell, Jane	Wausau	Wisconsin	1/22/2024	5I

Appendix H
Necrology 2022–2024
Rostered Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Name	City	State/Country	Death Date	Synod
Ahlstrom, Robert A.	Story City	Iowa	3/18/2023	5D
Alexander, Laurel E.	Carmel	California	11/4/2022	2A
Alexis, Maren R.	Carlisle	Pennsylvania	12/24/2024	8D
Althouse, LaVonne	Lititz	Pennsylvania	12/15/2023	7F
Ames, Carl W.	Northfield	Minnesota	6/28/2024	3I
Amundsen, Rolf F.	Pound	Wisconsin	11/28/2024	5I
Andersen, Carl E.	Perham	Minnesota	2/29/2024	3D
Anderson, Alan W.	Jamestown	New York	3/25/2023	7D
Anderson, Bruce E.	Moorhead	Minnesota	4/15/2022	3D
Anderson, Charles K.	Savage	Minnesota	8/26/2023	3G
Anderson, Christopher D.	Norton Shores	Michigan	5/13/2024	7G
Anderson, David A.	Lakeville	Minnesota	8/15/2024	5F
Anderson, Dean W.	Silver Spring	Maryland	4/8/2023	8G
Anderson, E. Charles	Edina	Minnesota	12/23/2022	3G
Anderson, Glenn M.	Park Rapids	Minnesota	12/20/2023	3D
Anderson, Gloria J.	Ramsey	Minnesota	7/25/2022	3F
Anderson, J. Roger	Thousand Oaks	California	12/24/2023	2B
Anderson, John E.	Spokane Valley	Washington	3/20/2022	1D
Anderson, Lowell L.	Owatonna	Minnesota	11/29/2022	6C
Anderson, Norman E.	Alexandria	Minnesota	10/8/2022	3B
Anderson, R W	Brookfield	Wisconsin	8/31/2023	5J
Anderson, Ralph D.	Colorado Springs	Colorado	12/14/2024	2E
Anderson, Ramona M.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	5/10/2022	3H
Anderson, Russell H.	Columbia	South Carolina	10/22/2024	9C
Anderson, Scott J.	Canton	Ohio	12/3/2024	6E
Armstrong-Kaukis, Cheryll A.	Port Charlotte	Florida	7/2/2022	9E
Arndt, Charles F.	Luck	Wisconsin	10/10/2024	5H
Arnold, Walter W.	Chelsea	Michigan	1/26/2022	6F
Arpino, Denise M.	Altoona	Pennsylvania	7/3/2023	8C
Ash, Lynn M.	Springdale	Arkansas	3/25/2024	9E
Auman, Frederick P., Jr.	Boca Raton	Florida	2/4/2022	9E
Austin, Benjamin D.	Brookville	Pennsylvania	1/26/2023	8A
Avilés-deJesús, Marie	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	3/17/2023	5J
Aylor, Charles P.	Burlington	Kentucky	11/14/2024	6C
Baacke, Donald C.	Toledo	Ohio	5/22/2024	6D
Bacher, Robert N.	Bluffton	South Carolina	5/23/2022	9C
Bacon, L. Scott	Washington	Illinois	4/24/2024	5C
Baietti, Lawrence T.	Fort Collins	Colorado	7/18/2023	2E
Bailey, James L.	Duluth	Minnesota	1/27/2024	3E
Baker, David E.	Spokane	Washington	7/15/2022	1D
Baker, Jane C.	Newport	Oregon	12/26/2022	1E
Baker, Paul A.	Rochester	Minnesota	11/3/2024	3I
Baker, Phillip R.	Aurora	Colorado	7/17/2024	2E
Bakken, Dean R.	Becker	Minnesota	9/18/2024	3A
Bakken, Norman K.	Roanoke	Virginia	5/19/2023	9A
Balch, David L.	Portland	Oregon	6/30/2024	1E
Bangert, Mark P.	Chicago	Illinois	2/12/2023	5A
Banks, Harold G.	Gardena	California	7/18/2022	2B
Baranek, Paul	Lititz	Pennsylvania	5/9/2023	8D
Barkenquast, James L.	Bucyrus	Ohio	9/20/2024	6D
Barndt, Joseph R.	Royal Oaks	California	8/18/2023	2A
Barnes, Virginia K.	Douglas	Georgia	10/16/2022	9D

Barrix, Devon W.	Lake Tomahawk	Wisconsin	7/21/2024	5G
Bauer, Arthur O F	Pompton Plains	New Jersey	8/20/2023	7A
Bauer, Dale G.	Albuquerque	New Mexico	3/18/2024	2E
Bauer, Donald E.	Salisbury	Maryland	6/21/2023	8F
Bauermeister, Paul J.	Ballwin	Missouri	9/1/2022	4B
Baumbach, Ralph F.	Stoughton	Wisconsin	6/21/2022	5K
Baylor, Kara F.	Kenosha	Wisconsin	5/25/2023	5J
Bean, Kenneth O.	Webster	Massachusetts	8/2/2022	7B
Beck, Donald P.	Honesdale	Pennsylvania	7/31/2022	7E
Beckstrand, Robert G.	Stoughton	Wisconsin	3/26/2022	5K
Beckstrom, David A.	Rochester	Minnesota	9/17/2023	3I
Bedenbaugh, Clyde E.	Pembroke Pines	Florida	5/31/2023	9E
Beener, LaVerne C.	Hinsdale	Illinois	5/31/2023	5D
Behrens, William C.	Louisville	Colorado	1/3/2023	2E
Beissel, Clyde D.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	8/19/2023	3G
Belland, Norman P.	Hudson	Wisconsin	7/19/2022	3H
Beltz, Ronald A., Jr.	Enterprise	Alabama	9/8/2022	6C
Benedict, William P.	Butler	Tennessee	7/5/2024	9D
Bennett, James E.	Aiken	South Carolina	1/21/2023	4E
Bennett, Ronald C.	Bakersfield	California	2/23/2024	2B
Bensch, Eugene W.	Roswell	Georgia	9/23/2022	9D
Bentz, Myrin D.	Dallesport	Washington	6/19/2024	1E
Berg, Robert D.	Eau Claire	Wisconsin	10/19/2023	5H
Bergland, Robert W.	Stewartville	Minnesota	5/4/2023	3I
Bergmark, Glenn B.	Lemont	Illinois	3/13/2024	5A
Bernhardt, David F.	Stewartville	Minnesota	5/23/2023	3I
Bernheisel, Lisa J.	Cincinnati	Ohio	3/5/2023	6F
Berry, Christopher D.	Bellingham	Washington	3/14/2024	1B
Berry, Jack W.	Fremont	Nebraska	5/16/2023	4A
Beutel, LeRoy H.	Fredericksburg	Virginia	4/28/2022	9A
Beyer, L. Rudolph	Amherst	Massachusetts	1/28/2024	7B
Beyerhelm, Carl W.	Iowa City	Iowa	1/19/2022	5D
Bigott, Willfred F.	Kerrville	Texas	3/10/2024	4E
Bigsby, Jon R.	San Antonio	Texas	5/11/2022	4E
Bingea, Robert N.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	1/26/2022	3H
Bishop, Sherman A.	Westlake	Ohio	4/11/2022	6E
Bjork, Elvin E.	Salem	Oregon	5/3/2022	1E
Black, L. Alexander	Mars	Pennsylvania	7/26/2022	8H
Blank, Jeffrey A.	Cedar Falls	Iowa	1/11/2022	5F
Block, Lawrence K.	Black Jack	Missouri	6/29/2024	4B
Bloedow, Willis L.	Appleton	Wisconsin	2/27/2024	5I
Blohm, Robert W., Jr.	Oregon	Ohio	7/31/2022	6D
Blom, Paul J.	Georgetown	Texas	6/5/2023	4F
Blume, Donald E.	Manchester	New Hampshire	3/25/2023	7B
Boda, Robert J.	Le Center	Minnesota	4/14/2022	3I
Bodine, Danny N.	Kennett Square	Pennsylvania	9/7/2023	7F
Bohnhoff, Lee E.	Orfordville	Wisconsin	8/7/2022	5K
Boone, David P.	Utica	Michigan	9/28/2022	6A
Borson, Bernard K.	Port Orchard	Washington	12/21/2023	1C
Bossman, Dennis E.	Brandon	South Dakota	3/10/2022	3C
Boston, Linda E.	Vallejo	California	9/14/2023	2A
Bowen, E. Richard	Girard	Ohio	11/19/2023	6E
Bowker, Charles W.	Franklin	Tennessee	4/7/2024	9D
Boyd, Donald E.	Katy	Texas	2/12/2023	4F
Braaten, Carl E.	Sun City West	Arizona	10/28/2023	2D
Braaten, John M.	Rochester	Minnesota	8/17/2024	3I
Braband, Robert H.	Lombard	Illinois	12/10/2023	5A

Brady, H. Wayne	North Brunswick	New Jersey	8/23/2023	7A
Branch, Kenneth J	Lindsborg	Kansas	4/29/2023	4B
Brandt, Henry N.	Prosperity	South Carolina	9/1/2023	9C
Brathwaite, Rosalind M.	Bronx	New York	1/19/2024	7C
Braun, Robert R.	Schertz	Texas	5/21/2023	4E
Breden, Margareta M.	Hanover	Pennsylvania	2/12/2023	8D
Bremer, Richard D.	Burnet	Texas	8/22/2023	4E
Brndjar, Paul L.	Macungie	Pennsylvania	2/17/2024	7A
Brockmeier, Dean C.	Elk Mound	Wisconsin	12/15/2024	5H
Brunk, Robert K.	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	1/24/2024	8B
Buehner, Alfred R.	Navarre	Florida	8/13/2022	9E
Buenting, Howard N.	Shawano	Wisconsin	1/15/2022	5I
Bullock, William J.	Atchison	Kansas	6/22/2024	4B
Burdick, Raymond C.	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	8/21/2022	7E
Burgie, Richard R.	Westerville	Ohio	9/12/2022	6F
Burkins, C. Roger	Lancaster	Pennsylvania	12/12/2023	8D
Burns, Russell A.	Alburtis	Pennsylvania	1/22/2022	7F
Burrall, Elmer E.	Hot Springs Village	Arkansas	4/30/2023	4C
Busch, H. William	Visalia	California	11/24/2023	2A
Bushkofsky, Dennis L.	Henryville	Pennsylvania	2/2/2023	7E
Caltvedt, Ernest M.	Edina	Minnesota	10/9/2023	5D
Camberg, Lawrence R.	Valencia	Pennsylvania	6/7/2023	8B
Campbell, Carolyn E.	Granbury	Texas	5/27/2023	4D
Campbell, George J.	Overland Park	Kansas	12/28/2023	4B
Carlsen, Aage S.	Fosston	Minnesota	2/26/2022	3D
Carlson, Alan N.	Puyallup	Washington	4/25/2024	1C
Carlson, Harry C.	Rio Linda	California	5/25/2023	2A
Carlson, Martin J.	Framingham	Massachusetts	12/28/2024	8D
Carlson, Reuben L.	Wittenberg	Wisconsin	7/30/2024	5I
Carter, Robert H.	Lima	Ohio	1/15/2022	6F
Chae, Andrew W.	Garden Grove	California	2/4/2023	2B
Chamberlain, Thomas L.	Delray Beach	Florida	4/27/2023	9E
Charles, Charles J.	Wyomissing	Pennsylvania	7/23/2022	7E
Chaveas, Richard W.	Shillington	Pennsylvania	3/19/2023	7E
Chong, Daniel H K	Silver Spring	Maryland	10/18/2022	4B
Christ, James B.	Charlotte	North Carolina	3/31/2022	9B
Christell, Thomas B., Jr.	Springfield	Illinois	4/14/2023	5C
Christensen, David W.	Ellendale	Minnesota	5/29/2023	3D
Christensen, Louise M.	Sidney	Montana	7/4/2023	1F
Christianson, John T.	Lakeville	Minnesota	11/28/2022	3G
Christopherson, G. Neil	Blue Earth	Minnesota	9/6/2024	3I
Christopherson, James E.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	5/26/2024	3C
Chu, Clinton E.	Middletown	Connecticut	1/24/2023	8E
Clark, Gerald W.	Springfield	Ohio	12/27/2022	6A
Claus, Charles W.	Oak Park Hts	Minnesota	3/3/2024	3H
Clefisch, Lewin G.	Detroit Lakes	Minnesota	9/5/2023	3D
Coffman, William R.	Portland	Oregon	10/20/2022	1E
Cole, Wallace B.	Prescott	Arizona	1/16/2023	2D
Collins, Robert S., Jr.	Prescott	Arizona	5/25/2023	2D
Connelly, James R., Jr.	Lexington	South Carolina	4/29/2022	9C
Connor, Richard M., Sr.	Panama City	Florida	7/5/2023	7F
Coon, Robert G.	Greenville	South Carolina	11/18/2022	9C
Corley, G. Baylis	Orangeburg	South Carolina	6/2/2024	9C
Cornett, Ward L., III	Delaware	Ohio	7/2/2023	6F
Corry, Howard D.	Taos	New Mexico	9/9/2024	2E
Cote, David R.	Gardner	Massachusetts	7/23/2024	7B
Cowan, William O.	Dassel	Minnesota	6/6/2022	3F

Cross, Ellen M.	Jacksonville	Florida	9/1/2023	9E
Crout, J. Harry	Columbia	South Carolina	1/9/2023	9C
Cruys, George H.	St Louis Park	Minnesota	2/16/2024	3G
Cunfer, Carl W.	Mansfield	Ohio	11/19/2023	6E
Dahl, George L.	San Antonio	Texas	8/12/2023	4E
Dahlen, Robert W.	Goodridge	Minnesota	4/25/2022	3D
Dale, Leonard A., II	Olathe	Kansas	1/22/2024	4B
Danielson, Donald D.	Aurora	Illinois	11/10/2024	5A
Darge, Ronald R.	West Des Moines	Iowa	2/14/2022	5D
Daugs, Kenneth H.	Kennewick	Washington	2/24/2023	1B
Davis, Harvey P.	Bala Cynwyd	Pennsylvania	4/7/2023	7F
Dawkins, Charles B.	Lexington	South Carolina	4/15/2022	9C
Day, Caldwell N.	Fancy Gap	Virginia	8/19/2024	9C
Deal, Jack D.	North Charleston	South Carolina	5/26/2024	9C
Dean, Marjorie A.	Lansdale	Pennsylvania	12/21/2024	7E
Deist, William E.	Somerset	Pennsylvania	6/23/2022	8C
DeLange, James W	San Francisco	California	8/20/2022	2A
Delp, Lawrence P.	Topton	Pennsylvania	8/30/2022	7E
Denys, Jack A	Somerville	New Jersey	6/26/2022	7A
Derrick, William F.	Burton	Texas	8/18/2024	4F
Deutsch, Daniel E.	Traverse City	Michigan	9/16/2024	6B
Dexheimer, Jeri R.	Corvallis	Oregon	6/20/2022	7D
Dickhart, Daniel A.	Denton	Maryland	8/30/2023	8F
Dickman, Dennis H.	Waverly	Iowa	9/21/2022	5F
Diepenbrock, Linda K.	Inman	Kansas	9/23/2024	4B
Diers, Jerome A.	Franklin	Kentucky	11/5/2023	6C
Dinsmore, John T.	Eugene	Oregon	5/1/2022	1E
Dirks, Paul M.	Decorah	Iowa	9/16/2024	2E
Dittmer, Glenn R.	Mabank	Texas	2/25/2022	4D
Doan, Gilbert E., Jr.	Berlin	New Jersey	1/27/2024	7F
Doeden, Andrea L.	Trinidad	Colorado	9/27/2023	2E
Doerring, Lane	Chaska	Minnesota	10/30/2023	3I
Donfried, Karl P.	Washington	District of Columbia	2/23/2022	7B
Dorau, Ned E.	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	1/23/2024	5J
Dorward, Dallas D.	Burlington	New Jersey	12/1/2023	7A
Dowhower, Richard L.	Mechanicsburg	Pennsylvania	9/5/2024	8D
Dragelin, John E.	Northfield	Minnesota	12/31/2022	7C
Drews, Ruth A.	Springfield	Missouri	5/22/2023	7B
Dufresne, Edward R.	Penobscot	Maine	2/27/2023	7B
Dumpys, Hans G.	Oak Park	Illinois	7/23/2024	5A
Dye, James E.	Indianapolis	Indiana	9/27/2024	6C
Easley, Charles W.	West Columbia	South Carolina	5/27/2022	9C
Eckhardt, Frederick P.	New Windsor	Maryland	6/28/2022	8F
Edwards, Byron W.	Alexandria	Minnesota	9/15/2022	3D
Egdahl, Lauren I.	Northfield	Minnesota	4/19/2022	3I
Ehnen, Marvin L.	Cedar Rapids	Iowa	11/17/2022	5D
Ehrhardt, Walton H.	Mandeville	Louisiana	10/27/2022	4F
Eid, Luthard N.	Port Huron	Michigan	1/2/2022	3D
Eidsness, Gene R.	Brookings	South Dakota	9/12/2023	3C
Eifert, Thomas W.	Fayetteville	Pennsylvania	2/16/2024	8D
Eisele, Gerald C.	Eden Prairie	Minnesota	9/29/2022	3E
Eisenhauer, Joy E.	Fish Creek	Wisconsin	7/20/2023	5I
Elger, Benjamin F.	Westminster	Colorado	7/12/2024	2E
Elliott, Richard L.	Bonita	California	10/13/2022	2C
Emerson, Joel A.	Nashville	Tennessee	7/19/2024	9D
Erat, William G.	Jenkintown	Pennsylvania	11/8/2023	7F
Erickson, Dale A.	Grafton	Wisconsin	12/14/2023	5J

Erickson, John D.	Crawford	Nebraska	8/3/2022	3G
Erickson, Richard L.	Chaska	Minnesota	7/4/2024	3E
Erlander, Daniel W.	Seattle	Washington	8/28/2022	1B
Erno, Kimber D.	Swanton	Vermont	5/5/2022	7B
Ernst, Matthew L.	Ocean Isle Beach	North Carolina	4/21/2023	9B
Esse, Robert E.	Green Valley	Arizona	8/13/2023	5H
Evans, J. Pierce, Jr.	Little Mountain	South Carolina	4/17/2022	9C
Evenson, Leland E.	Big Lake	Minnesota	12/2/2022	3G
Ewen, Bruce T.	Barnegat	New Jersey	6/27/2024	7A
Falk, George K H	San Diego	California	8/12/2022	2C
Fant, P. Daniel	Miamisburg	Ohio	1/1/2024	6F
Faust, Boyd Q.	Houston	Texas	5/23/2022	4F
Faust, Daniel G.	Valley City	North Dakota	5/3/2024	3B
Faust, Frederick H.	Herndon	Pennsylvania	7/9/2023	8E
Fearer, William R.	Greencastle	Pennsylvania	7/8/2022	8F
Featherstone, R	Pickerington	Ohio	11/8/2024	6F
Fensterer, William C.	Fairfield	Connecticut	7/24/2024	7C
Ferkey, Suzanne M.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	7/30/2023	3G
Ferne, Richard C.	Pickerington	Ohio	2/16/2022	6D
Fetter, David E.	Springfield	Virginia	3/1/2022	8C
Fiedler, Fredrick W.	Augusta	Georgia	10/29/2024	6C
Firnhaber, Norbert A.	Austin	Texas	5/28/2024	4E
Fisher, Carl M.	Matthews	North Carolina	11/17/2023	9B
Fisher, Robert C.	Mount Horeb	Wisconsin	6/14/2022	5K
Fisher, Wilbur O.	Moorhead	Minnesota	12/12/2024	3B
Flagstad, Leroy A.	Rapid City	South Dakota	11/25/2022	3C
Floistad, Eugene H.	Staples	Minnesota	10/28/2022	3D
Fluegel, Charles J.	Oshkosh	Wisconsin	5/4/2024	5I
Foerster, Frederick S.	Emmaus	Pennsylvania	12/31/2024	7E
Fogleman, Alfred	Mount Sidney	Virginia	4/11/2023	9A
Fohs, Margo P	Deloit	Iowa	9/19/2022	5F
Foltz, Rodger N.	Albertville	Minnesota	2/3/2022	3G
Fonss, Norman	Lamberton	Minnesota	3/27/2024	3F
Foss, Erika E.	Cook	Minnesota	11/22/2024	3E
Foss, Leslie E.	Longview	Washington	12/16/2022	1C
Fosser, Howard A.	Lakewood	Washington	2/25/2023	1C
Fossum, Donald G.	Puyallup	Washington	7/29/2022	1C
Fossum, Steven A.	Viroqua	Wisconsin	11/29/2023	5L
Foster, Harry Goddard, III	New Braunfels	Texas	12/16/2023	4E
Foster, Larry L.	Whitehall	Michigan	5/7/2023	6B
Fowler-Lindemulder, Karen L.	Bella Vista	Arkansas	4/6/2024	4C
Fox, Curtis A.	Peterson	Minnesota	4/26/2022	3I
Fox, Elizabeth M.	Cleveland	Ohio	12/11/2023	6E
Fox, Harry C.	East Liverpool	Ohio	4/12/2023	6E
Fox, James R.	Laurens	South Carolina	4/1/2024	9C
Frahm, Melvin D.	Appleton	Wisconsin	7/22/2022	3C
Franke, Milburn D.	Orlando	Florida	2/12/2022	9E
Franks, Richard N.	Bryan	Ohio	4/24/2022	6D
Freed, John H.	West Bloomfield	Michigan	12/20/2022	6A
Frey, John D.	Shawnee	Kansas	8/18/2023	4B
Freyberger, George W.	Pleasant Mount	Pennsylvania	1/21/2023	7A
Fricke, Vincent C.	Waverly	Iowa	6/25/2022	5F
Friedlein, Stacey L.	Davenport	Washington	10/2/2023	1D
Friedman, Clyde F.	Deerfield	Illinois	8/13/2024	5A
Friesth, Wilmer C.	Apple Valley	Minnesota	3/21/2022	3H
Froehlig, Richard A.	Guffey	Colorado	3/9/2022	2E
Fruehling, Eldor M.	Prairie Du Sac	Wisconsin	5/26/2024	5K

Frye, Michael W.	Charlotte	North Carolina	3/15/2024	9B
Fultz, Don A.	Shoreview	Minnesota	10/2/2022	3H
Furgurson, Jerald N.	Gresham	Oregon	4/11/2022	1E
Gaeta, Jane S.	Fountain Hill	Pennsylvania	2/9/2022	7C
Gante, Marshall H.	York	Pennsylvania	2/9/2022	8D
Ganzkow-Wold, Stephen L.	Shoreview	Minnesota	8/27/2022	3G
Garmer, Gregory R.	Duluth	Minnesota	12/1/2024	3E
Gavin, Charles D., Jr.	Altoona	Wisconsin	7/18/2022	5H
Gawienowski, Michelle L.	Burnsville	Minnesota	8/7/2023	3H
Gaye, Lisa A.	New Orleans	Louisiana	12/9/2024	4F
Geiss, Harold G.	Lakewood	Colorado	11/16/2024	2E
Getzendanner, David C.	Salem	Oregon	4/25/2024	1E
Gieschen, Roger J.	Lenexa	Kansas	1/23/2024	4B
Gieseke, Gerald D.	Donna	Texas	2/22/2023	4A
Gilmore, Hugh E.	Waconia	Minnesota	8/4/2024	3G
Girtz, Albert F.	Mankato	Minnesota	2/11/2022	3I
Goehrig, Robert G., Jr.	Shrewsbury	Massachusetts	4/4/2024	7B
Goetz, Delmar L.	Lodi	Wisconsin	11/9/2024	5K
Goins, Ted W., Sr.	Salisbury	North Carolina	6/27/2023	9B
Golberg, Ronald C.	Green Valley	Arizona	4/20/2022	2D
Goodrich, Gerald V.	Hartland	Wisconsin	9/1/2023	5J
Goodwin, Lisa Klein	Bloomington	Illinois	1/4/2023	5C
Goos, Harry J.	Wernersville	Pennsylvania	6/17/2024	7E
Gotsch, Thomas L.	Hingham	Massachusetts	1/16/2024	7B
Grady, Rayford J.	Chicago	Illinois	12/29/2023	5A
Graf, William A.	Folsom	California	3/10/2022	2A
Granger, William C.	Fort Dodge	Iowa	4/17/2023	5E
Granquist, Theodore V.	Rochester	Minnesota	5/12/2024	3I
Grauer, David	Battle Ground	Washington	12/20/2024	1C
Green, Donald K.	Oakland	California	3/16/2024	2A
Greenawald, Carl H.	Gettysburg	Pennsylvania	10/1/2023	8F
Greene, James H.	Hawley	Minnesota	12/19/2024	3D
Greenwald, Arlene S	West Chester	Pennsylvania	2/29/2024	7F
Gregson, Linda S.	North Olmsted	Ohio	3/3/2022	6E
Gremmels, Robert C.	Waverly	Iowa	2/28/2023	5F
Griess, Leland J.	Omaha	Nebraska	4/2/2024	4A
Grimes, Peter P.	Bethlehem	Pennsylvania	5/22/2024	7E
Grishkowsky, Henry J.	Dubuque	Iowa	3/17/2022	5B
Groettum, Kip A.	Pine Island	Minnesota	10/7/2022	3I
Grosenick, Conrad W.	Eugene	Oregon	1/23/2022	1E
Grosse, Frederick W.	Strasburg	Ohio	12/6/2022	6E
Groves, Mark A.	Brenham	Texas	9/24/2023	4F
Gugel, John R.	Muskego	Wisconsin	2/19/2024	5J
Guinn, Roy A.	Tucson	Arizona	8/23/2023	2D
Gunderson, Linda M.	Elk Mills	Maryland	7/15/2023	8F
Gusdal, Delmar M.	Palm Harbor	Florida	5/30/2022	9E
Gustav, Walter A.	Lebanon	Oregon	8/27/2024	1E
Gustavson, Eric J., Jr.	Plymouth	Minnesota	5/27/2023	3G
Haas, Randall C.	Cathlamet	Washington	4/4/2023	1C
Haase, Ferdinand K W	Rochester	New York	11/23/2024	7D
Haase, Martin L.	Mitchell	South Dakota	12/6/2022	3C
Haffly, Paul R.	Douglasville	Georgia	1/15/2023	9D
Hagberg, Raymond L.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	1/24/2022	4A
Hagen, Maurice E.	Rochester	Minnesota	12/20/2024	3I
Haight, Leila K.	Rice Lake	Wisconsin	12/5/2023	5H
Halenza, Jeffrey M.	Riverdale	Georgia	1/12/2024	9D
Hall, David L.	Madison	Minnesota	10/7/2024	3F

Hall, Marcia L.	Albert Lea	Minnesota	2/6/2024	3I
Hallberg, Dale W.	Logan	Utah	2/7/2022	2D
Hall-Schordje, Laura M.	Chicago	Illinois	2/2/2022	5A
Halvorson, Arvin H.	Detroit Lakes	Minnesota	7/24/2022	3D
Hamester, Walter H.	Libertyville	Illinois	12/22/2023	5A
Hammer, Melvin J.	Cedar Hill	Texas	2/5/2024	4D
Hammond, Thomas E.	Laredo	Texas	11/22/2024	7C
Hanawalt, Sandra K.	Monument	Colorado	3/25/2023	2E
Hanberry, Donald E.	Snellville	Georgia	9/29/2023	9D
Haney, Charles B.	Superior	Montana	12/19/2024	1E
Hanggi, Glen O.	Forest Lake	Minnesota	11/16/2022	3H
Hanisch, John M.	Oakfield	Wisconsin	7/17/2024	5I
Hansen, Barbara K.	Sioux City	Iowa	6/30/2024	5E
Hanson, Bruce L.	Garnavillo	Iowa	4/13/2024	5F
Hanson, Daryl M.	Toledo	Ohio	5/17/2024	6D
Hanson, Dennis L.	Freeland	Washington	9/19/2023	1B
Hanson, Lloyd R.	Reno	Nevada	7/20/2022	2A
Hanson, Richard S.	Stoughton	Wisconsin	9/23/2024	5F
Hanusa, Ralph W.	Oshkosh	Wisconsin	9/6/2023	5I
Haraldson, Orris H.	Shoreview	Minnesota	5/22/2023	5H
Harbaugh, James F., Jr.	Roseville	Minnesota	1/19/2023	5F
Hare, Donald L.	Celina	Ohio	5/21/2023	6F
Haring, Lynda R.	Womelsdorf	Pennsylvania	12/11/2022	7E
Harklau, Arvid	Lima	Ohio	11/8/2022	6D
Harpel, George M.	Boyertown	Pennsylvania	11/14/2024	7F
Harpel, John W.	Aurora	Colorado	12/4/2022	2E
Harris, Doris Gurst	Desoto	Texas	7/9/2022	4D
Harris, Kathy S.	Pickens	South Carolina	11/13/2023	9C
Harris, Paul H.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	2/17/2022	3H
Harrisville, Roy A.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	7/22/2023	3A
Harter, Harold J.	Newport News	Virginia	9/5/2023	9A
Hartman, George A.	Columbus	Ohio	1/28/2024	6F
Hartsoe, James R.	Arden Hills	Minnesota	4/10/2024	3G
Haseley, Ronald M.	Reynoldsburg	Ohio	5/28/2023	6C
Hathaway, Bruce B.	Bedford	Ohio	11/23/2023	6E
Hatlen, Carol E.	Fargo	North Dakota	2/12/2024	3B
Hauck, David R.	Danville	Pennsylvania	3/4/2022	8E
Hawley, Patricia L.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	4/8/2023	3G
Hayes, Paul L.	Warrenville	Illinois	12/29/2022	5A
Haynes, George F.	Rockport	Texas	12/15/2023	4E
Heaps, Charles M.	Montoursville	Pennsylvania	10/22/2023	8E
Hefner, Philip J.	Chicago	Illinois	4/27/2024	4F
Heichler, Muriel N.	Adamstown	Maryland	12/4/2023	8F
Heid, Norman J.	New Hartford	New York	7/12/2022	7D
Heide, Philip W.	Rosemount	Minnesota	10/30/2022	3H
Heilener, Raymond W.	Germantown	Tennessee	2/15/2023	5C
Heimgartner, Tammy R.	Afton	Wyoming	2/5/2023	1D
Heinemeier, John L.	Durham	North Carolina	4/19/2022	9B
Heinzig, Harold F.	Wallingford	Iowa	11/1/2024	5E
Heitzenroder, Frederick C.	Greensburg	Pennsylvania	1/9/2024	8B
Helgemo, Marlene Whiterabbit	Minneapolis	Minnesota	7/22/2022	3G
Hellevik, Nils C., Jr.	Inver Grove Heights	Minnesota	8/16/2022	3G
Henrichs, Larry G.	Mc Gregor	Texas	10/1/2022	4D
Herbon, Joan M.	Portage	Michigan	2/10/2024	6B
Hermstad, Richard P.	Gig Harbor	Washington	11/14/2023	1C
Heuermann, Kenneth C.	Jamesville	New York	11/4/2024	7D
Hicks, Joel M.	Keatchie	Louisiana	10/18/2024	4D

Hillesland, Alton V.	Sidney	Montana	2/10/2024	3A
Hingst, Emory A.	Tallahassee	Florida	8/26/2024	9E
Hinkley, Kerry G.	Saint Augustine	Florida	12/14/2024	9E
Hinrichs, Eimo	Peoria	Illinois	10/24/2022	5C
Hinrichs, Paul E.	Central City	Kentucky	4/9/2023	6C
Hirth, Paul A.	Elloree	South Carolina	10/10/2023	9C
Hjelm, Norman A.	Wynnewood	Pennsylvania	2/13/2024	7F
Hluchy, Stephen	Rochester	New York	5/30/2022	7D
Hofer, Fred H.	Racine	Wisconsin	10/29/2022	5J
Hofer, John E., Jr.	South Whitley	Indiana	9/2/2024	6C
Hoffman, Gerald W.	Vancouver	Washington	6/13/2024	1C
Hoffman, Malcolm E.	Marlton	New Jersey	9/2/2024	4E
Hoffmann, Richard E.	Valley Park	Missouri	7/31/2023	4B
Hoh, Paul J.	Reading	Pennsylvania	1/19/2023	7E
Holcombe, Thomas E.	Omaha	Nebraska	10/8/2023	4A
Hollinger, Kay M	Norristown	Pennsylvania	12/10/2022	7F
Holm, Leon A.	Santa Rosa	California	7/25/2022	2A
Holmquist, Ivar R.	Rockville	Maryland	4/25/2023	9A
Holmstrom, Paul E.	Green Bay	Wisconsin	1/4/2022	5G
Holst, E. Frederick	Zionhill	Pennsylvania	11/3/2024	7E
Holst, Lawrence E.	Savannah	Georgia	2/18/2022	9D
Holzer, Richard B.	Northfield	New Jersey	1/23/2022	7A
Homme, Donald W.	Vergas	Minnesota	1/30/2022	3D
Hoobing, Stanley C.	Boise	Idaho	1/31/2023	1D
Hoops, Victor J.	Arvada	Colorado	6/24/2023	2E
Horn, James L.	Dover	Florida	8/20/2024	9E
Horn, William O.	Wichita	Kansas	1/21/2023	4B
Houck, Sally J.	Edmond	Oklahoma	11/15/2024	4C
Hower, Elaine M.	Oakmont	Pennsylvania	10/21/2024	8B
Hoyt, Robert S.	Golden Valley	Minnesota	10/26/2023	3G
Hrbek, George	Cleveland	Ohio	2/19/2023	6E
Hsie, Shue-Liang	South Barrington	Illinois	4/27/2024	5A
Huang, Nathan T.	Cypress	Texas	3/21/2024	4F
Huber, John G., Jr.	Lansdale	Pennsylvania	5/17/2023	7F
Huffman, Gordon S., Jr.	Newark	Ohio	3/11/2023	6F
Huggins, Charles R.	Sanford	North Carolina	9/14/2023	9B
Hughes, Robert G.	Ocean View	New Jersey	9/3/2023	7A
Huhn, C. Gerald	Renfrew	Pennsylvania	10/9/2022	8B
Hulsether, Charles W.	Viroqua	Wisconsin	4/26/2022	5L
Hultine, Vicki R.	Mankato	Minnesota	1/30/2022	3I
Hunsberger, Eleanor M.	Minnetonka	Minnesota	9/23/2022	3G
Hurlocker, Thomas W.	Salisbury	North Carolina	7/29/2022	8D
Hurtt, David J.	Faribault	Minnesota	9/16/2023	3I
Imhoff, David E.	Jacksonville	Florida	5/13/2023	9E
Ingvoldstad, William	Nisswa	Minnesota	6/30/2023	3E
Jackson, Steven D.	Newberry	South Carolina	10/8/2022	9C
Jacobson, Karl N.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	8/18/2024	3G
Jacobson, Michael Thomas	Casselton	North Dakota	9/17/2022	3B
Jandrey, Cyril A.	Stoughton	Wisconsin	2/26/2024	5K
Janz, Mary L.	Racine	Wisconsin	7/31/2024	5J
Jensen, Bonnie L.	Eagan	Minnesota	3/31/2024	3H
Jensen, Gerald L.	Eugene	Oregon	3/12/2023	1E
Jensen, Mary E.	Lincoln	Nebraska	8/15/2024	4A
Jensen, Ronald D.	Austin	Minnesota	6/6/2023	3I
Jewell, Barbara B.	Blue Earth	Minnesota	1/23/2024	3I
Jiang, Franklin X. W.	Oceanside	California	11/24/2023	2C
Johansen, John L.	West Milton	Ohio	6/20/2022	6F

Johns, Paul A.	Oakland	California	4/12/2024	5A
Johnson Wrege, Jennifer E.	Woodville	Wisconsin	11/1/2023	5G
Johnson, Alton O.	Missoula	Montana	1/1/2023	3A
Johnson, Anton P S	Bend	Oregon	3/2/2022	1E
Johnson, Donald D.	Kissimmee	Florida	1/19/2022	9E
Johnson, Glenn E.	Santa Cruz	California	1/15/2022	2A
Johnson, Henry K.	Indiana	Pennsylvania	1/9/2024	8D
Johnson, John H.	Chicago	Illinois	1/19/2022	5A
Johnson, John W., Jr.	Skillman	New Jersey	5/7/2023	7A
Johnson, LaVonne M.	Arlington	Tennessee	3/26/2024	9D
Johnson, Oliver E.	Waverly	Iowa	4/11/2022	5F
Johnson, Patricia F.	Deland	Florida	11/3/2023	9E
Johnson, R. William	Lakewood	Washington	1/18/2022	1C
Johnson, Robert C.	Omaha	Nebraska	12/26/2022	4A
Johnson, Virginia E.	Moses Lake	Washington	3/29/2023	1D
Johnson, William B.	Sherman	Texas	11/21/2024	4D
Johnson, Zachary W.	Pasadena	California	9/1/2023	2B
Johnston, Bruce D.	Galesburg	Illinois	1/26/2024	5B
Jordahl, V. Truman	Hardy	Virginia	4/12/2024	9A
Kaffine, Helmut H.	Bethlehem	Pennsylvania	4/3/2024	7E
Kallestad, William B.	Robbinsdale	Minnesota	8/21/2024	5E
Kaltenbaugh, Robert G.	Johnstown	Pennsylvania	4/19/2024	8C
Kamphuis, Betsy E J	Greenville	Michigan	10/26/2023	6B
Kaplinski, John W.	Waupaca	Wisconsin	10/25/2024	5I
Kappes, Adolph B.	Green Bay	Wisconsin	8/17/2024	5J
Kastelle, Rodney L.	Tacoma	Washington	11/27/2023	1C
Keating, John W.	Elkton	Maryland	4/11/2023	8F
Keck, George E.	Harleysville	Pennsylvania	9/18/2023	7F
Keiter, John J., Jr.	Nesquehoning	Pennsylvania	8/30/2023	7G
Kelley, John W.	Chatham	Illinois	5/17/2024	5C
Kemppainen, Robert A.	Spicer	Minnesota	4/27/2024	3F
Kennedy, Paul D.	Worcester	Massachusetts	8/24/2022	7B
Kerr, John S.	King of Prussia	Pennsylvania	11/30/2022	7F
Kessler, Karl O.	Cincinnati	Ohio	8/5/2023	6D
Ketterling, Eugene	Waverly	Iowa	12/28/2022	5F
Keyser, E. Edward	Gettysburg	Pennsylvania	4/7/2022	8D
Kiebler, Yvonne F.	Arlington	Texas	12/30/2022	4D
Kindsvatter, John F., Jr.	Columbus	Ohio	3/21/2024	6F
King, Dennis L.	Clayton	North Carolina	6/18/2022	9B
King, Ernest H.	Los Angeles	California	6/30/2024	2B
Kinney, James W.	Willow Street	Pennsylvania	1/15/2022	8F
Kirkegaard, Walter J.	Great Falls	Montana	10/23/2023	1F
Kirsh-Carr, Lauren A.	Southfield	Michigan	4/15/2022	6A
Kishino, Yutaka	Riverside	California	1/28/2022	2C
Kissell, Gerald N.	Carbondale	Illinois	9/26/2022	5C
Kjeseth, Peter L.	Lynchburg	Virginia	1/16/2022	5K
Kleinke, Robert W.	Eloy	Arizona	7/12/2022	2D
Kline, John P.	Cornwall	Pennsylvania	12/26/2022	7G
Kline, Marcia K.	Bishop	Texas	3/23/2023	4E
Klingeman, John P.	Altoona	Pennsylvania	7/24/2022	8C
Klockau, Keith W.	Kansas City	Missouri	2/24/2022	4B
Klopfer, Paul E.	Pickerington	Ohio	6/5/2022	6F
Kloss, Jean C.	Christiansted	Virgin Islands	12/13/2023	9F
Knecht, Donald J.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	7/11/2024	3G
Knudten, Herbert J., Jr.	Grinnell	Iowa	1/5/2023	5D
Knutson, Gerhard I.	Plymouth	Minnesota	3/3/2023	3I
Kobs, William Gary	Madison	Wisconsin	1/23/2022	5K

Koch, Stephen J.	Story City	Iowa	4/7/2022	5D
Koehler, Roy H., Jr.	Walnutport	Pennsylvania	1/13/2022	7E
Kolden, Thomas T.	Wadena	Minnesota	9/29/2024	3D
Konig, Paul H.	Waverly	Nebraska	3/17/2022	4A
Kragthorpe, Ronald E.	Irvine	California	5/20/2023	2B
Krahling, Conrad O.	Madison	South Dakota	10/5/2024	3C
Kramm, Thomas S.	Reedsvillle	Pennsylvania	9/26/2022	8E
Krampitz, Paul D.	Cromwell	Connecticut	9/18/2024	7B
Kreiensieck, Ronald A.	Winchester	Virginia	3/12/2022	8H
Kreis, Sandra B	Shelton	Washington	11/1/2022	1C
Krueger, Paul P.	Auburn	California	4/6/2023	2A
Kuehn, Jerry L.	Baxter	Minnesota	4/23/2022	3E
Kuo, Ying-Chhi	Carlsbad	California	2/23/2023	2C
Kurz, W. Robert	Lancaster	Pennsylvania	9/29/2023	8D
Kylander, Philip H., Jr.	Newton	Massachusetts	11/20/2023	7B
Kyllonen, Donna J.	New York Mills	Minnesota	6/9/2022	3D
Lai, Kam H.	Brooklyn	New York	2/15/2022	7C
Lambdin, Philip S.	Carlisle	Pennsylvania	10/6/2022	8D
Lamoureux, Paul D.	Mankato	Minnesota	6/15/2024	7B
Landin, B. Arlene	Miami	Florida	4/21/2023	9E
Landsberg, U. Fredrik	Shawnee	Kansas	6/20/2023	4A
Lang, Carroll D.	Fort Dodge	Iowa	2/20/2023	5E
Lange, Jeffrey T.	Universal City	Texas	1/24/2024	4E
Langeland, Marvin L.	Lacey	Washington	10/30/2022	1C
Langeland, Melvin C.	Pomona	California	4/13/2022	2B
Langseth, Robert V.	Calumet	Michigan	10/17/2023	5G
Larner, Frederick E.	Galesburg	Illinois	7/26/2023	5B
Larsen, Dean A.	Reynoldsburg	Ohio	11/21/2024	5B
Larsen, Howard N.	La Crescent	Minnesota	6/2/2023	5L
Larson, Raymond S.	Detroit Lakes	Minnesota	5/6/2024	3D
Larson, Sue Moline	Sun Prairie	Wisconsin	2/23/2023	5K
Larson, William C. C.	Woodbury	Minnesota	8/30/2022	3H
Laufer, Mary E.	Kingston	Pennsylvania	1/25/2024	7E
Laughlin, Walter G.	Tulsa	Oklahoma	1/7/2023	4C
Lauman, Dennis E.	Toledo	Ohio	1/31/2022	6D
Launer, Christian H., II	Lees Summit	Missouri	2/12/2024	4B
Laur, Hendrik	Olympia	Washington	4/27/2023	1C
Laurin, Philip O.	Dahinda	Illinois	4/30/2022	5B
Lavelle, Leah L.	Villas	New Jersey	9/10/2023	7A
Lawson, William O.	Green Bay	Wisconsin	4/11/2024	5I
Leaf, P. Gerald	McPherson	Kansas	12/6/2023	4B
Leazer, Carl W.	Manorville	New York	11/9/2022	7C
Lee, Paul O.	Dousman	Wisconsin	3/16/2023	5J
Lee, Roger E.	Kelso	Washington	4/13/2023	2A
Lee, Thomas O.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	2/9/2022	3G
Lehr, Nadine F.	Bismarck	North Dakota	1/6/2023	3A
LeMond, John G.	Lakeland	Florida	2/19/2023	9E
LePore, Audrey C.	Fargo	North Dakota	1/29/2022	1F
Lester, Ray K.	Olympia	Washington	10/1/2022	1B
Letalien, Robert G.	Flower Mound	Texas	1/20/2024	7B
Levin, Ingmar L.	Manistique	Michigan	8/19/2023	5G
Lewis, Alvin G., Jr.	Stillwater	Minnesota	1/24/2024	3F
Lewis, Jack R.	Richfield	Minnesota	9/26/2022	3G
Liebenow, Cameron L.	Lakeville	Minnesota	1/30/2024	5E
Lightfoot, Jennie	Saint Paul	Minnesota	5/5/2022	3H
Lillejord, Nels J.	Jamestown	North Dakota	4/8/2024	3B
Lilley, Jeffrey M.	Honolulu	Hawaii	10/13/2024	2C

Lind, Orville L.	Fernandina Beach	Florida	6/5/2022	7B
Lind, Richard E.	Sarona	Wisconsin	3/24/2022	5H
Lindberg, Alan R.	Prairie Du Chien	Wisconsin	12/16/2022	5J
Lindberg, Susan L.	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	9/15/2024	5J
Lindell, Carl G.	Austin	Minnesota	10/15/2022	3G
Lindgren, Arnold L.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	4/27/2024	3G
Lindgren, Charles F.	Gaylord	Minnesota	9/23/2022	3F
Lineberger, Everette L.	Inman	South Carolina	2/11/2023	9C
Lineberger, Robert B.	Columbia	South Carolina	7/17/2024	9C
Linquist, Leon L.	Kalispell	Montana	6/19/2023	7B
Lisse, Charles H.	Lancaster	Pennsylvania	7/19/2024	8D
Little, Steven R.	Blanchard	Oklahoma	4/17/2023	4B
Livdahl, Ralph K.	Mesa	Arizona	10/16/2023	2D
Livdahl, Roger O.	Spring Lk Pk	Minnesota	11/27/2024	3B
Lofdahl, Cedric J.	Cedar Rapids	Iowa	11/2/2024	5D
Long, Larry S.	Lexington	South Carolina	11/24/2022	9C
Long, Paul R.	Bellevue	Ohio	9/27/2024	6D
Lorensen, Lloyd W.	Pantego	Texas	4/1/2024	2E
Lorentzen, Alan L.	La Porte	Indiana	2/8/2024	6C
Lund, Willard H.	Stoughton	Wisconsin	2/6/2022	5K
Lundahl, Deanne K.	Omaha	Nebraska	7/8/2023	4A
Lundeen, Lyman T.	Schwenksville	Pennsylvania	8/10/2023	1C
Lundquist, Mary J.	Middle River	Minnesota	3/14/2023	3D
Lutz, Lyle Cornelius	Wyoming	Minnesota	8/8/2024	3H
Lutze, Paul O.	Fort Pierce	Florida	2/18/2023	9E
Lynch, Philip A.	Lancaster	Pennsylvania	9/1/2022	8D
Lynch, Susan P.	Coatesville	Pennsylvania	5/27/2022	7F
Lyngdal, Lloyd W.	Woodbridge	Virginia	12/2/2022	8G
Lynne, Robert D.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	12/4/2022	3A
Madsen, George H O	Duluth	Minnesota	10/21/2024	6B
MaGinn, Douglas H.	Crossville	Tennessee	1/5/2023	9D
Mahler, Naomi L.	Willmar	Minnesota	10/21/2023	3F
Maier, Walter J.	Reading	Pennsylvania	10/16/2024	7A
Mains, William A.	Racine	Wisconsin	5/27/2023	5J
Mancini, Ernest A., Jr.	Detroit Lakes	Minnesota	12/15/2023	3D
Mangiante, David D.	Hainesport	New Jersey	9/6/2024	7A
Markland, Arne K.	Tempe	Arizona	5/4/2022	2D
Markowich, David W.	Columbus	Ohio	7/5/2024	6F
Markquart, Edward F.	Des Moines	Washington	9/3/2024	1B
Marks, Frederick A.	Racine	Wisconsin	5/21/2023	5J
Marshall, Yvonne I.	Portage	Wisconsin	12/25/2024	5K
Martens, Steven P.	Centerville	South Dakota	6/30/2024	3C
Martinson, Paul V.	Bemidji	Minnesota	8/18/2022	3H
Martyn, Joel T.	Kihei	Hawaii	8/7/2023	2C
Mathre, Henry J.	Pine Island	Minnesota	12/14/2024	3I
Mathre, Lawrence G.	North Las Vegas	Nevada	4/1/2022	2A
Mathre, Paul G.	Houston	Texas	4/14/2022	4F
May, Larry A.	Columbia City	Indiana	11/29/2022	9D
May, William R.	Lebanon	Pennsylvania	10/18/2022	8D
McCaffrey, Brian K.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	5/3/2024	3G
McClean, Donald J.	Adamstown	Maryland	9/24/2023	8F
McClurg, Nancy B	Madison	Wisconsin	4/10/2024	5K
McCollum, Robert E.	Newberry	South Carolina	6/3/2024	9C
McCombs, R Earl E Jr	Greenwood	South Carolina	3/2/2024	9C
McDaniel, Richard E., Sr.	Springfield	Ohio	1/25/2022	6F
McElroy Thomas, Linda J.	Somerset	Pennsylvania	11/3/2023	8C
McKee, Judith A.	York	Pennsylvania	11/18/2024	8D

McKenzie, Carl C.	Hendersonville	North Carolina	8/13/2023	9B
McKinstry, Roger A.	Waterloo	Iowa	5/5/2024	5F
McManus, Charles R.	Salisbury	North Carolina	1/20/2024	9B
McMillin, Harold R., Jr.	Garnavillo	Iowa	3/2/2024	5F
Mehl, L. Guy	Lancaster	Pennsylvania	2/3/2022	8D
Meier, Michael L.	Corvallis	Oregon	9/25/2023	5H
Melber, David W.	Austin	Texas	4/2/2022	4E
Melby, Colin H.	Bonney Lake	Washington	8/28/2024	2D
Melby, Gerald K.	Saint Charles	Minnesota	12/26/2023	3I
Melby, Kenneth N.	Decorah	Iowa	11/10/2023	5L
Melsted, Marino S.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	3/23/2024	5E
Menk, Harlen D.	Prospect	Kentucky	4/23/2024	5H
Merz, Earl P.	Paw Paw	Michigan	3/1/2023	6B
Meseck, Kirk E.	Grand Forks	North Dakota	10/5/2023	3B
Mesenbring, Victor H.	Novi	Michigan	10/28/2022	6A
Meyer, Roberta J.	Holland	Indiana	6/8/2022	6C
Michael, Richard L. R.	Union Bridge	Maryland	11/17/2022	8F
Michener, Ray W	Milton	Delaware	8/17/2023	8G
Milheim, Paul R.	Medina	Ohio	6/18/2024	6E
Miller, Arthur W.	Round Rock	Texas	3/17/2024	4E
Miller, Charles W.	La Crosse	Wisconsin	1/16/2024	5L
Miller, Eddie C., Jr.	Newberry	South Carolina	8/8/2022	9C
Miller, James B.	Reinholds	Pennsylvania	9/30/2023	7E
Miller, Lawrence A., Jr.	Saint Petersburg	Florida	5/27/2022	9E
Miller, Melvin F., Jr.	Naples	Florida	11/17/2024	9E
Miller, Robert L.	Yuma	Colorado	10/17/2024	2E
Miller, Tom O.	Tallahassee	Florida	8/8/2024	9E
Miller, Van C.	Faribault	Minnesota	12/25/2023	3I
Milligan, James H.	Sevierville	Tennessee	3/9/2022	9C
Milner, Henrietta J.	Dekalb	Illinois	1/2/2024	5B
Miritz, Melvin A.	Racine	Wisconsin	11/30/2023	5J
Misenheimer, John C.	Wilmington	North Carolina	11/26/2024	9B
Moberg, Frederick J.	Fort Pierce	Florida	8/30/2023	9E
Modr, F. Robert	Port Jefferson Station	New York	9/22/2024	7C
Moen, Ronald F.	Quincy	Washington	10/24/2023	1D
Moline, Charles R.	Wayzata	Minnesota	6/6/2024	7B
Moore, Eugene H.	Fayetteville	Pennsylvania	11/11/2023	8D
Moore, Gilbert C.	Stanton	California	8/19/2024	2C
Moore, Nancy L.	Jim Thorpe	Pennsylvania	11/22/2023	7E
Moore, Nancy S.	Marlboro	New Jersey	12/13/2022	7A
Moore, Robert W.	New Braunfels	Texas	4/24/2023	4E
Mordey, Hyacinth J.	Fort Washington	Pennsylvania	1/16/2024	7F
Moren, John E.	Davis	California	8/28/2023	2A
Moren, Orval K.	Coon Rapids	Minnesota	12/28/2023	3G
Mork, Marcus J.	Ramsey	Minnesota	3/20/2023	3G
Morris, John R.	Chelsea	Michigan	6/4/2022	6B
Morrow, Lynne M.	Lake Zurich	Illinois	12/18/2024	5A
Morse, R. Kent	Bennington	Nebraska	10/4/2024	4A
Mraz, Jerry	Northampton	Pennsylvania	4/24/2024	7E
Mueller, Rudolph W.	Zionsville	Indiana	9/16/2022	6C
Muhr, F. Peter	Allentown	Pennsylvania	6/20/2024	7E
Mumford, John D., II	Erie	Pennsylvania	3/1/2023	8A
Murdock, Ronald L.	Pickerington	Ohio	4/14/2024	6F
Myers, Victor A.	Barberton	Ohio	11/10/2022	6E
Mylod, Robert T.	Georgetown	Delaware	11/5/2024	7F
Nagle, Susan E.	Farmington	Connecticut	12/10/2024	7B
Nagy, Z. Louis	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	2/15/2024	8B

Neifert, Jody L.	Lehighton	Pennsylvania	10/28/2024	7E
Nelson, Gerald W.	Moose Lake	Minnesota	1/6/2023	5A
Nelson, Hubert J A	Eden Prairie	Minnesota	11/7/2023	3G
Nelson, Irven A.	Brooklyn Park	Minnesota	3/5/2023	3F
Nelson, James M.	Coon Rapids	Minnesota	6/5/2022	2D
Nelson, Larry K.	Rio Vista	California	4/9/2023	2A
Nelson, Norman A.	Lombard	Illinois	9/2/2024	5B
Nelson, Richard N.	Apple Valley	Minnesota	10/28/2022	3H
Nelson, Ronald C.	North Cape May	New Jersey	9/28/2024	7A
Nelson, Ronald D.	Edwards	Colorado	5/28/2023	4A
Nelson, Ronald W.	Lewis Center	Ohio	12/2/2022	3A
Nelson, Vince	Mesquite	Texas	4/9/2024	4D
Nestler, Pablo A M	Round Rock	Texas	4/16/2023	4E
Nething, Norman E., Jr.	North Huntingdon	Pennsylvania	5/16/2022	8B
Newcomb, Bob	Spokane Valley	Washington	8/16/2024	1D
Newhart, David C.	Elizabethtown	Pennsylvania	8/1/2024	8D
Ng, James Kam	Hacienda Heights	California	5/22/2023	2B
Nichols, James H.	Chapin	South Carolina	1/2/2023	9C
Nicholson, William N.	Harbor Springs	Michigan	7/8/2023	6B
Niederloh, James W.	Kenosha	Wisconsin	2/12/2022	5J
Nielsen, Ronald A.	Mahtomedi	Minnesota	4/21/2024	3H
Nieman, Edward L.	Andover	Minnesota	7/4/2022	3I
Niemi, Leslie E.	Au Train	Michigan	1/22/2024	5G
Nilsen, John	Minot	North Dakota	7/11/2024	3A
Nilsen, Joseph N.	Crossville	Tennessee	12/30/2023	9D
Nilsen, K. Roy	Edinburg	Virginia	3/22/2024	9A
Nodyne, Peter W. F.	Lancaster	Pennsylvania	7/17/2023	8D
Noer, Roger N.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	5/27/2024	3C
Nordgaard, John B.	Red Wing	Minnesota	6/7/2022	3I
Nordness, Oradell L.	Madison	Wisconsin	6/27/2023	5K
Nordstrom, K. David	Fremont	Nebraska	5/25/2022	4A
Norris, Howard M.	Moorestown	New Jersey	3/28/2022	7A
Norum, Arden L.	Alexandria	Minnesota	5/3/2024	3D
Novak, Edward L.	Edina	Minnesota	6/24/2022	3H
Nyce, Ray	Telford	Pennsylvania	12/23/2024	7F
Nyline, Karl F.	Shakopee	Minnesota	3/25/2022	3G
Nyman, Thomas E.	Marine On Saint Croix	Minnesota	7/26/2023	3H
Odden, Francis D.	Fox Point	Wisconsin	9/3/2023	5J
Oechler, Marvin W.	Kenosha	Wisconsin	8/17/2022	5J
Olsen, Clifford A.	Portsmouth	Virginia	6/13/2023	9A
Olsen, Ralph H., Jr.	Woodbury	Minnesota	9/3/2024	3H
Olsen, Raymond A.	Citrus Heights	California	12/21/2022	2A
Olsen, Willard L.	Piedmont	South Dakota	8/2/2023	3C
Olsen, William A.	Bozeman	Montana	12/26/2024	3C
Olson, Gary J.	Spirit Lake	Iowa	8/30/2024	5E
Olson, Randall C.	Lakewood	Washington	1/30/2022	1C
Olson, Richard E.	Cambridge	Massachusetts	12/15/2024	7B
Olson, Ronald H.	Lakebay	Washington	2/14/2022	4B
Olson, Royal L.	Allentown	Pennsylvania	9/26/2024	7E
Opsahl, Geri A	Sterling	Virginia	4/26/2022	8G
Opsahl, Paul D.	Sterling	Virginia	8/26/2023	8G
Ortiz, Talia O.	Bloomington	Minnesota	3/10/2022	3G
Osterfield, G. Thomas	Palm Harbor	Florida	10/14/2024	9E
Otto, Raymond A.	Saint Joseph	Missouri	1/12/2024	4B
Overvold, Paul M.	Tucson	Arizona	1/31/2024	2D
Owens, Gary W.	Lewisburg	Pennsylvania	8/6/2024	8E
Padgett, Stanley D.	Apache	Oklahoma	11/12/2023	4C

Pancoast, J. Elliott	Loveland	Colorado	2/11/2024	4E
Papada, James C.	Shillington	Pennsylvania	2/7/2022	7E
Patrick, Stephen L.	Dover	Ohio	10/2/2024	6E
Pauling, Randall D.	Urbandale	Iowa	6/19/2024	5D
Paulsen, A. William, Jr.	Brooklyn	New York	3/15/2022	7C
Paulson, Charles T., Jr.	Sun City	Arizona	12/15/2023	2D
Payne, Norman O.	Baltimore	Maryland	8/1/2024	8F
Pechauer, Ronald F.	Sun City	Arizona	12/4/2024	2D
Pedersen, Gerald O.	Sacramento	California	7/21/2024	2A
Peeders, Harald	Sound Beach	New York	11/12/2022	7A
Peischl, Victor C.	Allison Park	Pennsylvania	8/16/2024	8B
Pelletier, Phyllis A.	Mildred	Pennsylvania	4/12/2023	7E
Pepelnjak, Dale J.	Pelican Rapids	Minnesota	3/14/2024	3D
Pereyra, Luis A.	Santiago	Chile	11/15/2024	4D
Perkins, William G.	Redmond	Washington	6/27/2024	1B
Person, Eldon C.	Northfield	Minnesota	12/16/2022	3I
Pete, Lois L.	Oakland	California	5/19/2024	2A
Peters, David W.	Denver	Colorado	1/18/2022	2E
Peters, Frederick J.	Keizer	Oregon	10/4/2022	1E
Peters, James F.	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	12/3/2022	5J
Peters, Raymond L.	Key West	Florida	6/3/2022	9D
Petersen, Jon R.	Tacoma	Washington	6/13/2023	1C
Peterson, Dean A.	Escanaba	Michigan	7/15/2024	5G
Peterson, Harold J.	Sun City	Arizona	9/14/2024	2D
Peterson, Harold L.	Madelia	Minnesota	5/6/2022	3F
Peterson, John A.	Buffalo	Minnesota	1/4/2023	3F
Peterson, Melvin T.	Liberty	Missouri	8/20/2022	4B
Peterson, Paul E.	Northfield	Minnesota	1/17/2024	3I
Peterson, Philip T.	Madison	Wisconsin	7/14/2022	5I
Peterson, Richard L.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	4/2/2022	3C
Peterson, Robert D.	Shorewood	Illinois	3/14/2022	5B
Peterson, Ronnie C.	Round Hill	Virginia	10/28/2024	9A
Pfadenhauer, Paul J.	Fort Lauderdale	Florida	1/18/2024	7C
Phillips, Roger G.	New Bremen	Ohio	1/20/2024	6D
Pieper, Walter C.	Oakland	California	8/10/2022	2A
Piper, Donald R.	Vienna	Virginia	7/28/2023	8G
Plaehn, Edmond Holle	Tacoma	Washington	12/17/2022	1C
Plaster, Charles R.	Richfield	Minnesota	7/24/2024	3G
Pohlmann, Kenneth F.	Huntley	Illinois	1/17/2023	5A
Poltrock, Roy A.	Janesville	Wisconsin	11/22/2024	5K
Priester, Herbert D.	Walworth	Wisconsin	6/22/2023	5B
Probst, Charles D.	New Braunfels	Texas	9/4/2022	4E
Quam, John E.	Northfield	Minnesota	10/4/2023	3I
Quibell, Wayne V.	Fargo	North Dakota	2/6/2023	3B
Radde, Richard C.	Fargo	North Dakota	4/3/2022	3D
Rader, Clement J.	Plantation	Florida	4/30/2024	9E
Radloff, Ralph M.	Rock Island	Illinois	12/15/2023	5B
Raess, Connie J.	Carleton	Nebraska	3/19/2022	4A
Rasmussen, Roy E.	Kearney	Nebraska	4/14/2022	4A
Rauch, W. Eric	Clearwater	Florida	4/22/2023	9E
Reaves, Ronald E.	Frederick	Maryland	10/23/2024	8F
Rebane, Priit	Largo	Florida	10/28/2022	9E
Reeb, James H.	Peever	South Dakota	11/9/2023	3A
Reents, Jack F.	Ocala	Florida	10/14/2023	9E
Refsal, Harley J.	Decorah	Iowa	9/8/2024	5F
Reichley, Glenn C.	Salisbury	North Carolina	10/11/2023	9B
Reitz, Otto J.	Nerstrand	Minnesota	9/13/2022	3I

Rendleman, C. Henry	Hickory	North Carolina	12/15/2024	9B
Reppe, John H.	Two Harbors	Minnesota	9/13/2022	3E
Rex, Ernst L.	Dekalb	Illinois	12/4/2022	5A
Reynolds, David D.	Mission Viejo	California	10/1/2024	2C
Richards, Elton P.	Wyomissing	Pennsylvania	8/7/2023	7E
Riis, Clifford A.	Manassas	Virginia	5/11/2024	9C
Rill, James K.	Millheim	Pennsylvania	1/1/2022	8C
Rinehart, Graham T.	Loveland	Colorado	7/16/2022	2E
Ritterling, Marvin V.	Pueblo	Colorado	2/29/2024	2E
Robbins, Jerry K.	Falmouth	Massachusetts	10/30/2023	8H
Roberts, Donald L.	North Mankato	Minnesota	5/4/2024	3I
Robinson, Beverly A.	Isanti	Minnesota	1/15/2023	3H
Robinson, Kenneth J.	Poulsbo	Washington	7/4/2024	1C
Rock, Liane S	Minneapolis	Minnesota	10/21/2022	3G
Rodriguez, Raquel E.	Chicago	Illinois	2/2/2024	9F
Rogahn, Roger H.	Sylmar	California	8/16/2023	2B
Rogers, Paul F.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	2/1/2024	3G
Rolland, Conrad E.	Roland	Iowa	1/21/2024	5F
Romsa, Donald I.	Port Hueneme	California	7/7/2023	2B
Roppel, David J.	Chittenango	New York	5/27/2024	7D
Rosebrock, H. Norton	Winter Park	Florida	10/22/2023	9E
Rosenberg, Andrew J.	Yuma	Arizona	1/23/2022	1C
Rosenthal, Ray A.	Hilliard	Ohio	4/26/2023	6F
Rosheim, Waldron A.	Locust Grove	Virginia	7/21/2024	9A
Rosin, Frederick M.	Brandon	South Dakota	10/7/2023	3C
Ross, Michael T.	Ridgewood	New York	10/17/2023	7C
Rossbach, Daniel L.	Fairview Park	Ohio	9/3/2022	6E
Rothweiler, Don E.	Ankeny	Iowa	10/12/2022	5D
Routté, Luther H	Wyomissing	Pennsylvania	6/9/2023	7E
Rozen, Lee B.	Whittier	California	8/13/2023	2C
Rudkin, Kenneth E.	Decatur	Illinois	2/6/2022	8A
Ruegg, Lawrence R.	Chaska	Minnesota	6/21/2024	3G
Ryden, Ernest E.	Osterville	Massachusetts	4/21/2023	7B
Saarela, Jack A.	Wyncote	Pennsylvania	5/25/2024	7F
Saarinen, Martin F.	Newberry	South Carolina	4/1/2023	9C
Sailer, Delbert E.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	11/12/2023	3H
Sangobiyi, Miltoria Annette	Evanston	Illinois	10/13/2022	5A
Santmire, Gary C.	Scarsdale	New York	7/28/2024	7C
Santoro, John J.	Buena Park	California	6/12/2023	2B
Sass, William J.	Palisade	Minnesota	6/2/2022	3E
Sasse, Roger L.	Lincoln	Nebraska	1/5/2024	4A
Satre, Carl H.	New Haven	Indiana	7/3/2024	6C
Sauers, Robert F.	Wilkes Barre	Pennsylvania	2/8/2022	7E
Sause, Donald F.	Lavale	Maryland	11/29/2022	8F
Schaefer, Martin J.	Petaluma	California	6/11/2024	2A
Schaffner, Clarence L., Jr.	Chisago City	Minnesota	6/17/2024	3H
Schalnat, Roger G.	Dayton	Ohio	6/8/2022	6F
Schatt, Dennis L.	Green Bay	Wisconsin	9/8/2022	5I
Scheck, Gerald E.	Jacksonville	Florida	5/19/2024	9E
Scheel, Cora E.	Palo Alto	California	12/31/2022	2A
Scherer, James A.	Oak Park	Illinois	12/20/2023	5A
Scherzer, Paul A.	Bowdoinham	Maine	11/11/2022	7B
Schick, Edwin A.	Dubuque	Iowa	2/9/2022	5F
Schilling, John R., III	Essington	Pennsylvania	12/2/2023	7F
Schimmer, Gary M.	Nashville	Tennessee	5/16/2022	9D
Schmalenberger, Jerry L.	Sedona	Arizona	4/25/2022	2A
Schmalzle, Robert T.	Oviedo	Florida	8/11/2024	9E

Schmidt, Karl A.	Coeur D Alene	Idaho	1/30/2024	1C
Schmitt, Harley H.	Brooklyn Park	Minnesota	12/11/2023	3G
Schneuker, Donald G.	Spokane	Washington	6/16/2023	1D
Scholl, William F.	Jacksonville	Florida	10/4/2024	9E
Schoonover, Allan J.	Thayne	Wyoming	6/4/2024	1D
Schoss, Carl H., Jr.	Austin	Texas	4/8/2024	4E
Schroder, Peter C., Jr.	Littleton	Colorado	9/7/2022	2E
Schroeder, David W.	Stockton	California	2/25/2022	2A
Schroeder, Hugo W., Jr.	Liverpool	Pennsylvania	7/13/2024	8E
Schroeder, Kenneth L.	Lombard	Illinois	10/20/2023	5A
Schroeder, Robert R.	Rochester	Minnesota	1/18/2024	3I
Schroeppel, John E.	Hutchinson	Kansas	10/4/2024	4B
Schuetze, Lowell E.	Alexandria	Virginia	7/12/2023	8G
Schultz, Charles G.	Rogers City	Michigan	5/8/2024	6B
Schultz, Gordon J.	Jamaica Plain	Massachusetts	10/9/2024	7B
Schultz, Thomas A.	White Bear Lake	Minnesota	9/22/2023	3H
Schumacher, Frederick J. H.	Manchester	New Jersey	5/14/2023	7C
Schutt, Ronald P.	Evergreen	Colorado	10/29/2022	2E
Schwartz, Roger D.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	3/8/2023	3H
Schwarze, Roger W.	White Bear Lake	Minnesota	5/23/2024	3H
Seiffert, James L.	Portland	Oregon	12/26/2022	1E
Seip, Durrell J.	Nesquehoning	Pennsylvania	11/4/2024	7E
Seivard, Charles F.	North Grosvenordale	Connecticut	5/30/2023	7B
Senarighi, Cynthia S.	White Bear Lake	Minnesota	3/4/2023	3H
Serr, Earnest L.	Waco	Texas	3/7/2024	4E
Shade, Barbara J.	Durham	North Carolina	9/10/2022	9B
Shallow, John F.	Crivitz	Wisconsin	4/4/2023	5G
Sharkey, Eugene F.	Bethlehem	Pennsylvania	11/9/2023	7E
Shealy, James F.	Little Mountain	South Carolina	2/28/2024	9C
Sheppard, Charles F.	Houston	Texas	10/28/2023	4F
Shiell, James L.	Woodbury	Minnesota	1/31/2023	3H
Shiell, Wendell C., Sr.	Edina	Minnesota	11/5/2024	3G
Shoberg, Lawrence A.	Williamsburg	Virginia	6/27/2022	9A
Shriver, Raymond H.	Waynesboro	Pennsylvania	1/4/2024	8D
Shuman, Kenneth E.	Hammond	Louisiana	1/1/2023	4F
Siefken, John H., Jr.	Birmingham	Michigan	12/30/2022	6A
Sill, Sanford S.	Eagle Grove	Iowa	7/25/2022	5E
Simonsen, Edward W.	New Albany	Ohio	11/21/2023	6F
Simpson, John-David	Clinton	Mississippi	9/27/2022	9D
Sinn, Thomas F M	Hillsborough	North Carolina	8/3/2022	9E
Sistek, Raymond A.	York	Pennsylvania	1/1/2022	8D
Skulstad, Howard A.	Blaine	Minnesota	7/8/2023	3G
Smith, Keith L.	Revillo	South Dakota	11/13/2022	3C
Smith, Kenneth H.	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	11/27/2022	7F
Smith, Thomas C.	Austin	Texas	6/7/2022	4E
Smith, William E.	Newton	North Carolina	4/19/2022	9B
Snell, Gwendolyn H.	Farmington Hills	Michigan	3/3/2024	6A
Snyder, Russell E.	Auburn	Indiana	9/11/2023	6C
Solberg, Arthur M.	Edina	Minnesota	12/12/2023	3H
Sonnenberg, Harris G.	Fayetteville	Arkansas	2/14/2023	4C
Sorensen, Harry C.	Colorado Springs	Colorado	7/28/2023	5D
Sortland, Allan B.	Plymouth	Minnesota	10/20/2024	3G
Spann, John W.	Vista	California	2/7/2022	2C
Spear, Ralph S.	Burlington	North Carolina	5/16/2024	9B
Squire, Vernon F.	Pittsford	New York	1/24/2024	7D
Stadem, Leroy W.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	10/30/2024	3C
Staffa, Jean R	Butler	Pennsylvania	11/13/2022	8B

Stakkestad, Wendell J.	Blaine	Washington	2/28/2022	1B
Stallings, Ben G.	Terre Haute	Indiana	10/16/2024	6C
Stangeland, Wendell M.	El Dorado Hills	California	2/14/2024	2A
Startzel, Walter L.	Johnstown	Pennsylvania	8/27/2022	8C
Stein, Timothy J.	Cambridge	Massachusetts	7/31/2022	7B
Steinwand, Dana K.	West Fargo	North Dakota	12/26/2024	3B
Stelzl, James M.	Maumelle	Arkansas	2/28/2023	4C
Stennett, Thomas R.	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	8/22/2022	8B
Stenslie, James R.	Bismarck	North Dakota	9/23/2023	3A
Stephenson, Lester E., Jr.	Scranton	Pennsylvania	12/20/2022	7E
Stern, James A.	Lakewood	Washington	7/16/2024	1C
Stewart, Dean M.	Moscow	Idaho	8/2/2022	1D
Stewart, Richard N.	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	11/13/2022	7F
Stiffler, Raymond L.	Sonora	California	1/20/2023	2D
Stiles, Larry Resmer	Fountain Hills	Arizona	8/16/2023	2D
Stivers, Lloyd E., Jr.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	8/25/2022	3C
Stoa, Allan J.	Albert Lea	Minnesota	2/22/2024	3I
Stoffregen, Virtus W.	Greencastle	Indiana	4/18/2023	5E
Storm, Ralph W.	Cabot	Pennsylvania	12/7/2022	8B
Straszheim, Jerry L.	St Petersburg	Florida	12/31/2022	9E
Stremel, William W.	Broomfield	Colorado	9/12/2024	2E
Stricklin, Melvina V.	Ocean Pines	Maryland	12/13/2022	8F
Strobel, Robert W.	Zelienople	Pennsylvania	5/14/2024	8B
Strom, William F.	Hastings	Minnesota	7/19/2022	3H
Stromer, Harold D., Jr.	Sun City West	Arizona	1/7/2022	2D
Stuhr, Walter M.	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	10/23/2022	2A
Stumme, Wayne C.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	5/24/2023	3H
Sturm, Craig M.	Sherman	Texas	7/16/2024	4D
Sudman, Dean E.	Little Rock	Arkansas	7/25/2023	4C
Sulouff, Nelson R.	Oro Valley	Arizona	2/14/2024	2D
Sustaita, Jose A.	Austin	Texas	1/30/2023	4E
Swanson, Jerrold R.	Mundelein	Illinois	6/23/2022	5A
Swanson, Stephen H.	Lombard	Illinois	10/20/2022	5A
Swartz, Martin L.	Lititz	Pennsylvania	1/31/2022	8D
Swenson, Dean L.	Chisago City	Minnesota	9/6/2023	3H
Swingle, Albert E.	Washington	District of Columbia	10/28/2024	8G
Switzer, Gerald L.	Shelby Township	Michigan	2/13/2023	6B
Sylte, Leonard V.	Nashville	Tennessee	4/19/2022	9D
Synstelien, Floyd L.	Lake Park	Minnesota	10/21/2024	3D
Thalacker, William P.	Waverly	Iowa	1/31/2024	5F
Thime, Howard R.	Mechanicsville	Virginia	11/30/2022	9A
Thompson, Donald R.	Mesa	Arizona	12/9/2024	2D
Thompson, Lowell S.	Baltimore	Maryland	7/28/2024	8F
Thompson, Neil R.	Shelton	Washington	11/25/2022	1C
Thompson, Ralph M.	Shell Lake	Wisconsin	5/1/2022	5H
Thompson, Roger L.	Willard	Ohio	2/12/2022	6D
Thorstensen, John R.	Highlands Ranch	Colorado	4/19/2024	4C
Thuesen, Theodore J.	Hickory	North Carolina	7/11/2024	9B
Thummel, Warren L.	Mundelein	Illinois	1/8/2023	5A
Thurow, Eldon H.	Brandon	South Dakota	2/28/2022	3C
Thvedt, James E.	Brookings	South Dakota	3/26/2023	3C
Timm, John K.	Hagerstown	Maryland	12/16/2022	8C
Timm, Lowell J.	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	5/4/2023	5J
Timmons, Ronald G.	Springfield	Ohio	11/26/2022	6F
Tobiassen, Lloyd T.	Sartell	Minnesota	4/16/2024	3F
Tobisch, Frank A.	De Pere	Wisconsin	4/28/2023	5I
Tokheim, M. Caroline	Hastings	Minnesota	5/9/2024	3H

Tollefsrud, Howard M.	Omaha	Nebraska	4/28/2022	4A
Tomlinson, John W., Jr.	Allentown	Pennsylvania	4/24/2023	7E
Tomlinson, Keith A.	Waverly	Iowa	3/10/2023	5F
Trom, John P.	Grand Junction	Colorado	1/24/2023	3C
Truckenbrod, Kenneth J.	Sun City	Arizona	7/15/2022	2D
Tundel, Philip C.	Yeagertown	Pennsylvania	9/17/2022	8E
Ulleland, Duane E.	Spokane	Washington	3/6/2023	1D
Vaagenes, Carl P.	Saint Paul	Minnesota	12/29/2024	3H
Vaagenes, Morris G. C., Jr.	Shoreview	Minnesota	5/8/2023	3H
Van Antwerp, F. Timothy	Fredericksburg	Texas	11/1/2022	4E
Van Horne, Robert M.	Fletcher	North Carolina	11/4/2022	9B
VanHeerden, Maureen	Palatine	Illinois	6/11/2024	5A
Vasquez, Hector H.	San Antonio	Texas	11/26/2023	4E
Vetter, Eugene W.	New Port Richey	Florida	4/5/2022	9E
Villa, George	Gardena	California	7/13/2023	2B
Villani, Robert E.	Holyoke	Massachusetts	8/24/2024	7B
Vinger, Theodore J.	Rochester	Minnesota	9/11/2022	3I
Vlasak, Don D.	Seguin	Texas	10/15/2023	4E
Voelker, Jim E.	Apple Valley	Minnesota	7/15/2024	3G
Voges, Deana K.	College Station	Texas	9/24/2023	4E
Vojta, Daniel D.	Horicon	Wisconsin	1/28/2024	5K
Vold, Harold O.	Hatton	North Dakota	10/27/2024	3B
Volkmann, Edward J.	Lemon Grove	California	6/28/2024	2C
Vonderlage, E. Frederick, Jr.	Seattle	Washington	10/21/2023	1B
Vorland, Gehard E.	Stillwater	Minnesota	5/28/2024	3H
Wagner, David H.	Sarasota	Florida	5/7/2024	9E
Wagner, Deborah M.	Bethlehem	Pennsylvania	3/11/2023	7E
Wahl, Allen E.	Madison	Wisconsin	1/16/2024	5K
Walker, Robert G.	Burlington	North Carolina	12/6/2023	9B
Walsworth, T. Brent	Madison	Wisconsin	9/3/2024	5K
Wangen, Russell M.	Austin	Minnesota	2/20/2022	3I
Ward, Robert E.	Beaverton	Oregon	4/7/2023	1E
Ware, John E.	Cincinnati	Ohio	11/17/2024	6F
Warke, Guy D.	Bourbonnais	Illinois	3/11/2022	5C
Warnke, Paul F. W., Jr.	Sykesville	Maryland	1/7/2022	8F
Webb, David H.	Seminole	Florida	10/30/2022	9E
Wedemeyer, Gustave H., Jr.	Syracuse	New York	1/6/2022	7D
Wegehoft, Robert R.	Lancaster	Pennsylvania	1/14/2023	8D
Weidlich, Albert W.	Decatur	Illinois	1/13/2023	5C
Weiskotten, Edward F.	Glendale	Wisconsin	11/29/2022	5J
Weissenbuehler, Wayne E.	Burlington	Iowa	9/2/2022	5D
Weitschat, Arthur A.	Hot Springs	South Dakota	4/18/2022	3C
Wendt, William A.	Oakdale	Minnesota	1/11/2023	5H
Wenger, David E.	Yorba Linda	California	8/7/2022	2C
Wennes, Howard E.	Thousand Oaks	California	7/12/2022	2B
Westgard, Gary A.	Yankton	South Dakota	11/12/2022	3C
Wette, Maria T.	Beaverton	Oregon	1/31/2022	2E
White, Byron W., Sr.	Palm Coast	Florida	7/20/2023	9E
White, Gerald C.	Winger	Minnesota	1/4/2022	3D
White, James J., Jr.	Hendersonville	North Carolina	5/10/2024	9B
Whitney, Milton L. R.	Freeport	Illinois	7/18/2024	5B
Wick, Jeffrey P.	Logan	Ohio	10/29/2024	6F
Wickey, Ronald W.	Greenport	New York	9/9/2022	7C
Wietzke, Paul L.	Camano Island	Washington	9/17/2024	1B
Wilburn, Randall K.	Belchertown	Massachusetts	12/10/2024	7B
Wilch, Andrew W., Jr.	Columbus	Ohio	9/12/2024	6F
Wilker, John C.	Thousand Oaks	California	10/9/2022	2B

Willem, Shelley R.	Newport	Oregon	3/13/2022	1E
Williams, Betsy M.	Granville	Ohio	11/16/2023	6F
Wilson, Tom	Chalfont	Pennsylvania	2/5/2023	4A
Wilson, Zane O.	Springfield	Oregon	1/1/2022	1E
Windle, David L.	Watertown	New York	4/5/2024	7D
Winkler, Wilbert H.	Enterprise	Alabama	8/10/2022	9D
Winterfeld, Eugene P.	Rohnert Park	California	8/22/2022	2A
Wittkopf, Marvin	Novi	Michigan	8/10/2023	6A
Wold, David K.	Apache Junction	Arizona	7/16/2022	2D
Wolf, Susan A.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	1/13/2023	3C
Wolff, Larry K.	Pinehurst	North Carolina	4/20/2023	7B
Womer, Jan L.	Chino Hills	California	7/11/2023	2A
Wood, Arthur V.	Tacoma	Washington	6/30/2023	1C
Wuertz, Arnold A.	Overland Park	Kansas	10/17/2024	4B
Yarnell, Ronald	Johnston	Iowa	4/17/2023	5E
Yelovich, Stephen F.	Cumberland	Maryland	10/7/2023	8H
Young, Martin T.	East Berlin	Pennsylvania	9/2/2022	8D
Young, Robert L.	Fremont	Ohio	1/10/2022	6D
Youngblood, Thelma R.	Kingshill	Virgin Islands	5/20/2024	9F
Youngquist, Philip N., Jr.	Lindsborg	Kansas	6/23/2024	4B
Zayas, José D	Bayamon	Puerto Rico	9/19/2024	9F
Zelle, Edgar A.	Waverly	Iowa	10/9/2023	5F
Ziegler, Jeffrey B.	Stratford	New Jersey	8/19/2024	7A
Zielske, Daniel E.	Morristown	Minnesota	10/30/2022	3H
Zikeli, Frederick B.	North Huntingdon	Pennsylvania	9/24/2022	8B
Zima, William C., II	Gibsonville	North Carolina	9/6/2022	9B
Zingale, Timothy B.	Fort Dodge	Iowa	4/2/2022	5E
Zwetzig, Clarence L.	Lincoln	Nebraska	3/25/2022	4A

Rostered Ministers of Word and Service

Name	City	State	Death Date	Synod
Anderson, Ann A.	Longwood	Florida	1/27/2024	9E
Arms, Muriel D.	Inver Grove Heights	Minnesota	8/3/2023	5K
Atkins, Judith N.	Swanton	Ohio	4/22/2023	6D
Beard, Vickie	Simi Valley	California	5/2/2022	2B
Bernards, Cleo	Valencia	California	12/30/2023	2B
Bischmann, Kenneth	Waukesha	Wisconsin	4/8/2024	5J
Blew, Hannelore F.	Allentown	Pennsylvania	3/30/2023	7E
Broman, Raleigh N.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	12/29/2024	3G
Bueide, Audrey J.	Moorhead	Minnesota	10/4/2022	3B
Burling, Marian	Sheridan	Wyoming	1/4/2024	3C
Byers, Sarah J.	Pottstown	Pennsylvania	4/19/2023	7E
Carlin, Ramona H.	Baltimore	Maryland	1/24/2023	4B
Creager, Doris I.	Florence	Oregon	5/6/2022	1E
Degelau, Elaine A.	Minneapolis	Minnesota	2/19/2023	3G
Drake, Millicent J.	Boyertown	Pennsylvania	2/10/2023	7E
Elliott, Leanne N.	Mechanicsburg	Pennsylvania	1/13/2023	8D
Ellis, Linus Marvin, III	Richmond	Virginia	2/24/2023	9A
Enck, Phyllis J.	Stevens	Pennsylvania	9/18/2022	8D
Erickson, Marilyn J.	Bloomington	Minnesota	2/24/2022	3G
Essig, Aina J.	Andover	Minnesota	3/6/2023	3G
Frank, Geraldine A.	Dumont	New Jersey	4/23/2023	7A
Freese, Dorothy A.	Willmar	Minnesota	12/19/2024	3F
Guenther, Timothy E.	Mansfield	Ohio	2/15/2023	6E
Handshue, Marilyn A.	Wadsworth	Ohio	3/5/2023	6E

Hanst, Barbara M	Boulder	Colorado	3/18/2022	2E
Harn, Marjorie J.	Minnetonka	Minnesota	5/22/2023	3G
Helgeson, Lois S.	Edina	Minnesota	8/24/2023	3G
Heller, Laura L	Hampstead	Maryland	6/2/2023	8F
Hernes, Wanda L.	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	3/31/2022	3C
Herr, Anna Elizabeth	Middletown	Pennsylvania	1/17/2023	8D
Hinsch, Judith Ressmeyer	Plainview	New York	1/8/2022	7C
Holten, Olga A.	Pearland	Texas	8/15/2023	4F
Hushagen, Inez M.	Camano Island	Washington	4/22/2023	1B
Johnsen, William A.	Oregon City	Oregon	12/6/2024	1E
Kaufmann, Diane E	Chippewa Falls	Wisconsin	4/12/2024	5H
Kebschull, Elizabeth L.	Saugus	California	3/31/2024	2B
Kieschnick, Melvin M.	Carlsbad	California	12/26/2024	2C
Kirst, Edward A.	North Olmsted	Ohio	6/6/2022	6E
Kroeger, Rose J.	Mount Pleasant	Wisconsin	5/13/2023	5J
Larsen, Bonnie L.	Grand Island	Nebraska	3/3/2024	4A
Larson, Curtis R.	Forman	North Dakota	4/5/2024	3B
Laukonis, Brenda J.	Casa Grande	Arizona	3/17/2024	2D
Lauterbach, Carol J.	West Bend	Wisconsin	10/31/2022	5J
Lee, Erma	Seattle	Washington	1/1/2023	1B
Lightfield, Wanda M.	Denver	Colorado	8/26/2022	5F
Linderkamp, Marilyn G.	Tucson	Arizona	4/10/2024	3G
Meckes, Verna E.	Allentown	Pennsylvania	4/14/2022	7E
Miller, Ruth T.	Allentown	Pennsylvania	11/18/2022	7E
Mize-Baker, Jacquelyn J.	Ozone Park	New York	10/16/2023	7C
Nurnberger, Mark C.	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	1/9/2023	8B
O'Brien, Thomas J.	Lexington	South Carolina	7/29/2023	9C
Olsgaard, Bonnie M.	Missoula	Montana	9/19/2023	1F
Olson, Cassandra S.	Aurora	Colorado	12/4/2022	2E
Pederson, Dorothy A.	Enumclaw	Washington	8/15/2023	1D
Peters, Marilyn L.	Albert Lea	Minnesota	1/8/2023	3I
Price, John D.	Stanardsville	Virginia	2/29/2024	9A
Price, Reginald B.	Baltimore	Maryland	10/13/2024	8F
Ramirez, Carmen A.	Bayamon	Puerto Rico	1/27/2024	9F
Rennegarbe, Paula O.	Huntington Beach	California	4/9/2023	2C
Score, Phyllis L.	Menomonie	Wisconsin	3/26/2022	3G
Slavinski, Barbara A.	York	Pennsylvania	4/11/2024	8D
Smith, Shirley A.	Newark	Ohio	5/30/2023	6F
Sodergren, Joyce E.	Battle Lake	Minnesota	5/28/2023	3D
Sontag, Jean M.	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	1/27/2024	8B
Stemler, Ruthann G.	Louisville	Kentucky	2/3/2022	6C
Stenman, Dorothy L.	Denver	Colorado	3/28/2023	2E
Steveson, Sonnee Olson	Tempe	Arizona	10/7/2023	2D
Stump, Janet A.	Allentown	Pennsylvania	8/25/2024	7E
Tahtinen, Lenora I.	Stillwater	Minnesota	1/24/2024	5G
Tantow, Janet O.	Rochester	Minnesota	2/16/2022	3I
Terhark, Ann L.	Eveleth	Minnesota	10/17/2022	3E
Vuylsteke, Peggy H.	Brown City	Michigan	3/2/2022	6A
Wackenhuth, Sandra M.	Chicago	Illinois	5/16/2023	5A
Walton, Nan Beth	Seattle	Washington	8/3/2023	1B
Weigang, Betty J.	Eastbrook	Maine	12/21/2024	7B
Wilkinson, Marianne A.	Lawrence	Kansas	11/5/2022	4B

Appendix I
Congregations Organized or Received

Synod	State	City	Congregation and Number	Action	Date
1B	Washington	Lake Stevens	Hope Lake Stevens (31480)	Organized	5/18/2024
1C	Washington	Port Ludlow	Peace Lutheran Fellowship (30910)	Organized	5/31/2022
2A	California	Lodi	Iglesia Luterana Santa Maria Peregrina (31472)	Organized	9/15/2023
2C	California	Palm Springs	River Of Hope (31420)	Organized	3/19/2022
2E	Colorado	Boulder	Westview Church (31341)	Organized	4/24/2024
3C	South Dakota	New Effington	Walla Lutheran Church (5387)	Reinstated	6/1/2024
3G	Minnesota	Minneapolis	Holy Cross Lutheran Church (31403)	Organized	4/30/2022
3H	Minnesota	Vadnais Heights	Eternal Flame Lutheran Church (30897)	Organized	4/22/2024
4C	Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	All Saints Lutheran Church (31404)	Organized	2/6/2022
5A	Illinois	Chicago	First Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church (31376)	Received	6/3/2022
5E	Iowa	Sioux City	United Lutheran Church (31400)	Organized	1/1/2022
5I	Wisconsin	Oshkosh	Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church (31441)	Organized	1/3/2023
6A	Michigan	Clawson	Spirit Of Christ Lutheran Church (31457)	Organized	7/1/2023
6C	Indiana	Indianapolis	Mara Evangelical Church In Indianapolis (31390)	Organized	6/7/2024
6E	Ohio	Ontario	Hope Lutheran Church (31477)	Organized	1/14/2024
6F	Ohio	Middletown	New Hope United Lutheran Church (31483)	Organized	8/25/2024
7A	New Jersey	Kendall Park	Abiding Love Lutheran Church (31452)	Organized	4/16/2023
7A	New Jersey	Florham Park	Amazing Grace Lutheran Church (31453)	Organized	5/23/2023
7A	New Jersey	Elizabeth	Santa Isabel Lutheran Church (30846)	Organized	12/3/2023
7B	Connecticut	Bristol	Faith Lutheran Church (31484)	Organized	10/27/2024
7E	Pennsylvania	Easton	United Fellowship Lutheran Church (31421)	Organized	8/1/2022
7E	Pennsylvania	Bethlehem	Blessed Trinity At Rosemont (31471)	Organized	12/3/2023
8E	Pennsylvania	Milton	Milton Lutheran Church (31402)	Organized	1/1/2022
9A	Virginia	Kilmarnock	Living Water Lutheran Church (30639)	Organized	11/20/2022
9B	North Carolina	Winston Salem	Christ's Beloved Community (31203)	Organized	3/10/2024
9E	Florida	Punta Gorda	The Community, ELCA (31391)	Organized	6/2/2024

Appendix J
Congregations Removed, Disbanded, Withdrawn, Consolidated, or Merged

Synod	State	City	Name	Status	Date
1B	Washington	Bellingham	Central Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/26/2023
1B	Washington	Lynden	Clearbrook Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/22/2023
1B	Washington	Renton	Cross and Crown Lutheran Church	Merged to form Living Hope Lutheran Church (04806)	10/20/2024
1B	Washington	Burien	Glendale Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/23/2023
1B	Washington	Bellevue	Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/01/2023
1B	Washington	Lake Stevens	Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/03/2023
1B	Washington	Concrete	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/11/2022
1C	Washington	Sumner	Christ the King Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/15/2024
1D	Idaho	Orofino	Ascension Lutheran Church	Removed	09/08/2024
1D	Washington	Cheney	Emmanuel Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/31/2022
1D	Washington	Spokane	Messiah Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/10/2024
1E	Oregon	Gold Beach	Bethany Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/04/2024
1E	Oregon	Portland	Bethany Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/03/2024
1E	Oregon	Portland	Community of Christchurch	Disbanded	09/15/2024
1E	Oregon	Keizer	Faith Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/24/2024
1E	Oregon	Portland	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/15/2024
1E	Oregon	Woodburn	House of Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/06/2023
1E	Oregon	Boring	St Paul of Damascus Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/12/2024
1E	Oregon	Gladstone	St Stephen Lutheran Church	Merged to form Spirit of Life Lutheran Church (04899)	07/07/2024
1E	Oregon	Medford	Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	03/13/2022
1F	Montana	Absarokee	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	02/20/2022
2A	California	San Francisco	Grace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/16/2022
2A	California	Santa Clara	Our Savior's Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/10/2022
2A	California	Hanford	St James Lutheran Church	Disbanded	02/28/2022
2B	California	San Dimas	Faith Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/22/2022
2B	California	Northridge	First Lutheran Church D/B/A LIFEhouse Church	Withdrawn	06/26/2022
2C	California	Riverside	Hope Lutheran Church	Disbanded	03/27/2022
2D	Arizona	Tucson	Abounding Grace Church	Disbanded	06/11/2023
2D	Arizona	Phoenix	Alleluia Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/12/2022
2D	Arizona	Douglas	Emmanuel Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/31/2022
2D	Arizona	Paradise Valley	Gloria Christi Federated Church	Disbanded	10/06/2024
2D	Arizona	Flagstaff	Living Christ Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/19/2024
2D	Nevada	Las Vegas	Living Hope Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/29/2023
2D	Arizona	Scottsdale	Resurrection Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	03/19/2023
2D	Nevada	Las Vegas	The Lakes Lutheran Church	Merged to form Good Samaritan Lutheran Church (07493)	03/20/2022
2E	Colorado	Austin	All Saints Lutheran Church	Removed	04/24/2024
2E	New Mexico	Truth or Consequences	Desert Springs Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	10/18/2022
3A	North Dakota	Hettinger	Duck Creek Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/16/2023
3A	North Dakota	Halliday	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/11/2023
3A	North Dakota	Bremen	Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/16/2022
3B	North Dakota	Emerado	Ascension Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/08/2024
3B	North Dakota	Hankinson	Calvary Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/24/2022

3B	North Dakota	Fargo	Elim Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/15/2024
3B	North Dakota	Inkster	Faith Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/02/2022
3B	North Dakota	Cummings	Highland Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/02/2022
3B	North Dakota	Luverne	Luverne Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/01/2024
3B	North Dakota	McHenry	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/21/2023
3B	North Dakota	Grafton	Our Saviour Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/08/2023
3B	North Dakota	Pekin	Pekin Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/27/2023
3B	North Dakota	Pembina	Pembina Lutheran Church	Disbanded	08/14/2022
3B	North Dakota	Sarles	Sarles Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/31/2023
3B	North Dakota	Streeter	St Luke Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/15/2022
3B	North Dakota	Litchville	Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/08/2024
3B	North Dakota	Brocket	United Lutheran Church	Disbanded	08/20/2022
3B	North Dakota	Overly	Willow Creek Lutheran Church	Disbanded	07/31/2022
3C	South Dakota	Vienna	Bethlehem Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	09/11/2022
3C	South Dakota	Willow Lake	Grace Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	09/11/2022
3C	South Dakota	Volga	Lake Campbell Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	04/21/2024
3C	South Dakota	Flandreau	Midway Lutheran Church	Removed	03/18/2022
3C	South Dakota	Sinai	Sinai Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	04/21/2024
3C	South Dakota	Scotland	Zion-American Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	03/27/2022
3D	Minnesota	Garfield	East Moe Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/23/2022
3D	Minnesota	Sauk Centre	Little Sauk Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/10/2023
3E	Minnesota	Aitkin	Bethesda Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	02/24/2024
3E	Minnesota	Hibbing	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/16/2023
3E	Minnesota	Boy River	Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	08/06/2023
3F	Minnesota	Lake Wilson	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	01/21/2024
3F	Minnesota	Big Lake	Hope Lutheran Church	Removed	04/13/2024
3F	Minnesota	Stewart	St Paul Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	07/14/2024
3F	Minnesota	Adrian	Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/30/2022
3G	Minnesota	Edina	Calvary Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/31/2023
3G	Minnesota	Minneapolis	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Disbanded	03/01/2023
3G	Minnesota	East Bethel	St Andrew Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/01/2023
3G	Minnesota	Minneapolis	Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/06/2022
3H	Minnesota	Rosemount	Faith Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/31/2022
3H	Minnesota	Saint Paul	Hope Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/31/2022
3H	Minnesota	Saint Paul	St Mark Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/02/2024
3I	Minnesota	Kenyon	Hegre Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	09/10/2023
3I	Minnesota	Bricelyn	South Blue Earth Lutheran Church	Removed	02/05/2022
4A	Nebraska	Pickrell	Christ Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	01/22/2023
4A	Nebraska	Syracuse	Christ Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/24/2022
4A	Nebraska	Walton	Grace Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/10/2024
4A	Nebraska	Wymore	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	06/05/2023
4A	Nebraska	Elkhorn	Living Grace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	02/26/2023
4A	Nebraska	Ponca	Salem Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	10/14/2023
4A	Nebraska	Pilger	St Peter Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/08/2023
4A	Nebraska	Bruning	Trinity Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	01/15/2023
4A	Nebraska	Clay Center	Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/29/2022
4A	Nebraska	Johnson	Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/03/2024
4B	Missouri	Webster Groves	Bethany Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/01/2022
4B	Missouri	Raytown	Blue Ridge Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	07/21/2022
4B	Kansas	Derby	Cross of Glory Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/15/2023
4B	Kansas	Spring Hill	Hillside Community Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	09/01/2022
4B	Kansas	Ness City	Our Redeemer Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/30/2023

4B	Kansas	New Cambria	Peace Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/16/2024
4B	Missouri	Sullivan	Peace Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	12/11/2022
4B	Missouri	Saint Louis	Resurrection Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/31/2022
4B	Kansas	Great Bend	Trinity Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	05/01/2022
4B	Kansas	Otis	Trinity Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	12/03/2023
4B	Missouri	Cole Camp	United Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/24/2022
4B	Kansas	Beloit	Zion Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/28/2023
4B	Kansas	Hollenberg	Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	07/10/2022
4B	Kansas	Wakeeney	Zion Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	06/25/2023
4C	Oklahoma	Del City	Ascension Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form All Saints Lutheran Church (31404)	02/06/2022
4C	Arkansas	Lead Hill	Lord of the Lake Lutheran Church	Disbanded	02/13/2022
4C	Oklahoma	Bartlesville	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Disbanded	02/11/2024
4C	Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	Redeemer Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form All Saints Lutheran Church (31404)	02/06/2022
4C	Oklahoma	Midwest City	St Mark Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form All Saints Lutheran Church (31404)	02/06/2022
4D	Texas	Dallas	Bethany Lutheran Church	Merged to form Central Lutheran Church (14104)	03/27/2022
4D	Texas	Slaton	Grace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/05/2024
4D	Texas	Midland	Hope Lutheran Church	Removed	04/28/2023
4D	Texas	Rockwall	Joy Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	02/05/2022
4D	Texas	Fort Worth	King of Glory Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/14/2023
4D	Texas	Dallas	St John Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/21/2023
4D	Louisiana	Shreveport	St Stephen Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/02/2024
4D	Texas	Farmers Branch	Walnut Hill Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/08/2023
4E	Texas	Lyford	Bethel Lutheran Church	Removed	11/15/2022
4E	Texas	Burnet	First Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	04/28/2024
4E	Texas	Gonzales	First Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	04/23/2023
4E	Texas	Rockport	Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	02/19/2022
4E	Texas	Austin	Lord of Life Lutheran Church	Disbanded	03/05/2023
4E	Texas	San Antonio	Lutheran Church of the Resurrection	Disbanded	02/26/2023
4E	Texas	Manor	New Sweden Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	11/25/2024
4E	Texas	Karnes City	St Paul Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	09/24/2023
4F	Texas	League City	Lakeside Lutheran Church	Disbanded	08/13/2022
4F	Texas	Houston	Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/24/2023
4F	Texas	Brenham	St James Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/11/2024
4F	Texas	Brenham	St Paul Lutheran Church of Phillipsburg	Withdrawn	08/11/2024
5A	Illinois	Chicago	Ashburn Evangelical Lutheran Church	Merged to form Trinity Lutheran Church (10746)	05/22/2022
5A	Illinois	Brookfield	Faith Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/31/2022
5A	Illinois	Chicago	First Lutheran Church of the Trinity	Disbanded	06/30/2023
5A	Illinois	Naperville	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	05/05/2024
5A	Illinois	Chicago	Salem Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/08/2022
5A	Illinois	Western Springs	St James Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/17/2023
5A	Illinois	Elmhurst	St Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church	Disbanded	08/31/2023
5A	Illinois	Itasca	St Matthew Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/31/2023
5A	Illinois	Antioch	St Stephen Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/18/2022

5A	Illinois	Chicago	St Timothy Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/22/2023
5B	Illinois	Rockford	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/14/2024
5C	Illinois	Nauvoo	Christ Lutheran Church	Disbanded	08/07/2022
5D	Iowa	Burlington	Faith Lutheran Church	Merged to form Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church D/B/A Unity Lutheran Church (02432)	03/28/2024
5D	Iowa	Clinton	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/11/2022
5D	Iowa	West Des Moines	Lutheran Church of Hope	Removed	09/15/2024
5E	Iowa	Brayton	Brayton Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	01/21/2023
5E	Iowa	Sioux City	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form United Lutheran Church (31400)	01/01/2022
5E	Iowa	Sioux City	New Life Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form United Lutheran Church (31400)	01/01/2022
5E	Iowa	Correctionville	Salem Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	11/06/2022
5E	Iowa	Paullina	Siloam Lutheran Church	Disbanded	03/31/2024
5E	Iowa	Cushing	St John Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	11/06/2022
5E	Iowa	Le Mars	St John Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/28/2022
5F	Iowa	Mitchell	Faith Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/30/2024
5F	Iowa	Scarville	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/30/2024
5F	Iowa	Cedar Falls	Nazareth Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/28/2024
5F	Iowa	Marble Rock	St Paul Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/29/2023
5F	Iowa	Chester	United Lutheran Church	Disbanded	02/05/2023
5F	Iowa	Alta Vista	Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/07/2024
5G	Wisconsin	Sayner	Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	01/13/2024
5H	Wisconsin	Superior	Bethel Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/06/2023
5H	Wisconsin	Ellsworth	Bethlehem Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/17/2023
5H	Wisconsin	Taylor	First Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/28/2024
5H	Wisconsin	Riplinger	St John Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	05/08/2022
5H	Wisconsin	Spencer	St John Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	05/08/2022
5I	Wisconsin	Aniwa	Bethany Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	04/30/2023
5I	Wisconsin	Oshkosh	Christ Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church (31441)	01/03/2023
5I	Wisconsin	Appleton	Grace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/08/2023
5I	Wisconsin	Green Bay	Incarnation Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/08/2023
5I	Wisconsin	Oshkosh	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church (31441)	01/03/2023
5I	Wisconsin	Leopolis	St John Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/24/2023
5J	Wisconsin	Milwaukee	Capitol Drive Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/25/2022
5J	Wisconsin	Racine	Messiah Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/11/2023
5J	Wisconsin	Milwaukee	Redemption Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/08/2023
5J	Wisconsin	Milwaukee	Spirit of Peace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	02/25/2024
5J	Wisconsin	West Milwaukee	St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/15/2023
5J	Wisconsin	Milwaukee	Wellington Park Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/16/2023
6A	Michigan	Farmington Hills	Antioch Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/04/2023
6A	Michigan	Shelby Township	Faith Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/31/2023

6A	Michigan	Pontiac	Good Samaritan Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/11/2023
6A	Michigan	Royal Oak	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Spirit of Christ Lutheran Church (31457)	07/01/2023
6A	Michigan	Madison Heights	Prince of Glory Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Spirit of Christ Lutheran Church (31457)	07/01/2023
6A	Michigan	Ypsilanti	St Mark Lutheran Church	Disbanded	02/06/2022
6A	Michigan	Sterling Heights	St Thomas Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/13/2022
6A	Michigan	Clawson	Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Spirit of Christ Lutheran Church (31457)	07/01/2023
6B	Michigan	Lansing	Calvary Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/30/2022
6B	Michigan	Wyoming	Gethsemane Lutheran Church	Disbanded	07/31/2022
6B	Michigan	Niles	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/25/2022
6B	Michigan	Marlette	Hope Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	09/07/2024
6B	Michigan	Roscommon	Messiah Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	09/07/2024
6B	Michigan	Rogers City	St John Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	11/13/2022
6B	Michigan	Lansing	St Stephen Lutheran Church	Disbanded	08/31/2022
6B	Michigan	Midland	St Timothy Lutheran Church	Merged to form Trinity Lutheran Church (11316)	06/01/2022
6B	Michigan	Barton City	Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/23/2024
6C	Indiana	La Porte	Bethany Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	04/23/2022
6C	Indiana	Syracuse	Grace Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/03/2024
6C	Indiana	Walton	Shiloh Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/15/2023
6C	Indiana	Sunman	St John Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	03/06/2022
6D	Ohio	Toledo	Augsburg Evangelical Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/08/2023
6D	Ohio	Wapakoneta	First English Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	04/13/2024
6D	Ohio	Bryan	First Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/31/2023
6D	Ohio	Oregon	First St Mark Lutheran Church	Disbanded	07/30/2023
6D	Ohio	Toledo	Martin Luther Lutheran Church	Disbanded	03/06/2022
6D	Ohio	Galion	Peace Lutheran Church	Merged to form Trinity Lutheran Church (13189)	08/04/2024
6D	Indiana	Portland	St James Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/27/2022
6D	Ohio	Crestline	St John Lutheran Church	Merged to form Trinity Lutheran Church (13189)	08/04/2024
6D	Ohio	Marion	St Paul Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/19/2023
6D	Ohio	Sandusky	St Paul Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/20/2022
6D	Ohio	Fremont	Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/26/2022
6D	Ohio	Lafayette	Zion Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	09/21/2024
6E	Ohio	Euclid	Euclid Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/28/2023
6E	Ohio	Plymouth	First Lutheran Church	Removed	08/17/2024
6E	Ohio	Warren	Living Lord Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	09/08/2024
6E	Ohio	Shiloh	Mount Hope Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	08/17/2024
6E	Ohio	Elyria	Redeemer Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/09/2024
6E	Ohio	Polk	Rowsburg Lutheran Church	Disbanded	07/16/2022
6E	Ohio	Sandyville	Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/15/2024
6E	Ohio	Highland Heights	St John Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/30/2022

6E	Ohio	Newcomerstown	St Paul Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	06/25/2022
6E	Ohio	Ontario	St Paul Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Hope Lutheran Church (31477)	01/14/2024
6E	Ohio	New Philadelphia	St Peter Lutheran Church	Removed	08/26/2023
6E	Ohio	Mansfield	St Timothy Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Hope Lutheran Church (31477)	01/14/2024
6E	Ohio	Lakewood	Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/11/2023
6F	Ohio	Middletown	Bethlehem Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form New Hope United Lutheran Church (31483)	08/25/2024
6F	Ohio	St Louisville	St Paul Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/23/2022
6F	Ohio	Middletown	Zion Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form New Hope United Lutheran Church (31483)	08/25/2024
7A	New Jersey	Jersey City	Christ Our Saviour Lutheran Church	Merged to form Redeemer Lutheran Church (03624)	05/07/2023
7A	New Jersey	Kendall Park	Christ the King Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Abiding Love Lutheran Church (31452)	04/16/2023
7A	New Jersey	Pleasantville	Epiphany Lutheran Church	Merged to form Reformation Lutheran Church (03773)	01/20/2022
7A	New Jersey	Kearny	First Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/22/2023
7A	New Jersey	Florham Park	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Amazing Grace Lutheran Church (31453)	05/23/2023
7A	New Jersey	Maple Shade	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/11/2022
7A	New Jersey	Kendall Park	Nativity Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Abiding Love Lutheran Church (31452)	04/16/2023
7A	New Jersey	Dunellen	St Luke Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/15/2023
7A	New Jersey	Florham Park	St Mark Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Amazing Grace Lutheran Church (31453)	05/23/2023
7A	New Jersey	Collingswood	St Paul Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/27/2024
7A	New Jersey	Fairview	Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/11/2023
7B	Connecticut	East Hartford	Faith Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/08/2023
7B	Connecticut	Ellington	First Lutheran Church	Merged to form Trinity Lutheran Church (20033)	06/01/2022
7B	Connecticut	Plainville	Grace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/20/2024
7B	Massachusetts	Framingham	Lutheran Church of Framingham	Disbanded	05/01/2022
7B	Massachusetts	Brockton	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Merged to form First Lutheran Church (03543)	07/03/2022
7B	Connecticut	Kensington	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/20/2022
7B	Massachusetts	Lawrence	Redeemer Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/16/2023
7B	Connecticut	Bridgeport	Salem Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/16/2024
7B	Connecticut	Bristol	St Andrew Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/20/2024

7B	Maine	Portland	St Ansgar Evangelical Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/29/2024
7B	Connecticut	New Britain	St John Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/16/2023
7B	Massachusetts	Peabody	St John Lutheran Church	Removed	12/03/2022
7B	Massachusetts	East Longmeadow	St Paul Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/06/2022
7B	Connecticut	Shelton	Trinity Lutheran Church	Merged to form Immanuel Lutheran Church (03469)	09/18/2022
7B	Connecticut	Bristol	Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/20/2024
7C	New York	Little Neck	Christ Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/24/2022
7C	New York	New York	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	01/27/2024
7D	New York	Williamsville	Amherst Lutheran Church	Merged to form St Paul Lutheran Church (07030)	12/28/2022
7D	New York	Rochester	Reformation Lutheran Church	Merged to form Our Saviour Lutheran Church (20215)	11/02/2022
7D	New York	Niagara Falls	St Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/06/2022
7D	New York	Silver Creek	Zion Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/02/2024
7E	Pennsylvania	Bethlehem	Blessed Trinity Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Blessed Trinity At Rosemont (31471)	12/03/2023
7E	Pennsylvania	Easton	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form United Fellowship Lutheran Church (31421)	08/01/2022
7E	Pennsylvania	Martins Creek	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Disbanded	08/06/2023
7E	Pennsylvania	Reading	Grace Lutheran Church	Merged to form Renewed Spirit Church (00775)	10/01/2022
7E	Pennsylvania	Bethlehem	Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	10/28/2023
7E	Pennsylvania	Reading	Holy Spirit Lutheran Church	Merged to form Renewed Spirit Church (00775)	10/01/2022
7E	Pennsylvania	Bethlehem	Light of Christ Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Blessed Trinity Lutheran Church (31445)	02/05/2023
7E	Pennsylvania	Reading	Peace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/25/2022
7E	Pennsylvania	Bethlehem	Rosemont Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Blessed Trinity At Rosemont (31471)	12/03/2023
7E	Pennsylvania	Nanticoke	St John Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	04/20/2024
7E	Pennsylvania	Bethlehem	St John Windish Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Blessed Trinity Lutheran Church (31445)	02/05/2023
7E	Pennsylvania	Reading	St Luke Lutheran Church	Merged to form Renewed Spirit Church (00775)	10/01/2022
7E	Pennsylvania	Hamburg	St Michael Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	01/15/2022
7E	Pennsylvania	Easton	St Paul Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form United Fellowship Lutheran Church (31421)	08/01/2022

7E	Pennsylvania	Bethlehem	St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Blessed Trinity Lutheran Church (31445)	02/05/2023
7F	Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Bethany Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/20/2022
7F	Pennsylvania	Lansdowne	St Paul Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/30/2024
7F	Pennsylvania	Norristown	St Paul Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/09/2024
7F	Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/08/2023
8A	Pennsylvania	Erie	St Stephen Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/30/2022
8B	Pennsylvania	Charleroi	Christ Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/06/2024
8B	Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh	Christ Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/08/2023
8B	Pennsylvania	Aliquippa	Faith Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/29/2024
8B	Pennsylvania	New Kensington	First Evangelical Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/05/2023
8B	Pennsylvania	New Castle	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/05/2023
8B	Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/14/2024
8B	Pennsylvania	Butler	Grace @ Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church	Disbanded	02/27/2022
8B	Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh	Grace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/31/2023
8B	Pennsylvania	Mount Pleasant	St John's Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/29/2023
8B	Pennsylvania	New Brighton	Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church	Merged to form Redeemer Trinity Lutheran Church (06449)	11/21/2023
8B	Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh	Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	06/25/2023
8C	Pennsylvania	Everett	Bald Hill Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	10/30/2022
8C	Pennsylvania	Dubois	Christ Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	01/22/2023
8C	Pennsylvania	Stoystown	Grace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	07/10/2022
8C	Pennsylvania	Somerset	Mount Zion Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	11/27/2022
8C	Pennsylvania	Bedford	St James Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	10/30/2022
8C	Pennsylvania	Rockwood	St Luke Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/05/2023
8C	Pennsylvania	Everett	St Mark Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	10/30/2022
8C	Pennsylvania	Hooversville	Trinity Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/24/2022
8C	Pennsylvania	Johnstown	Trinity Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	11/06/2022
8D	Pennsylvania	Dillsburg	Christ Lutheran Church	Merged to form St Peter Lutheran Church (01511)	08/01/2024
8D	Pennsylvania	Dover	Salem Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/21/2023
8D	Pennsylvania	Lebanon	St James Lutheran Church	Merged to form Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church (01190)	04/30/2023
8D	Pennsylvania	Carlisle	St Matthias Evangelical Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/24/2024
8D	Pennsylvania	York	Trinity Lutheran Church	Merged to form Luther Memorial Lutheran Church (01478)	12/04/2022
8D	Pennsylvania	Lemoyne	Zion Lutheran Church	Merged to form St Paul Lutheran Church (01027)	12/01/2024
8E	Pennsylvania	Milton	Christ Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Milton Lutheran Church (31402)	01/01/2022
8E	Pennsylvania	Sunbury	Grace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/16/2022
8E	Pennsylvania	Bloomsburg	Hidlay Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/01/2024
8E	Pennsylvania	Pennsdale	St James Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	07/06/2022

8E	Pennsylvania	Milton	Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church	Consolidated to form Milton Lutheran Church (31402)	01/01/2022
8F	Maryland	Baltimore	St Mark Estonian Lutheran Church	Disbanded	09/30/2024
9A	Virginia	Bealeton	St Thomas Lutheran Church	Disbanded	08/31/2022
9B	North Carolina	Winston Salem	Christ Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/15/2023
9B	North Carolina	Salisbury	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/12/2023
9C	South Carolina	Laurens	Atonement Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/10/2023
9C	South Carolina	Leesville	Cedar Grove Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/27/2024
9C	South Carolina	Columbia	Christ Mission	Disbanded	10/16/2022
9C	South Carolina	Greenville	Christ the King Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/19/2024
9C	South Carolina	Pickens	Faith Lutheran Chapel	Disbanded	07/16/2023
9C	South Carolina	Hartsville	Our Shepherd Lutheran Church	Disbanded	01/30/2022
9C	South Carolina	Johnston	St John Lutheran Church	Disbanded	02/25/2024
9D	Alabama	Huntsville	All Saints Lutheran Church	Disbanded	11/12/2023
9E	Florida	Tampa	Faith Lutheran Church	Disbanded	05/01/2022
9E	Florida	Cocoa	Messiah Lutheran Church	Disbanded	12/11/2022
9E	Florida	Panama City	Messiah Lutheran Church	Disbanded	04/07/2024
9E	Florida	Margate	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/30/2022
9E	Florida	Stuart	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Merged to form Immanuel Lutheran Church (07799)	01/08/2023
9E	Florida	Clearwater	St Matthias Lutheran Church	Disbanded	10/22/2022
9E	Florida	Niceville	St Paul Lutheran Church	Withdrawn	04/16/2023

Exhibit E

Report of the Treasurer

Part One: Work of the office

Responsibilities

The treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) proposes policy and provides for the implementation, within such policies, of the financial, accounting, audit, granting, banking, investment, property, and information technology systems of the churchwide organization. The office also oversees the management of churchwide organization facilities. The governing description of the Office of the Treasurer appears in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, continuing resolutions 15.14.A25. and 15.14.B25.

Budget development and oversight

In the area of budgeting the Office of the Treasurer estimates revenue, recommends spending authorization levels, and advises the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding financial sustainability. Working closely with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, including the Development team, this office engages in collaborative efforts to monitor and align spending of both unrestricted and restricted funds with anticipated income. The budget is prepared using Adaptive Planning, the budgeting tool within our financial accounting solution, Workday, based on revenue and spending authorizations approved by the Churchwide Assembly and/or the Church Council. Finance directors work collaboratively with programmatic units and offices to develop budgets and to provide financial oversight of spending in accordance with the budget allocations and restricted projects. Business reviews are conducted with each unit and office on a quarterly basis to review actual performance vis-à-vis budget. The budgeting team also oversees the capital expenditures and related budget of the churchwide organization. See Section V for more details on the FY 2026ç2028 budget.

Accounting services

The Financial Accounting and Reporting team is responsible for processing financial transactions, performing month-end closings, and reporting financial results of the churchwide organization, including the annual audit performed by our external auditors. Financial statements are prepared both monthly and annually. Collaboration across the organization and with our ăŜLJI·NJI·ű$fè ƛyŎ2NLJ2NJI·ű$Ř Yƛy‍ƛăúNJŜă ƛă I·y ƛYLJ2NúI·yű I·ăLJŜŎű 2ŦűKƛă ű$I·YQă ø2NJ‍ l ű2 Ŝyğ‍ădzNJŜ transactions are recorded in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and that internal controls are in place and operating effectively. Oversight of the financial statements also includes maintenance of the general ledger, including both accounting for receipts and spending for unrestricted, restricted, and designated funds. The accounts receivable, accounts payable, contracts processing, and cash management functions are also performed by the financial accounting team. The team also provides various accounting services for the ELCA Foundation, Lutheran Men in Mission, and Women of the ELCA, as well as services for special events such as the Youth Gathering and Churchwide Assembly.

Banking and investments

The Office of the Treasurer is responsible for safeguarding organizational assets and for recommending policies to the ELCA Church Council for managing cash balances and monitoring

the activities of investment managers. Investment strategies are designed to meet policy objectives and cash flow needs. Operational banking and investment relationships are maintained with BMO Harris Bank; Wells Fargo Bank; Columbia Threadneedle Investments, the global asset management business of Ameriprise Financial, Inc.; and Midwest Institutional Trust Company.

BMO Harris Bank continues to provide treasury management services for churchwide programs. Endowment assets and other deferred gift investments are managed by the ELCA Foundation.

Grants management

The Grants Management team of the ELCA churchwide organization serves as a central partner in supporting, consulting, and collaborating with program staff to develop efficient and effective processes for all grant and scholarship distributions. The team plays an integral role in every phase of the grant cycle (including registration, application, review, decision-making, distribution, and reporting), assuring a consistent and streamlined experience for both internal and external stakeholders.

Acting as both a service and strategy unit, the team is committed to building user-friendly systems, creating essential resources for grantees, employees, and reviewers, and fostering greater clarity and accessibility in all aspects of grants administration. Their goal is not only operational excellence but also to connect internal staff to their work in meaningful, informed ways.

Audit

The Office of the Treasurer is responsible for designing the system of internal controls to ăI·ŦŜ∃dzI·NJŘ ŭĸKŜ 2NJ∃I·yλÎI·ŭλ2yQă NJŜă2dzNJÖŜăΣ λyÕŦdzŘλyΞ ŭĸKŜ Ö22NJŘλyl·ŭλ2y´ 2Ŧ λyŭŜNJyl·f I·dzŘλŭ ăŜNJØλÖŜăΦ Forvis Mazars has provided internal audit services for the churchwide organization, the ELCA Foundation, and the Mission Investment Fund since 2021.

C2NJØλă aI·ÎI·NJăΩ ø2NJ] λyÕŦdzŘŜă I· ŭĸKλNJŘ-LJI·NJúè I·ăăŜăăY´Ŝyű 2Ŧ ŭĸKŜ ÖKdzNJÖKøλŘŜ 2NJ∃I·yλÎI·ŭλ2yQă NJλă] matrix and financial controls as well as best practices. The internal audit function reports directly to the ELCA Audit Committee. As part of the internal audit services provided, Forvis Mazars supports an electronic platform that employees may use to report whistleblower concerns, which includes topics in the following categories: Business Conduct Standards; Human Resources; Environmental, Health, and Safety; Fraud, Abuse, and Theft; Information Law, Data Privacy and Cybersecurity; and Healthcare. Employees may file claims anonymously if they choose.

Crowe LLP provides external audit services for the churchwide organization and meets with the ELCA Audit Committee at least two times per year. During the triennium, audit processes have resulted in unmodified opinions and no proposed adjustments or material weaknesses in internal controls. The audit reports for the churchwide organization are attached as an addendum to this report.

Information technology

The ELCA Information Technology and Digital Solutions team (OT-IT) widely supports the church by developing modern technology solutions for finding community and relationships with current members, as well as those unfamiliar with the ELCA. The churchwide organization OT-IT team provides contemporary business tools and applications for spreading the word of God and provides management services for finance, rostered ministers, congregations and relational constituents, archives, forms, surveys, and websites. Other digital solutions enhance how the ELCA carries out ministry across its expressions.

Office of the Treasurer highlights during the triennium 2023–2025

The work of all facets of the Office of the Treasurer is not only to support the work of the churchwide organization and all those we serve today, but also to provide thought leadership as together we plan for the future of the ELCA. The past triennium has been marked with adaptation of policies and business processes to support a continued hybrid work force, introduction of new tools to create efficiencies in our work, emphasis on planning and financial projections, response to shifts in communities that we serve and those with whom we want to connect, and a lens toward innovative thinking and change management. We recognize that none of our work would be possible without the support that is provided by members of our church, congregations and worshiping communities, synods, and other ministry partners, and we give thanks for each of you. The OT-Finance team is driven by a passion and commitment to provide accurate and timely information to support decision making and to faithfully steward those assets entrusted to us so we may be able to financially resource the organization to do the work that God is calling us to do for generations to come. The commitment of the OT-IT team is to create value by accompanying our partners in delivering and advancing purposeful technology solutions that reduce complexity and increase the focus on mission in a secure, people-centered, consistent, impactful, collaborative, and cost-effective manner.

- Enhanced budgeting, forecasting, and planning: ² 2ℕ⟧ŘI·è⓪ă ōʤŘƎŜűʎyƎ Y2ŘʤfŜƶ !ŘI·LJűʎØŜ Planning, was first introduced in the development of the detailed operating budgets for FY 2023. The use of Adaptive Planning has reinforced the practice of building budgets from the bottom up, simplified the user experience, promoted consistency in classification across the organization, improved versioning and document retention, and enhanced reporting and review of budget to actual results, necessary for informed decision making. Not only has this tool created efficiencies in the budgeting process, but visibility and access to greater detail through Workday has resourced teams with data to more easily manage budgets, considering declining budget allocations. The churchwide organization is continuously learning new ways to more effectively use Adaptive Planning in forecasting and modeling scenarios.
- Invoice payments: In February 2025, the OT-Finance team engaged with an outsourced payments provider, OneSource Virtual, to pay a portion of our invoices at a reduced cost. The service lowers our banking fees and also promotes the opportunity for suppliers to receive payments through virtual cards. The ELCA benefits through a quarterly rebate for those suppliers that opt-in to receive virtual payments. This payment partnership comes at no cost to the ELCA, enhances the types of payments we offer to vendors, reduces banking fees, and also creates a small revenue stream. International wires and checks and grants for synods, congregations, and other suppliers who do not opt-in for virtual payments continue to be paid through our regular payment processes and, if any urgent payment need arises, OT-Finance can continue to make these payments via our traditional banking process.
- Reduction in close time and issuance of monthly financial statements: The OT-Finance team has been actively engaged in coordinating a faster period close process to ensure that financial statements are completed and shared within the organization in a timely manner. Monthly, financial statements are reviewed with key OT-Finance leaders within the first ten business days of the month and published for the churchwide organization thereafter. This is 1ç2 weeks faster than the historical process. Thank you to the many partners, including synods, who have enabled this by modifying processes to submit data to us more quickly. OT-Finance staff have implemented enhanced system period close

checklists (starting July 2022) and account certifications (November 2022) as a means of coordinating monthly close tasks and reconciliation approval. These checklists and certifications clearly document when users complete tasks and the financial statements are not issued until all period close tasks are signed off and completed. Overall, this process not only has improved the timeliness of financial statement preparation, but also drastically improved our control environment as reviewed by both internal and external audit.

- Expense report improvements: The expense report process continues to improve both through technology enhancements and overall process improvements. Employees now receive recommendations when entering expense transactions on their reports, eliminating guesswork and ensuring accurate expense item coding. This also reduces the time employees spend on their expense reports. Furthermore, we offer receipt scanning services, allowing employees to scan receipts with their mobile phone cameras which automatically generates an expense item for upcoming reports. The control environment over expense report review has also been enhanced through the use of anomaly detection within the Workday application. Background machine learning helps to identify if employees have unusually high charges, incorrectly coded expenses, and provides a risk rating of high, medium, or low for the expense partner and other reviewers to see as they are reviewing expense reports.
- Other changes that benefit the organization: The Office of the Treasurer is continually working to improve the experience of our internal staff as well as those whom we serve. OT has internally automated many reports and functions that historically were done through manual files and processes. The streamlining of these functions has improved accuracy of data and allows for real-time reporting. The OT-Finance and OT-IT teams actively coordinate to ensure that all enhancements that would positively impact the ăűł·₮₸Ωă ʤžăŜ 2₸ űĸŜ ăèăűŜϒ ł·ℕŜ ʎϒLJfŜϒŜyűŜŘ¢ 9yĸł·yŎŜŘ ϒł·ŎĸʎyŜ fŜł·ℕyʎyƎΣ ł·y2ϒł·fê detection, and suggested invoice and expense coding are a few of the Workday improvements that have been leveraged over the last few years. The OT team also has worked to enhance payment mechanisms through implementing a stripe account to allow donors and staff to use digital wallets in making payments to the churchwide organization for various payments to the ELCA, online giving, and event registration. The use of the stripe system has improved user experience in allowing payments through QR codes and other fundraising pages.
- Grantmaking at scale: In FY 2024 alone, the Grants team managed 1,121 active grant processes, resulting in the distribution of approximately $50 million.
- Grant system improvements: Over the past three years, the Grants team conducted a comprehensive audit of the ELCA GrantMaker (EGM) system and its related resources. This led to the creation of a centralized resource hub, a reconfiguration of the EGM system, and a redesign of the elca.org/grants website. These updates simplified navigation, clarified support options, and enhanced system alignment for a more intuitive user experience.
- Structural streamlining and policy updates: To enhance consistency and future reporting capabilities, the Grants team reduced the number of grant themes from nine to four, consolidated data fields, and standardized backend naming conventions. They also led a ℕŜØʎăʎ2ϒ 2₸ űĸŜ 9[/ !ă Ǝℕł·yűϒł·ʅʎyƎ LJ2fůŎè, strengthening compliance, improving clarity, and reinforcing best practices.

- Responsive service model: Supporting both internal and external stakeholders, the Grants team manages an active grants ticketing system, responding to approximately 3,000 tickets annually. Their ongoing support ensures issues are resolved efficiently and user needs are consistently met.
- Affordable, enabling ministry technology: OT-IT staff focused on building partnerships with program leaders to enhance congregation and synod utilization of technology solutions to advance their ministries. For instance, listening sessions were conducted with Research and Evaluation along with several synods for improvements to the annual report process. This led to skillset development through scheduled training and instructions for completing the report with an updated technology system. Also, the OT-Finance and OT-IT team conducted a successful webinar for synod treasurers and bookkeepers regarding the synod remittance process and system which will help centralize communications for all active synod staff.
- Reaching a new ELCA audience with digital advancements: OT-IT partnered with Development and Strategic Communications and other parts of the churchwide organization to deliver easy-to-use online and digital solutions for existing members and for reaching new, young, and diverse individuals. The organization completed the move to a robust email platform to allow for more responsive and flexible communication for those we serve. The organization also introduced a new, modern, online giving platform which has processed $2.5 million in donations, including the ability to cover processing fees on 69% of all gifts, resulting in $44,000 of additional revenue to offset processing costs and support for digital wallets. The ExploreFaith.Church website was launched along with an upgraded online resource center. Other sites that were launched or migrated were the Youth Gathering site and Young Adult sites. A new e-advocacy system to improve dissemination of information and calls to action, including contacting legislators through email and phone calls, was implemented.
- The ELCA and artificial intelligence (AI): The churchwide organization invested in understanding and preparing for responsible, human-centered use of artificial intelligence. To be responsible and ethical in using the AI toolkit, governance structure and policies were implemented. The creation was iterative and will continue to evolve as the ELCA adopts this new technology. Baseline education was provided on the opportunities and risks. A readiness assessment and value discovery were conducted to understand opportunities and approaches that the organization can take as it looks to enable itself with this technology in a responsible way.
- Working efficiently through remote and hybrid collaboration: Reducing travel expenses increases the need to collaborate in a hybrid manner. New technologies have added benefits including transcription, translation, note summary, and advanced features such as hand-raising and whiteboarding. OT-IT embraced these new technologies and trained the organization to foster community and relationships using these tools, including the work of the Conference of Bishops and Church Council.
- Enterprise risk management and data security: Information security remained a top priority for the OT-IT team and partners to protect organizational reputation and keep systems and data secure. IT focused on moving more of the infrastructure to the cloud and improving security related to hybrid/remote work. Investments were made in security awareness to ensure all staff build their knowledge of the role they play in securing information. Data loss prevention systems were upgraded to improve data protection. The technology systems remaining at the Lutheran Center had their current

and disaster recovery databases migrated to an improved and more cost-effective platform.

A comprehensive security assessment was conducted in 2024. The assessment was based on the National Institute of Standards and Technology Cybersecurity Framework (NIST CSF). The ELCA received a score of 3 (Repeatable) on a scale of 4 (Adaptive) which indicates that churchwide organization practices are more formalized and consistently applied compared to lower tiers. The Repeatable tier indicates that an organization has established and implemented risk management practices that are regularly updated based on lessons learned and predictive indicators.

- Analytics and automation: Building upon capabilities of the major software systems implemented during 2019ς2022, priority was given to optimizing the user experience, automating processes, integrating technologies, leveraging single points of entry for constituent information, and enhancing data analytics to assist with financial insights, engagement strategies, and demographic information.

The Information Technology team led numerous other initiatives to become more digitally enabled. The team:

- Provided training and support for computers, website/web applications, staff onboarding and offboarding, and systems maintenance, as well as support for meetings, events, and conferences.
- Provided support for several separately incorporated ministries including the ELCA Foundation, Mission Investment Fund, Women of the ELCA, and Lutheran Men in Mission. In 2024 we began to partially support the ELCA Federal Credit Union.
- Created the concept of ELCA education days and delivered 44 live education classes with more than 1,015 attendees in 2024.
- Continued using agile and product centric management practices to increase speed to value delivery and impact.
- Provided global gender updates to systems and records to reflect gender identity more accurately.
- Improved technology in the chapel to offer better engagement for both in-person and remote attendees.
- Partnered with the MIF in the migration to their new banking platform.
- Partnered with the ELCA Foundation in the launching of their new donor/investor portal.
- A laptop refresh for churchwide organization staff will occur in the fourth quarter of 2025.

Major work in 2026ð2028

As we approach the next triennium, the OT-Finance team will continue to collaborate across the organization to identify opportunities to increase revenue streams and to leverage work to maximize resources available for ministries.

The team will also serve as resource staff for the Financial Coordinating Task Force, as recommended by the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. The task force will consist of members with financial expertise from all three expressions of this church and will look for opportunities to share best practices and to strengthen and leverage financial resources.

Oversight of facilities management returned to the Office of the Treasurer in 2025. A major focus of this work in the next triennium will be on tenant recruitment and operating improvements to enhance the financial returns generated by the Lutheran Center facility.

Finance will continue to better leverage the continuously evolving Workday system for improved analysis and user experience. Finance will continue to utilize system capabilities to

improve cashflow forecasting on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis and to review cash management alternatives to enhance short-term investment returns and protect assets. Further reporting and analytic creation will be leveraged to provide staff the resources needed to evaluate opportunities for cost reductions as the churchwide organization manages against projected declines in revenue streams for the 2026ς2028 triennium. Tools such as Workday Agents, an enhanced version of AI, will be assessed in the next few years to simplify and further automate essential tasks.

Efforts are underway to improve bi-directional synod communications related to financial matters. The implementation of a synod portal will bring an integrated approach to all payments to synods as well as a more user-friendly synod Mission Support process. Initially, the portal will be functional in 2025, but additional enhancements are expected in 2026 to bring about better reporting back to synods on intent, receipts, payments, and invoices.

Information Technology will have opportunities across the expressions of this church to analyze, assess, and deliver improved technical solutions for mission growth. Some of these opportunities include:

- Growing this church by building community: As new constituents are identified from an advanced technological generation, OT-IT is confident in building engagement platforms for supporting synods and congregations to advance the gospel through traditional and digital communications.
- Strengthening ELCA ecology communication portals: New digital portals will be developed to improve the flow of information across expressions of this church and its leaders. Solutions for these portals include the Ministry Site Profile, the Rostered Minister Profile, call process, candidacy, and synod financials.
- Website advancements: A new ELCA.org website with improved search technologies, including search engines powered by AI.
- Fundraising and online donations: Online giving grew in 2024, and the donor experience will continue to be enhanced with a new peer-to-peer fundraising solution that allows for Y2NS Y2ySè ű2 ōS NI·ǎŠŘ ōŠŐI·dzǎŠ ǎú NŠtǎŠǎ 2y˙ǎyŘǎØǎŘdzI·fǎΩ ŎN2øŘŦdzyŘǎyƎ øǎúK űKŠ 9[/!¢ Online giving, including the ELCA Good Gifts catalog, will continue to be evaluated to maximize potential giving as well as automation for deeper engagement like a welcome series and opportunities to engage more deeply with the ELCA.
- Execute budget and financial goals for stronger organizational fiduciary management: OT-IT and OT-Finance will heighten collaboration to ensure the ELCA is empowered to improve budget forecasting, enhance process efficiency, and remove redundant systems. Continuing OT-IT Adoption and Education will equip staff and help the organization understand improvements using the system tools at their fingertips. This includes budget management, contracts, income, and revenue.
- Artificial intelligence: OT-IT will advance governance and policy setting for use of AI by the churchwide organization and shape how the ELCA will utilize AI to assist with optimizing the operations of the organization and improving the way that we serve this church.
- Simplify hybrid work with technology improvements: To enable the churchwide organization workforce, investments will be made to improve the technology available to all staff to increase the effectiveness of their work. Making staff more efficient through better technology will help bring more value across the ministries and mission of this church.

- Constituent and financial data risk management and security: As part of the churchwide ƨNƎIˑyϰÎIˑúϰƨyŒă ϰyÕNŜIˑäϰyƎ ŜyúŜNLJNϰäŜ Nϰă] YˊIˑyIˑƎŜYˊŜyú LJNϰƨNϰúèΣ ûKϰă ƨ₸₸ϰÕŜ øϰff ϰYˊLJfŜYˊŜyú additional prevention and mitigation strategies for risks identified as related to the operations of the Office of the Treasurer.

Part Two: 2022, 2023 and 2024 audited financial reports

The audited financial statements of the ELCA churchwide administrative offices for the fiscal years ended Jan. 31, 2023; Jan. 31, 2024, and Jan. 31, 2025, are attached as Appendices AçC of this report. These statements include the activities of all units and offices of the churchwide organization for each of the three years. Financial statements are prepared by management, audited by Crowe LLP, and reviewed by the Audit Committee of the ELCA.

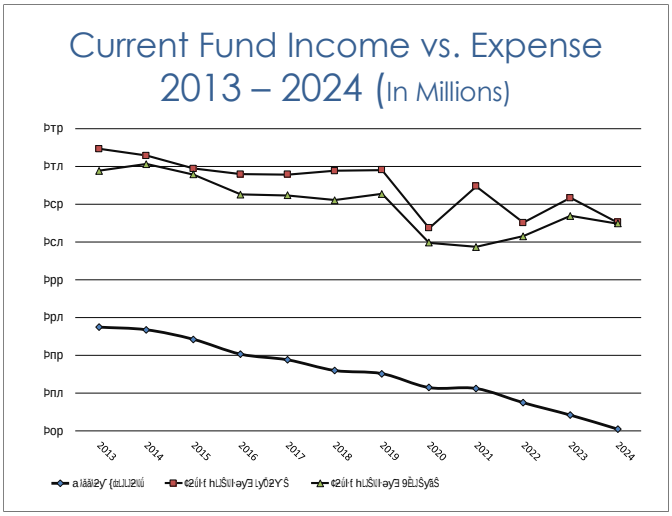
Current Fund Operating results for 2022, 2023, and 2024

Due to the generosity of our members, favorable investment returns, and expense controls, over the last triennium, net revenues over expenses were favorable by just over $4.7 million, net of unrealized gains on investments. These monies were reinvested in a) designated funds to support expenses from the work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church for the past two years and potential actions from the 2025 Churchwide Assembly; b) invested in the Mission Development Endowment Fund, which supports new initiatives and other ministry needs; and c) added to a designated fund that supports anticipated budget deficits in future years. Item c) is expected to be utilized in the 2025 and 2026 budget years.

Mission Support, which represents the share of income passed from congregations to synods to the churchwide organization decreased from $40.6 million in 2021 to $38.7 million in 2022, $37.1 million in 2023, and $35.2 million in 2024. Despite declines in Mission Support, the churchwide organization was able to maintain a relatively consistent level of spending of $62.5 million and $62.3 million in 2024 and 2023, respectively. Fiscal year 2022 was uncharacteristic with overall spending more than 10 percent below budget, at $59.2 million. This is largely attributable to staffing vacancies across the organization, but especially in the Innovation unit, as well as reduced travel and some delays in grants following the pandemic.

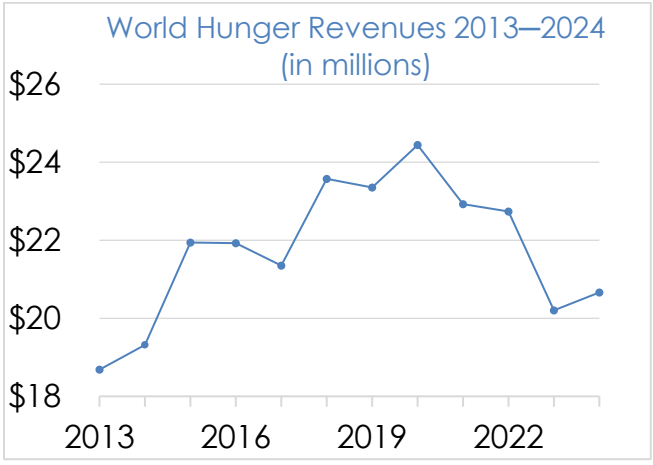
In each of the past three years, the churchwide organization has been blessed, not only from the generosity of our members, congregations, and synods but also by unplanned sources of income that have benefitted our work. In 2022, the churchwide organization received unrestricted bequests which exceeded plan by $1.3 million and were an important source of revenue to offset weakened investment returns. In 2023 and 2024, markets rebounded, generating $2.8 million and $3.7 million of favorable investment income, net of unrealized gains, respectively.

Over the past ten years, the percentage of unrestricted revenues from sources other than Mission Support has grown from 32 percent to 44 percent while Mission Support has decreased from 68 percent to 56 percent. These other sources of income include unrestricted direct gifts from individuals, congregations, synods, and other ministry partners, as well as bequest income, ŜyŘƨøYˊŜyú ŘϰăúNϰōdzűϰƨyãΣ άK₽fè Ŏf₽ădzNŜăέ ƨ₸ Ŏƨ₽yƎNŜƎIˑúϰƨyãΣ IˑyŘ ϰyØŜăúYˊŜyú ϰyŎƨ₽YˊŜΦ ² Ŝ IˑNŜ blessed by this abundance which has also allowed us to defer spending from the designated fund for budget support. However, because these revenue streams are less predictable, we do anticipate spending down the designated fund for budget support in 2025 and 2026.



ELCA World Hunger

The year 2024 marked the 50th anniversary of Lutherans working together to support and address the root causes of hunger and poverty issues around the world. Celebration of this anniversary will conclude at this Churchwide Assembly. Over the 2022ç2024 triennium, nearly $64 million has been raised in support of ELCA World Hunger, while nearly $73 million has been expended across the globe to address hunger and related issues. We celebrate the generosity of so many faithful members who have made this work possible. These gifts have allowed the ELCA to support hunger initiatives including food security, health and housing, hunger education, agriculture and income generation, migration, and human rights in 62 countries in 2024. Over the same three-year period, more than $55 million was received and more than $51 million was distributed to respond to a variety of disasters both domestically and internationally. Key areas of support were the Eastern European and Middle East crises, wildfires, and hurricanes, as well as growth in the general disaster fund which allowed this church to support those in need who were afflicted by less publicized disasters.



Summary

Scripture tells us in 2 Corinthians 9:8, 11çMH΢ ΰKŜ ₮2ff2ø∧y∃΢ ά!yŘ D2Ř ∧ă I·ōfŜ ΰ2 LJ№2Ø∧ŘŜ è2ʤ with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share I·ōʤyŘI·yΰfè ∧y˝ ŜØŜ№è ∃22Ř ø2№ⅼX℗ ¸2ʤ ø∧ff ōŜ Ŝy₪ŇǑKŜŘ ∧y˝ ŜØŜ№è øI·è for your great generosity,

which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only ăʤzLJLJfŝŜă űKŜ ɣŜŜŘă 2ŦűKŜ ăI·ƛɣűă ōʤű I·fă2 2ØŜℕŦf2ǿă ǿƛűK Y I·yȇ űKI·yϒăƎƛØƛyƎă ű2 D2Ř¢ɛ

Thank you for your financial support that funds the work of the churchwide organization. Please know that we take very seriously our responsibility to steward these resources faithfully. We appreciate your prayers and continued support as we work toward our purpose of activating each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice, and love. What a privilege and joy it is to serve this church in this capacity!

Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, *treasurer of the ELCA*, together with

Mr. Jonathan Beyer, *executive for information technology & digital solutions*

Ms. Cecilia Favella, *finance director*

Mr. Santiago Padilla, *director, planning, budgeting and system optimization*

Ms. Annette Roman, *executive for financial controls and policy, finance director*

Ms. Stephanie Ulba, *controller*

Part Three: Churchwide Assembly Presentation

άThank you and good afternoon! My name is Lori Fedyk, and it is truly a privilege to be serving in my second term as treasurer of the ELCA and to be with you gathering here in Phoenix. From the stage, I see a sea of red. What a powerful display to raise awareness of missing and murdered LyŘλƎŜyƵdžă ø2Y Ŝy l·yŘ ƎλNfă℗ L l·tă2 ø l·yű ű2 ăl·è ŰKl·ű ŰKŜNŜΩă ?dzăű ă2Y ŜűKλyƎ ŰKl·ű ŦŜŜfă øN2yƎ l·ō2dzű the treasurer giving her report in red. So, if you mighű l·ff2øΣ LΩŘ fλ]Ŝ ű2 ÖKl·yƎŜ ű2 ƎNŜŜy Ŧ2N ŰKŜ next few minutes.

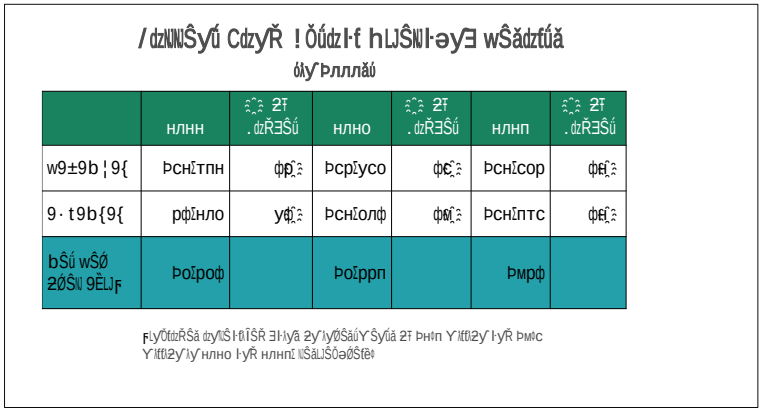
άhŦ Ö2dzNăŜΣ ƎNŜŜy λă ŰKŜ Ö2f2N 2Ŧ Y2ySèΣ l·yŘ LJl·Nű 2Ŧ ŰKŜ hŦŦλÖŜ 2Ŧ ŰKŜ ¢NŜl·ădzNŜNΩă responsibilities is to steward the resources that have been entrusted to us. But green is also a symbol of new life. As we give thanks and celebrate the abundance of gifts we have received during the last triennium and lay out a financial plan for the next three years, I hope you will see signs of new life. It will require us to change in some ways, but I have no doubt that, led by the Holy Spirit and with faith and trust in Jesus, we will see that vision of new life that is before us.

άThis presentation represents a summarized version of the financial highlights that were shared in my written pre-assembly report. That report, which includes the churchwide 2NƎl·yÎl·ű λ2yΩă l·dzŘλűŜŘ ŦλYl·yŎλl·f ăűl·ű ŜY Ŝyűă Ŧ2N нлннς2024, can be found in Section II of the Bulletin of Reports.

άThe Apostle Paul writes in Second Corinthians, ΨGod is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every Ǝ22Ř ø2N]X

άΨYou will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.Ω

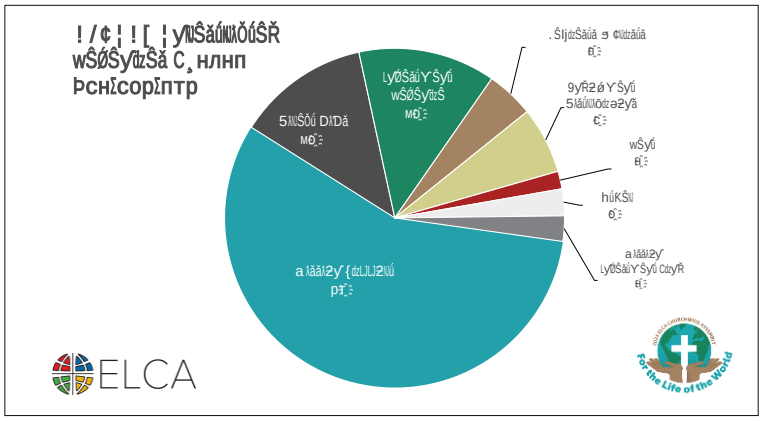
άThe work of the churchwide organization is made possible by your generosity. Your abundant gifts enable all of us, working together, to work toward our vision of a world experiencing the ŘλŦŦŜNŜyÖŜ D2ŘΩă ƎNl·ÖŜ l·yŘ f2ØŜ λy / KNλăű Y l·]Ŝ Ŧ2N l·ff LJŜ2LJfŜ l·yŘ ÖNŜl·ű λ2y℗ ¢Kl·y] è2dz℗



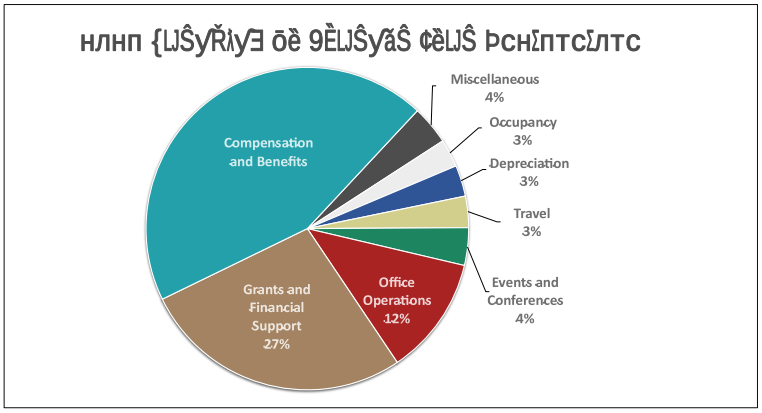
άCλNăű fŜűΩă űl·]Ŝ l· KλƎK-fŜØŜf f22] l·ű ŰKŜ ÖKdzNÖKøλŘŜ 2NƎl·yÎl·űλ2yΩă unrestricted (or Current Fund) operating results generated from 2022ς2024. These numbers are shown in thousands. Our revenues in each year ranged from 92ς96 percent of the budget while expenses ranged from 89ς 92 percent of the budget. The favorable net results are shown in the teal line at the bottom of the chart, and that is $3.5 million of favorable revenue over expenses in both 2022 and 2023, and $159,000 in 2024. Now, our goal is to distribute what we receive, so to spend exactly what comes in. So, you may be asking, Ψ ² hat did we do with the extra money that we raised űKl·ű ŘλŘyΩű ƎŜű spent λyűKl·ű èŜl·NKΩ And I want to report that, during the last triennium, we used these dollars, excluding revenue that was generated from unrealized investment gains, to do a few things:

1) fund special work approved at the last assembly, including the work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;
2) contribute money to an endowment that supports new and innovative ministries of the ELCA;
3) provide funds to support work in the next two years as the churchwide organization organizes around available revenue streams, additional work that may be called for at this assembly, and priorities of the bishop who will be elected at this assembly.

áCash reserves are maintained to support two months of unrestricted expenses as well as the total balances in our restricted and designated funds, and this is mandated by policies and reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee.



á[ŜúΩă ű׀·ʅŜ ׀· ƒƨʅ ׀·ú ΰĶŜ ăƨdzℕŎŜă ƨŦ ΰĶŜ Þcн¢c Y˙ʎfƭƨ2ƴ˙ƨŦ ŎdzℕℕŜyΰ ŦdzyŘ ƨLJŜℕ׀·ΰλyƎ ℕŜØŜŷΩzŜ ΰĶ׀·ú ØŜ ℕŜŎŜλØŜŘ λƴ˙нлнп¢ ¢ĶŜ fׁ·ℕƎŜăΰ Ŏ2Y˙LJ2yŜyΰ 2Ŧ ΰĶŜ ŎĶdzℕŎKØλŘŜ ƨℕƎ׀·yλÎ׀·ΰλƨ2yΩă ŦdzyŘλyƎ Ŝ׀·ŎK èŜ׀·ℕ is Mission Support, which represents a portion of the offerings received by your congregations and worshipping communities. These offerings total over $1.6 billion annually across the ELCA. ¢Ķ׀·úΩă λyŎℕŜŘλõfŜ ƎŜyŜℕƨăλΰè! On average, about 95 percent is retained by the congregations to support their ministries. The remainder is shared with your synods, who in turn share a portion with the churchwide organization. Thank you for your support of our work.



áIn 2024 about 44 percent of our expenses were used for compensation and benefits for your churchwide staff. These individuals operate, develop, support, write, convene, engage, research, guide, and many other action verbs. And, in many cases, the staff of the churchwide organization are our programs. In addition, the churchwide organization provides grants and financial supports to synods, congregations, seminaries, youth programs, international partners, and other organizations who can more effectively do the work.

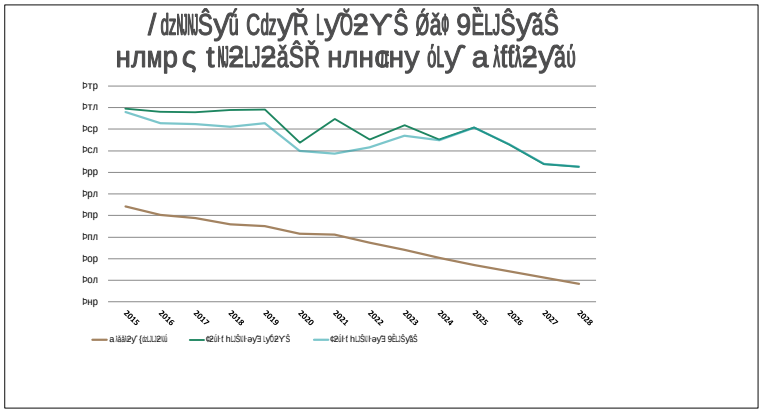
άYour gifts to the churchwide organization support Congregational Vitality Grants. Did you know that approximately 45 percent of ELCA congregations are described as rural or in small towns? Please join me in watching a short video put together by our Director for Evangelical Mission in the Northwestern Minnesota synod, Pastor Rebel Hurd, and Pastor Melissa Pickering who led a ministry called Rural Revival. *[The assembly viewed two short videos and responded with applause.]* Thank you, Pastor Rebel and Pastor Melissa, for your leadership in this important ministry work.

άIn 2024 the ELCA celebrated the 50th anniversary of Lutherans working together to support and address the root causes of hunger and poverty issues. Over the past three years, you have generously supported this work, contributing $64 million. Nearly $73 million of ELCA World Hunger funds have been distributed to support issues of hunger, water, health, homelessness, justice, and migration. ELCA World Hunger also invests resources in hunger education, income generation through agriculture, peace and reconciliation, and advocacy for human rights across the globe. Over the last 50 years, this church has raised nearly $650 million and distributed this money for ELCA World Hunger *[applause]*. We are grateful for your financial support and prayers for this life-changing ministry as well as the many ways congregations and synods support hunger issues.

άThe next video is an example of how all three expressions work together to support ministry. For the churchwide portion, funds have been provided from New Start ministries, ELCA World Hunger, and disability ministries. It is my privilege to introduce Pastor Anna Taylor-McCants of the Southeast Michigan Synod as she shares her passion for Fed Up Ministries. *[The assembly viewed a short video and responded with applause.]* Thank you to Pastor Anna for her work. This is truly l·y ŜÈl·YLJfŜ 2₮ D2ŘΩă [2ØŜ a l·ŘŜ wŜl·f. And congratulations to the team on being a recent recipient of a $100,000 award from Pilot Pen G2 Overachievers on the Kelly Clarkson show *[applause]*.

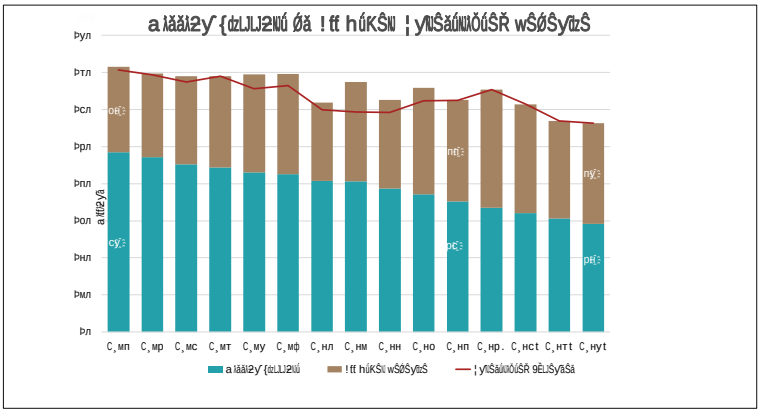
άLutheran Disaster Response strives to help the church continue to be church in the midst of disaster τ ₮2ff2ø›yƎ /KNJăúΩă ŎI·ff ΰ2 ăKI·NJŜ K2LJŜΣ KŜI·fΩyƎΣ I·yŘ NJŜySŜøI·f ø›ΰK 2dzN ySΛƎKō2N Λy yŜŜŘΦ Over the past three years, Lutheran Disaster Response has distributed over $51 million in 62 countries around the world. Your gifts enable our support not only at the time the disaster strikes but to continue during the recovery and rebuilding phases.

ά[ŜΰΩă y2ø ΰdzNy 2dzN I·ΰΰŜyΰΛ2y ΰ2 ΰKŜ LJNJ2LJ2ăŜŘ ŌdzŘƎŜΰ ₮2N нлнсς2028 for the Current (unrestricted) Fund and ELCA World Hunger. Thank you to the many of you who joined us virtually at the pre-assembly hearing on July 22 to review this proposed budget. The presentation portion of the hearing was recorded and is still available on the 2025 CWA Pre-Events webpage for your review.

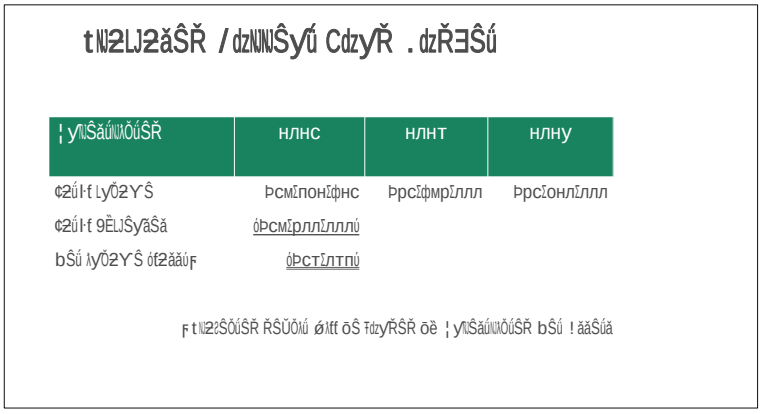


άThis slide shows unrestricted revenue as the top, dark green line, unrestricted expenses as the second, teal, line, and Mission Support as the brown line from 2015 through the proposed 2028 revenue budget.

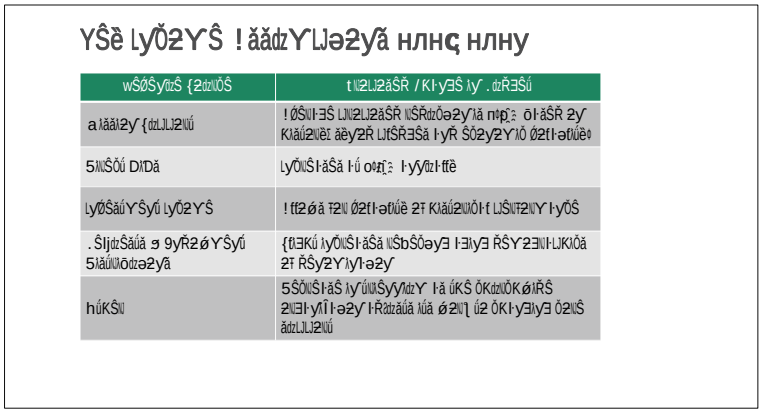
άIt is important to note that while Mission Support has gradually declined over this period, God has richly blessed us with other revenue streams to minimize spending reductions over the same period. I am also delighted to share that, through June 30, 2025, Mission Support is more than 2.8 percent ahead of the year-to-date plan *[applause]*.



άThis next graph provides additional clarity to the previous slides. All other revenues of the total unrestricted revenues in [2015] were 32 percent compared to 44 percent in 2024 and a projected 48 percent in 2028. These other revenues are things like investment income, bequest income, endowment distributions, and other releases that we have from restricted and designated funds. Because these other revenue streams are less predictable, the churchwide ƨẄƎl·yλÎl·ύλƨyɑă ăLJŜyŘλyƎ l·dzűKƨẄλÎl·ύλƨyˇλyˇнлнс ìă ẄŜŘdzỎŜŘ ōè pΦφ percent or $3.9 million from the 2025 approved spending.



άThe proposed current fund budget for 2026 reflects a $67K deficit which will be funded by unrestricted net assets of the churchwide organization. In a few moments, the Rev. Wyvetta Bullock will share the breakdown by ministry area.



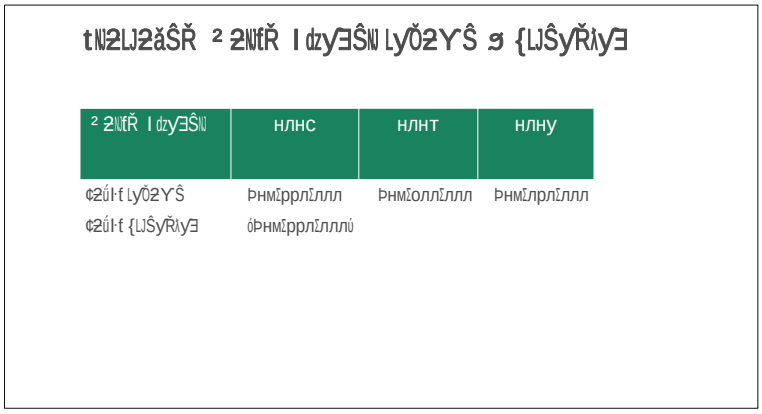
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ά Because the churchwide organization strives to operate on a breakeven budget where revenues equal expenses, and we want to try to avoid having to make downward adjustments to spending mid-year, the organization does tend to budget our revenues conservatively. Mission Support remains the largest contributor to unrestricted revenues and is budgeted to decline over the triennium by 4.5 percent annually.

ά Direct gifts represent gifts from individuals, congregations, and synods, in support of Where Needed Most, as well as temporarily restricted gifts such as support of missionaries and Young Adults in Global Mission.

ά Other represents primarily the release of a Church Council designated fund in support of a budgeted deficit. This fund is expected to be fully utilized in the next triennium.



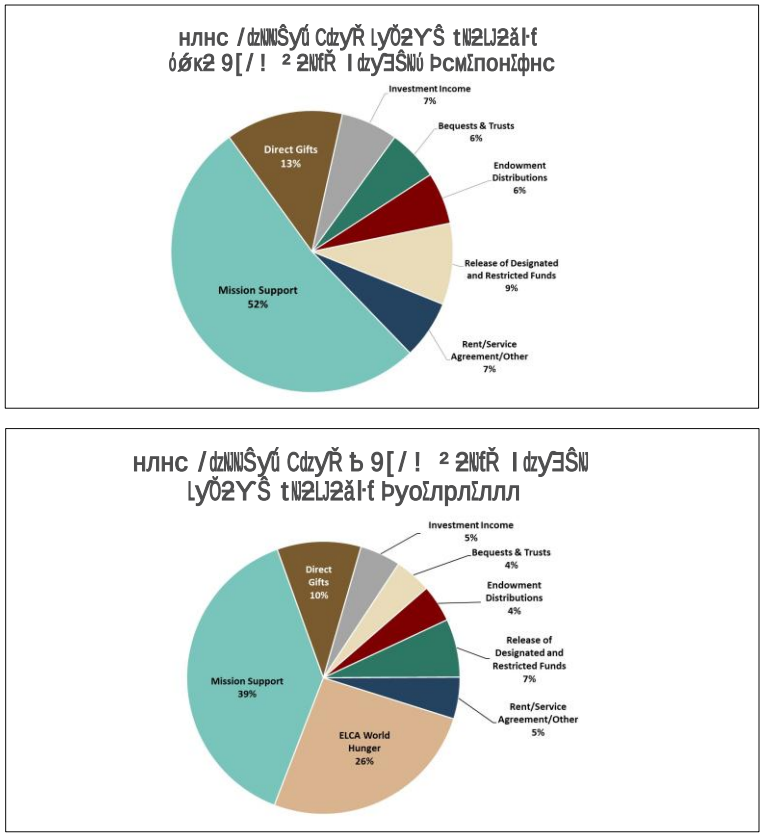
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ά ! yŘ ōŜŦ2Ł\Ŝ L ΰdzŁ\y˙λΰ 2ØŜŁ\Σ L Ř2 øł·yΰ ΰ2 ΰł·ţŜ ∂dzăΰ ł· Y˙2Y˙Ŝyΰ ōŜŦ2Ł\Ŝ Wyvetta covers the 2026 spending authorization to express my gratitude for the work of the staff of the Office of the Treasurer. You may have seen some of them here, either in finance or in the IT group, the outgoing members of the Budget and Finance Committee and the Audit Committee of the Church Council, [I want to express my gratitude] for their diligent work. Also, to my fellow officers, Bishop Eaton and Secretary Rothmeyer, I will miss you dearly. You have been incredible colleagues. Vice President Siddiqui, I look forward to continuing our work together. And finally, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, who has been a trusted colleague in partnership on the budget. She has brought a wealth of knowledge to this work and taught me so much about this church. I will miss her greatly. I will say, we may get a little budget relief; for those of you who know Wyvetta, she is always known to be carrying a binder full of paper with her, so

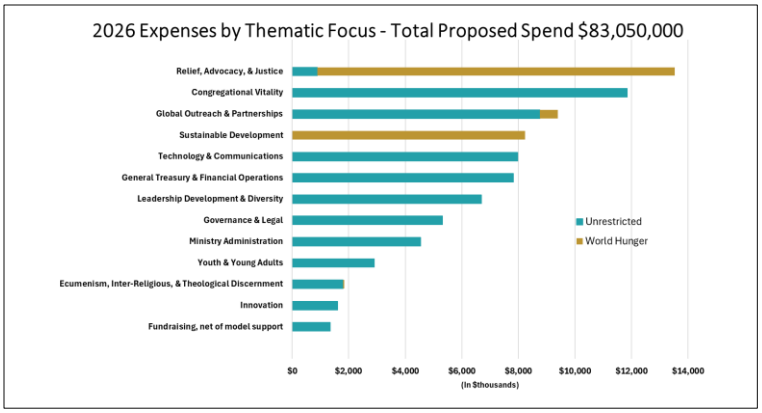
ǿŜ ϒƖèƎŜűƖ· ƭΛúúfŜ ℕŜſΛŜŦ ƨϒ ƨdzℕ ădzLJLJfè ŜÈLJŜyãŜăφ ¢ΚƖ·y⌈ èƨdzΣ ² èØŜűúƖ·Σ ŦƨℕƖ·ff èƨdzQØŜ Řƨy$ *[applause].ε*

Pastor Bullock presented the proposed 2026 expenditure authorization for churchwide organization ministries, beginning with the income proposal representing the resources available for churchwide organization ministries both without and with inclusion of ELCA Hunger funds.



Pastor Bullock reported that there are six major ministry areas where these funds will be distributed:

- ω ELCA congregations;
- ω Leadership development and support;
- ω Relief, advocacy, and justice;
- ω Connecting with members and partners financially, domestically, and globally;
- ω Further development of churchwide organization financial resources; and
- ω On-going support for the infrastructure that makes the delivery of these ministries possible, including churchwide staff and staff shared with synods.



Pastor Bullock shared a video introducing one of the ELCA congregations and outreach ministries made possible by Mission Support dollars. She introduced two guests of the assembly, Bishop Guadalupe Cortez, of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church, and Bishop Hilja Ndatala-Eenyofi Nghaangulwa, of the Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, each of whom addressed the assembly. Pastor Bullock concluded her report by reminding assembly members that the budget proposal would come before the assembly for action during the sixth plenary session.

Appendix A
Audited Financial Statements of the ELCA Churchwide Organization for the Fiscal Year Ended Jan. 31, 2023

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
January 31, 2023 and 2022

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
January 31, 2023 and 2022

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Crowe LLP
Independent Member Crowe Global

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Church Council
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Churchwide Organization

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Organization (the Church), which comprise the statements of financial position as of January 31, 2023 and 2022, and the related statements of activities, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Church as of January 31, 2023 and 2022, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Church and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audits. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Emphasis of Matter

As discussed in Note 1, the financial statements being presented are only for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Organization and do not include the assets, liabilities and net assets, and the revenue and expenses of the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that are recorded in the accounts of the other organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Accordingly, the accompanying financial statements are not intended to present the financial position of the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as of January 31, 2023 and 2022, or the change in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Church's ability to continue as a going concern for one year from the date the financial statements are available to be issued.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Church's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Church's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control–related matters that we identified during the audit.

Crowe LLP

Crowe LLP

Chicago, Illinois
June 28, 2023

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
January 31, 2023 and 2022

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 74,070,232	$ 66,552,968
Accounts receivable (Note 2)	6,860,999	8,303,215
Loans receivable (Notes 4 and 5)	658,781	792,876
Due from related organizations, net (Note 8)	7,354,689	9,034,441
Investments (Note 3)	522,700,757	550,905,665
Prepaid expenses and other assets	7,140,162	7,700,919
Property, furniture, and equipment, net (Note 6)	17,609,986	18,933,114
Beneficial interest in irrevocable, split-interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation (Note 3)	12,089,038	18,671,091
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts (Note 3)	18,326,340	21,700,986
Total assets	$ 666,810,984	$ 702,595,275
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	$ 234,123	$ 2,190,686
Deferred revenue	848,681	3,599,141
Due to related organizations, net (Note 8)	1,283,291	2,239,563
Accrued liabilities	3,837,483	7,540,402
Annuities payable (Note 7)	2,643,865	3,189,371
Funds held for others (Note 1)	5,278,076	6,320,083
Funds held for others in perpetuity (Note 1)	102,164,676	107,977,035
Total liabilities	116,290,195	133,056,281
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions (Note 15)	147,967,946	143,861,022
With donor restrictions (Note 16)	402,552,843	425,677,972
Total net assets	550,520,789	569,538,994
Total liabilities and net assets	$ 666,810,984	$ 702,595,275

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
Years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022

	2023			
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	2022 Total
Operating revenue and support				
Contributed support				
Synod mission support (Note 13)	$ 38,727,560	$ -	$ 38,727,560	$ 40,613,722
World Hunger Appeal	-	19,130,330	19,130,330	20,854,710
Global Church sponsorship	2,470,846	-	2,470,846	2,058,712
Disaster response	-	23,328,478	23,328,478	14,371,460
Endowment distributions	3,573,876	6,759,132	10,333,008	7,867,686
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	-	1,500,000	1,625,000
Bequests, trusts, and residuums	3,705,391	3,035,456	6,740,847	6,318,950
Grants—corporate and other	304,304	3,246,323	3,550,627	204,538
Other gifts	7,087,212	3,026,700	10,113,912	9,022,392
Total contributed revenue	57,369,189	58,526,419	115,895,608	102,937,170
Other revenue				
Net return on operating investments	(4,063,998)	-	(4,063,998)	1,914,787
SPPO offices' revenue	92,219	-	92,219	120,095
Services and other revenue	5,538,350	-	5,538,350	5,476,884
Lease income	1,824,025	-	1,824,025	1,821,611
Gains on extinguishment of debt	-	-	-	5,696,814
Total other revenue	3,390,596	-	3,390,596	15,030,191
Net assets released from restrictions				
Satisfaction of restrictions (Note 14)	47,840,624	(47,840,624)	-	-
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity (Note 14)	3,619,781	(3,619,781)	-	-
Net assets released from restrictions	51,460,405	(51,460,405)	-	-
Total operating revenue and support	112,220,190	7,066,014	119,286,204	117,967,361
Operating expenses				
Program services				
Christian Community Leadership	25,034,779	-	25,034,779	24,595,086
Service and Justice	51,620,436	-	51,620,436	41,057,578
OB, Development	3,661,398	-	3,661,398	5,735,965
Church periodicals	1,365,826	-	1,365,826	1,066,655
Office of the Presiding Bishop	1,234,525	-	1,234,525	948,765
Innovation	801,143	-	801,143	1,432,969
SPPO offices' expense	71,951	-	71,951	89,278
Total program services	83,790,058	-	83,790,058	74,926,296

(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
Years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022

	2023			
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	2022 Total
Operating expenses (Continued)				
Management and general				
Office of the Presiding Bishop	$ 3,123,297	$ -	$ 3,123,297	$ 5,352,341
Office of the Treasurer	10,682,296	-	10,682,296	9,982,816
Office of the Secretary	8,061,669	-	8,061,669	6,447,416
OB, Development	321,571	-	321,571	624,512
Total management and general	22,188,833	-	22,188,833	22,407,085
Fundraising				
Development	3,227,608	-	3,227,608	3,315,680
Total fundraising	3,227,608	-	3,227,608	3,315,680
Total operating expenses	109,206,499	-	109,206,499	100,649,061
Net operating revenue and support less operating expenses	3,013,691	7,066,014	10,079,705	17,318,300
Non-operating transactions				
Endowment contributions	4,477,398	5,392,423	9,869,821	5,942,309
Net investment return on endowment and other deferred gifts	(3,384,165)	(31,344,924)	(34,729,089)	19,889,589
Change in value of beneficial interest in split interest agreements and outside trusts	-	(4,238,642)	(4,238,642)	1,120,914
Total non-operating transactions	1,093,233	(30,191,143)	(29,097,910)	26,952,812
Changes in net assets	4,106,924	(23,125,129)	(19,018,205)	44,271,112
Net assets at beginning of year	143,861,022	425,677,972	569,538,994	525,267,882
Net assets at end of year	$ 147,967,946	402,552,843	$ 550,520,789	$ 569,538,994

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended January 31, 2022

	2022		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Operating revenue and support			
Contributed support			
Synod mission support (Note 13)	$ 40,613,722	$ -	$ 40,613,722
World Hunger Appeal	-	20,854,710	20,854,710
Global Church sponsorship	1,997,064	61,648	2,058,712
Disaster response	-	14,371,460	14,371,460
Endowment distributions	4,331,336	3,536,350	7,867,686
Mission Investment Fund	1,625,000	-	1,625,000
Bequests, trusts, and residuums	4,974,101	1,344,849	6,318,950
Grants—corporate and other	67,767	136,771	204,538
Other gifts	5,923,068	3,099,324	9,022,392
Total contributed revenue	59,532,058	43,405,112	102,937,170
Other revenue			
Net return on operating investments	1,911,663	3,124	1,914,787
SPPO offices' revenue	120,095	-	120,095
Services and other revenue	5,294,615	182,269	5,476,884
Lease income	1,821,611	-	1,821,611
Gains on extinguishment of debt, net	5,696,814	-	5,696,814
Total other revenue	14,844,798	185,393	15,030,191
Net assets released from restrictions			
Satisfaction of restrictions (Note 14)	40,929,196	(40,929,196)	-
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity (Note 14)	3,766,598	(3,766,598)	-
Net assets released from restrictions	44,695,794	(44,695,794)	-
Total operating revenue and support	119,072,650	(1,105,289)	117,967,361
Operating expenses			
Program services			
Christian Community Leadership	24,595,086	-	24,595,086
Service and Justice	41,057,578	-	41,057,578
OB, Development	5,735,965	-	5,735,965
Church periodicals	1,066,655	-	1,066,655
Office of the Presiding Bishop	948,765	-	948,765
Innovation	1,432,969	-	1,432,969
SPPO offices' expense	89,278	-	89,278
Total program services	74,926,296	-	74,926,296

(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended January 31, 2022

	2022		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Operating expenses (Continued)			
Management and general			
Office of the Presiding Bishop	$ 5,352,341	$ -	$ 5,352,341
Office of the Treasurer	9,982,816	-	9,982,816
Office of the Secretary	6,447,416	-	6,447,416
OB, Development	624,512	-	624,512
Total management and general	22,407,085	-	22,407,085
Fundraising			
Development	3,315,680	-	3,315,680
Total fundraising	3,315,680	-	3,315,680
Total operating expenses	100,649,061	-	100,649,061
Net operating revenue and support less operating expenses	18,423,589	(1,105,289)	17,318,300
Non-operating transactions			
Endowment contributions	740	5,941,569	5,942,309
Net investment return on endowment and other deferred gifts	2,216,382	17,673,207	19,889,589
Change in value of beneficial interest in split interest agreements and outside trusts	-	1,120,914	1,120,914
Total non-operating transactions	2,217,122	24,735,690	26,952,812
Changes in net assets	20,640,711	23,630,401	44,271,112
Net assets at beginning of year	123,220,311	402,047,571	525,267,882
Net assets at end of year	$ 143,861,022	$ 425,677,972	$ 569,538,994

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
Years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022

	2023	2022
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	$ (19,018,205)	$ 44,271,112
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used in operating activities:		
Depreciation	2,422,507	2,472,239
Change in fair value of investments	29,542,162	(29,053,412)
Loss (gain) on beneficial interest in perpetual trusts	4,238,642	(1,249,729)
Loss (gain) on change in value of deferred gifts	889,135	(2,293,409)
Gain on extinguishment of debt	-	(7,506,200)
Changes in:		
Accounts receivable	1,442,216	96,145
Interest receivable	(69,246)	67,578
Prepaid expenses and other assets	560,757	463,288
Accounts payable	(1,956,563)	335,279
Deferred revenue	(2,750,460)	2,821,114
Due to/from related organizations	723,480	(1,909,880)
Accrued liabilities	(3,702,919)	3,848,439
Net cash provided by operating activities	12,321,506	12,362,564
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase and acquisition of equipment	(1,099,379)	(359,060)
Net change on mortgage notes and construction loans	203,341	185,360
Purchase of investments	(3,891,550)	(1,592,204)
Transfer of funds to Endowment Fund Pooled Trust	(3,265,203)	-
Proceeds from sale of investments	4,683,191	10,640,825
Net cash (used in) provided by investing activities	(3,369,600)	8,874,921
Cash flows from financing activities		
Annuities payable	(1,434,642)	(655,340)
Net cash used in financing activities	(1,434,642)	(655,340)
Increase in cash and cash equivalents	7,517,264	20,582,145
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	66,552,968	45,970,823
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	$ 74,070,232	$ 66,552,968

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Organization: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the ELCA) is a Minnesota nonprofit corporation that functions interdependently with the congregations and synods of the ELCA. The ELCA serves on behalf of and in support of the ELCA's members, congregations, and synods. To fulfill its purpose, the ELCA receives, establishes, and supports congregations and ministries necessary to carry out its mission. The ELCA has constituent Lutheran congregations in 65 synods throughout the United States and the Caribbean. The ELCA's principal source of revenue is contributions.

The accompanying financial statements include all administrative and program offices and units of the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (collectively, the Church). These financial statements do not include the accounts of organizations, such as the ELCA Foundation, Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services), Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Mission Investment Fund), Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1517 Media), Lutheran Men in Mission, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Federal Credit Union (Credit Union), congregations, synods, schools, cemeteries, homes, seminaries, or any other institution owned and operated by religious orders of men or women, except insofar as financial transactions have taken place between them and the Church (e.g., subsidies, loans, and deposits). These organizations may or may not be separate corporations under civil law and may or may not be under the control of the ELCA; however, each is an operating entity distinct from the Church, maintains separate accounts, carries on its own services and programs, and reports annually to its respective constituency.

Effective January 1, 2018, the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, doing business as the ELCA Foundation (ELCA Foundation), is a separately incorporated ministry/corporation of the ELCA. This corporation manages the endowments of the ELCA, the Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT), and the Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) programs. The Church's beneficial interest in CRTs and CGAs are included in the Church financial statements for the years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022. Trusteeship of the existing CRTs has been transferred from the Church to the ELCA Foundation, effective February 1, 2018. The CGAs are being moved from the Church to the ELCA Foundation in stages and in compliance with applicable state regulations.

Basis of Presentation: The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.

To ensure the observance of limitations and restrictions placed on the use of resources available, the Church maintains its financial accounts in accordance with the principles and practices of fund accounting.

The financial statements focus on the organization as a whole and present balances and transactions classified based upon the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Net assets, revenue, contributed support, expenses, gains, and losses have been classified into two net asset classes based on these donor-imposed restrictions. A description of each net asset class follows:

Without Donor Restrictions – Net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions including the carrying value of all property, furniture, and equipment. Items that affect this category of net assets include contributions and bequests without donor restrictions, contributions with donor restrictions and bequests whose donor-imposed restrictions were met during the fiscal year and investment income whose use is without donor restrictions, as well as all expenses incurred in connection with the operations of the Church. Certain funds, generally set aside by Church Council action, function as endowments and are included in net assets without donor restrictions.

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

With Donor Restrictions – Net assets subject to donor-imposed restrictions that will be met either by actions of the Church or the passage of time. Items in this net asset category are contributions, bequests, and investment income whose use is limited to specific purposes by the donor. These amounts are reclassified when such restrictions are met or when time restrictions have expired.

Also included are net assets that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions which require them to be maintained permanently by the Church. Items in this net asset category include gifts wherein donors stipulate that the corpus be held in perpetuity and only the income be made available for purposes without donor restrictions or with donor restrictions (primarily gifts for endowments and gifts solicited by the Church that will fund perpetual endowments).

Cash and Cash Equivalents: Cash and cash equivalents include investments in money market accounts, commercial paper, and other short-term investments with original maturities of three months or less from the date of purchase. Cash and cash equivalents used by the Church in managing its investments are reported in investments. The Church maintains cash balances at several financial institutions in excess of the insurance limits provided by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Beneficial Interest in Irrevocable, Split-Interest Agreements, Held by ELCA Foundation: The Church holds a beneficial remainder interest in various charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts, commonly referred to as split-interest agreements. These agreements are administered by the ELCA Foundation on behalf of the Church and other beneficiaries. The Church records the fair value of the beneficial interest as a receivable and as revenue when documentation of the beneficial interest is received.

Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts Administrated by Outside Organizations: The Church has been granted a beneficial interest in various irrevocable trust accounts created under wills or deeds of trust. These trust accounts are administered and held by outside trustees. The Church records the fair value of the beneficial interest as a receivable and as revenue when documentation of the beneficial interest is received.

Investments and Related Income, Gains, and Losses: Investments are reported at fair value, except for certain equity and real estate investments, which are reported at cost. Investments carried at fair value consist primarily of equity mutual funds, corporate and government obligations, term deposit accounts and investments in pools. The cost of securities sold is based on either the specific-identification or average-cost method. Investment income, gains and losses, and any investment-related expenses are recorded net of investment fees as changes in net assets without donor restrictions in the statement of activities unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulations.

Property, Furniture, Equipment, and Depreciation: Property, furniture, and equipment are recorded at cost less accumulated depreciation to date. On an ongoing basis, the Church reviews long-lived assets for impairment whenever events or circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may be overstated. Depreciation is provided over the following useful lives on a straight-line basis:

Building	50 years
Building improvements	10-25 years
Hardware, software and related components	3-5 years
Furniture, fixtures and improvements	5-7 years
Tenant improvements	Lesser of length of lease or useful life
Transportation	5-7 years

(Continued)

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Funds Held for Others: Funds held for others consist of contributions received on behalf of and other resources held for other Lutheran organizations that are separate, nonconsolidated entities. The Church does not have variance power over these funds. In the case of funds held for others in perpetuity, the earnings are distributed per the donor's specifications, but the corpus or principal are held in perpetuity or intact and reflected as a liability of the Church.

Deferred Revenue: Deferred revenue consists of funds received relating to subsequent periods. Additionally, the Church also recognizes its remainder interest in the assets received from donors under pooled income fund agreements and life income fund agreements as contribution revenue in the period in which the assets are received from the donor. The difference between the assets recognized and the revenue recognized is recorded as deferred revenue, representing the amount of the discount for future interest.

Vacation Pay: The Church recognizes vacation pay expense when earned by its non-missionary personnel. The liability for vacation pay of missionary personnel cannot be reasonably estimated, and such amounts are recognized when paid.

Revenue and Expenses: Revenues are reported as increases in net assets without donor restrictions unless use of the related assets is limited by donor-imposed restrictions. Expenses are reported as decreases in net assets without donor restrictions. Gains and losses on investments and other assets or liabilities are reported as increases or decreases in net assets without donor restrictions unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulation. Expirations of net assets with donor restrictions (i.e., the donor-stipulated purpose has been fulfilled and/or the stipulated time period has elapsed) are reported as reclassifications between applicable classes of net assets.

Contributed Support: Contributions, including unconditional promises to give, are recognized in the period received. Conditional contributions are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend are met.

Contributions to be received after one year are discounted at an appropriate discount rate commensurate with the risk involved. Amortization of discount is recorded as additional contribution revenue in accordance with donor-imposed restrictions, if any, on the contributions.

Contributions received with donor-imposed restrictions are reported as revenue of the net asset class with donor restrictions, as appropriate. Contributions of land, buildings, and equipment without donor-imposed restrictions concerning the use of such long-lived assets are reported as revenue of net assets without donor restrictions.

Services and Other Revenue: Revenues from separately incorporated ministries and unincorporated self-supporting ministries for services provided by the Church (e.g., human resources, information technology, financial services, building management) relate to agreements to provide such services negotiated on an annual basis. These revenues are recognized throughout the year as these services are performed. Subscription revenue relates to publications and is recognized as the related publications are distributed. Registration revenue relates to events and is recognized as the events are held. Amounts paid for events that have not yet been held at January 31 are included in deferred revenues.

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Income Tax: The Church has received a determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service indicating that it is exempt from Federal income taxes on income related to its exempt purpose under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. There were no significant unrelated business income activities during the years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022.

Uncertainty in Income Taxes: The ELCA follows guidance issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) with respect to accounting for uncertainty in income taxes. A tax position is recognized as a benefit only if it is more likely than not that the tax position would be sustained in a tax examination, with a tax examination being presumed to occur. The amount recognized is the largest amount of tax benefit that is greater than 50% likely of being realized on examination. For tax positions not meeting the more likely than not test, no tax benefit is recorded.

The Church recognizes interest and penalties related to unrecognized tax benefits in interest and income tax expense, respectively. The Church has no amounts accrued for interest or penalties as of January 31, 2023 and 2022.

Due to its tax-exempt status, the Church is not subject to U.S. federal income tax or state income tax. The Church is no longer subject to examination by U.S. federal or state taxing authorities for years before January 31, 2018. The Church does not expect the total amount of unrecognized tax benefits to significantly change in the next 12 months.

Use of Estimates: The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from estimates.

Reclassifications: Certain amounts in the prior year financial statements have been reclassified. The reclassifications did not affect the net assets or the changes in net assets for all years presented.

NOTE 2 - ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

Included in accounts receivable at January 31, 2023 and 2022, were $5,975,214 and $5,809,225, respectively, relating to synods' contributions for mission support, world hunger appeal, global church sponsorship and other programs that have been collected subsequent to year end. Interest is not normally charged on receivables. Management reviews all of the receivables on an individual basis for collectability and determines whether an allowance is necessary. No allowance for bad debts has been established because management considers all accounts receivable to be collectible.

(Continued)

NOTE 3 - INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

Investments at January 31, 2023 and 2022, consist of the following:

	2023	2022
Equity mutual fund	$ 10,531,870	$ 15,158,670
Fixed income securities		
U.S. government obligations	16,036,253	13,691,102
Corporate bonds	27,972,804	25,432,434
Term investments	571,347	594,386
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost	1,354,825	1,731,825
Investments held in EFPT pools	465,218,792	493,284,368
Cash and cash equivalents	1,014,866	1,012,880
	$ 522,700,757	$ 550,905,665

The following schedule summarizes the investment return reported in the statement of activities for the years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022:

	2023	2022
Realized investment gains, net	$ 8,204,027	$ 13,447,130
Unrealized investment (losses) gains	(37,746,189)	15,606,282
Dividend and interest income	1,082,083	618,650
Investment return, net	$ (28,460,079)	$ 29,672,062

Investments are reported at fair value except for certain equity securities and certain investments in real estate which are reported at cost. Investments carried at fair value consist primarily of corporate and government obligations, inflation-indexed and high-yield securities and investments in ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust.

Fair value is the price that would be received for an asset (an exit price) in the principal or most advantageous market for the asset in an orderly transaction between market participants on the measurement date. Investments that have readily determinable market values are determined using quoted market prices. Fair values of investments for which market prices are not readily available are determined based upon quoted market close prices for similar issues, dealer quotes, appraisals, or pricing models utilizing market-observable inputs from comparable securities.

The fair value hierarchy is based on maximizing observable inputs and minimizing unobservable inputs when measuring fair value. Three levels of inputs may be used to measure fair value.

> Level 1: Quoted prices (unadjusted) for identical assets in active markets that the Church has the ability to access as of the measurement date.

NOTE 3 - INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

Level 2: Significant other observable inputs other than Level 1 prices, such as quoted prices for similar assets, quoted prices in markets that are not active, or other inputs that are observable or can be corroborated by observable market data.

Level 3: Significant unobservable inputs that reflect the Church's own assumptions that the market participants would use in pricing an asset.

In many cases, a valuation technique used to measure fair value includes inputs from multiple levels of the fair value hierarchy. Investments are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

The Church's investments which are reported at fair value are valued using the following inputs and valuation techniques:

Equity Mutual Fund: The fair values of equity mutual fund investments reflect quoted prices on nationally recognized securities exchanges (Level 1 inputs).

Fixed Income Securities: Fair values of U.S. Government securities reflect closing prices reported in the active markets in which the securities are traded (Level 1 inputs). Fair values of corporate bonds are determined based on quoted prices for similar instruments in active markets, quoted prices for identical or similar instruments in markets that are not active and other market-corroborated sources, such as indices, yield curves and matrix pricing (Level 2 inputs – market approach).

Term Investments: Demand accounts are estimated to approximate deposit-account balances. Term certificates are estimated to approximate principal amounts plus capitalized interest as of the reporting date. No discounts for credit quality or liquidity were determined to be applicable. Term certificates have varying maturity dates, may be redeemed prior to maturity at the discretion of the Mission Investment Fund, and are subject to an early redemption penalty. (Level 2 inputs – income approach).

Investments Held in Pools: The underlying investments within the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust, as well as certain other pooled investments held by the Church, have observable inputs and market activity that allow for fair values based on the underlying market prices of the securities in the pools. The Church has the ability to redeem their pooled investments at any time at the monthly per unit net asset value (NAV).

Beneficial Interests in Trusts: The fair value of beneficial interests in trusts is determined based upon the Church's proportional interest in the fair value of the underlying trust assets. The underlying trust assets are readily marketable and have fair values which are determined by obtaining quoted market prices in active markets. This valuation method has been estimated to represent the present value of future distributed income. The liquidation of these assets is contingent upon circumstances that are out of the Church's control and cannot be liquidated on a periodic basis (Level 3 inputs).

Beneficial Interest in Irrevocable, Split-interest Agreements, held by the Church: The beneficial interest in these agreements are measured at the present value of future cash flows considering the fair value of invested assets, the present value of contractual payment obligations under the agreement and the Church's ownership interest in the split-interest agreement (Level 3 inputs - income approach).

(Continued)

NOTE 3 - INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

The following table sets forth, by level within the fair value hierarchy, financial instruments owned, at fair value as of January 31, 2023 and 2022:

	2023			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Equity mutual fund	$ 10,531,870	$ -	$ -	$ 10,531,870
Fixed income securities				
U.S. government obligations	16,036,253	-	-	16,036,253
Corporate bonds	-	27,972,804	-	27,972,804
Term investments	-	571,347	-	571,347
Cash and cash equivalents	1,014,866	-	-	1,014,866
Investments held at fair value	$ 27,582,989	$ 28,544,151	$ -	56,127,140
Investments at net asset value per share				465,218,792
Total investments at fair value				521,345,932
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost*				1,354,825
Total investments				$ 522,700,757
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 18,326,340	$ 18,326,340
Beneficial interest in irrevocable split interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 12,089,038	$ 12,089,038

	2022			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Equity mutual fund	$ 15,158,670	$ -	$ -	$ 15,158,670
Fixed income securities				
U.S. government obligations	13,691,102	-	-	13,691,102
Corporate bonds	-	25,432,434	-	25,432,434
Term investments	-	594,386	-	594,386
Cash and cash equivalents	1,012,880	-	-	1,012,880
Investments held at fair value	$ 29,862,652	$ 26,026,820	$ -	55,889,472
Investments at net asset value per share				493,284,368
Total investments at fair value				549,173,840
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost*				1,731,825
Total investments				$ 550,905,665
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 21,700,986	$ 21,700,986
Beneficial interest in irrevocable split interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 18,671,091	$ 18,671,091

* Physical real estate investments, comprised of land and buildings held by the Church at cost of $150,297 and $527,297 at January 31, 2023 and 2022, respectively, was not included in the fair value tables above. Additionally, equity securities, comprised of closely held stock held by the Church at cost, of $1,204,528 and $1,204,528, respectively, at January 31, 2023 and 2022 was not included in the fair value tables above.

(Continued)

NOTE 3 - INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

The table below rolls forward balances for Level 3 beneficial interest in perpetual trusts from February 1, 2021, through January 31, 2023:

Balance as of February 1, 2021	$ 20,081,297
Unrealized gains	1,619,689
Balance as of January 31, 2022	21,700,986
Unrealized losses	(3,374,646)
Balance as of January 31, 2023	$ 18,326,340

The table below rolls forward balances for Level 3 beneficial interest in split-interest agreements from February 1, 2021, through January 31, 2023:

Balance as of February 1, 2021	$ 19,041,051
Decrease in beneficial interest resulting from:	
Change in value of beneficial interest	(369,960)
Balance as of January 31, 2022	18,671,091
Decrease in beneficial interest resulting from:	
New gifts	120,000
Unrealized losses	(1,839,932)
Terminations	(4,862,121)
Change in value of beneficial interest	(6,582,053)
Balance as of January 31, 2023	$ 12,089,038

Strategies Employed for Achieving Objectives of ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust: Investments held in endowment funds are stated at fair value. Certain endowment funds are classified by the Church as "Funds Held for Others" or "Funds Held for Others in Perpetuity" and are invested in the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust ("EFPT") administered under the terms of that Trust by its Trustee.

The EFPT investment objective is to provide participants with a stable stream of distributable investment income with long-term capital appreciation, while assuming a moderate level of investment risk. The assets of the EFPT are invested in a diversified portfolio that places an emphasis on equity-based and fixed income investments selected in accordance with the criteria of social responsibility that is consistent with the values and programs of the ELCA.

The target asset allocation ranges are 22% to 32% in U.S. equity securities, 25% to 35% in Non-U.S. equity securities, 4% to 14% in investment grade fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in high yield fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in U.S. inflation-indexed fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in global real estate securities, 0% to 8% in hedge funds, 0% to 8% in private infrastructure, and 0% to 20% in private markets, with the balance in cash and cash equivalents.

NOTE 3 - INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

Ownership interests in the EFPT are initially assigned through unitization of participants' investment additions. The total value of the EFPT net assets at the end of each month is used to determine the number of units allocated to participants' additions placed in the EFPT and to value withdrawals from the pool. Distributions from the pool are first made from dividend and interest income and net realized gains. If distributions exceed the actual dividends, interest, and net realized gains, the excess is distributed first from accumulated undistributed earnings and gains, then from capital.

Quarterly distributions from the EFPT are made at a rate established annually by the Trustee of the EFPT that reflects the Trustee's consideration of anticipated returns of the EFPT and anticipated changes in the purchasing power of the EFPT. The rate established for the years ended December 31, 2022 and 2021 was 4%. It was applied each year to the average unit value of the assets in the EFPT at December 31 of the five preceding years. The rate established for 2023 is 4%.

NOTE 4 - MORTGAGES AND NOTES

Mortgages, notes, and contracts for deed as of January 31, 2023 and 2022 are summarized as follows:

	Interest Rate	2023	2022
Partnership support loans to congregations	0%	$167,021	$ 265,110

There is one segment and one class in this portfolio.

Partnership support loans to congregations relate to Partnership Support grants, which are given for new starts, strategic renewal and transformation. Congregations that receive these grants sign a covenant where they agree to return the funds if the congregation leaves the Church.

Concentration of Credit Risk: There are no delinquencies with the mortgage notes as of January 31, 2023 and 2022. The Church does not believe that an allowance is necessary for these mortgage notes. If a Congregation decides to leave and is not able to pay the full amount received, the Church provides the opportunity for them to repay in installments.

NOTE 5 - OVERSEAS CHURCH CONSTRUCTION LOANS

Overseas church construction loans bear interest at rates ranging from 2% to 5% and mature at various dates through October 15, 2029. The balances of overseas church construction loans outstanding as of January 31, 2023 and 2022 is $287,440 and $392,692, respectively.

NOTE 5 - OVERSEAS CHURCH CONSTRUCTION LOANS (Continued)

Concentration of Credit Risk: The loan portfolio consists of one segment and one class. The Church's overseas lending activities are primarily conducted with companion churches. Notes receivable are generally not collateralized with real estate but are secured by the grants from the Church. At January 31, 2023 and 2022, there was no amount past due for a period greater than one year. The following is a summary of notes by region for the years ended January 31:

	2023	2022
Africa	$ 36,772	$ 93,199
Latin America/Caribbean	250,668	299,493
Total overseas construction loans	$ 287,440	$ 392,692

NOTE 6 - PROPERTY, FURNITURE, AND EQUIPMENT

Property, furniture, and equipment are recorded at cost less accumulated depreciation. Details relating to these assets as of January 31, 2023 and 2022 is presented below:

	2023	2022
Land	$ 133,000	$ 133,000
Buildings and improvements	52,564,361	51,994,321
Furniture and equipment	15,341,229	14,554,705
Work in progress	154,424	325,701
	68,193,014	67,007,727
Less accumulated depreciation	(50,583,028)	(48,074,613)
Totals	$ 17,609,986	$ 18,933,114

Depreciation expense for the years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022 was $2,422,507 and $2,472,239, respectively.

NOTE 7 - SPLIT-INTEREST AGREEMENTS

Charitable Gift Annuities: Charitable gift annuities are arrangements between a donor and the Church in which the donor contributes assets to the Church in exchange for a promise by the Church to pay a fixed amount for the life of the donor or other individuals designated by the donor. Due to state insurance regulations, the assets received are held as segregated assets. The annuity liability is a general obligation of the Church. Assets are recognized at fair value on the date of the contribution. An annuity payment liability is recognized for the present value of future cash flows expected to be paid to the donor or to the designated individual. The discount rate is the appropriate risk adjusted rate on the date of the contract. The 2012 IAR Tables are used to calculate the life expectancies of the annuity beneficiaries. At the death of the donor or designated individual, the book value of the contract is distributed to the Church or related organization either with or without donor restricted use depending upon the donor restrictions.

(Continued)

NOTE 7 - SPLIT-INTEREST AGREEMENTS (Continued)

Pooled Income Funds and Life Income Contracts: Donors contribute assets to an investment pool and are assigned a specific number of units based on the proportion of the fair value of their contribution to the total fair value of the pooled income fund on the date of the donor's entry to the pooled fund. Until a donor's death, the donor or designated beneficiary is paid the actual ordinary income earned on the donor's units. Realized gains or losses are added to each unit's principal. Upon the donor's death, the value of the units is released to the Church or a related organization to be used as specified by the donor.

The contributed assets are recorded at fair value. A contribution is recorded at the fair value of the assets discounted for the estimated time period until the donor's death. The appropriate risk adjusted rate at the date of the contribution is used for the discount rate, and the 2012 IAR Tables are used to calculate life expectancies. The difference between the fair value of the assets received and the revenue recognized is recorded as deferred revenue, representing the amount of the discount for future revenue.

A summary of recorded amounts related to these arrangements as of January 31, 2023 and 2022, is as follows:

	2023		2022	
	Deferred Revenue	Annuities Payable	Deferred Revenue	Annuities Payable
Charitable gift annuities	$ -	$ 2,643,865	$ -	$ 3,189,371
Pooled income funds	608,802	-	743,636	-
Life income funds	972	-	984	-
Life income estates	-	-	98,676	-
	$ 609,774	$ 2,643,865	$ 843,296	$ 3,189,371

Adjustments to the liability, to reflect amortization of the discount and changes in actuarial assumptions are recognized in the statements of activities as a change in the value of split-interest agreements in net assets with donor restrictions.

NOTE 8 - RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The ELCA Churchwide Organization is the beneficiary of endowment, trust and annuity accounts with a fair value of $482,554,701 and $513,173,550 at January 31, 2023 and 2022. These are managed by the ELCA Foundation.

The Church had a net receivable due from related organizations in the amount of $6,071,398 at January 31, 2023, and $6,794,878 at January 31, 2022. The net receivable represents expenses related to service level agreements between the Church and certain affiliated organizations for building space, accounting and management services performed on their behalf.

NOTE 9 - DEFINED-CONTRIBUTION PENSION PLAN

Substantially all active employees of the Church are enrolled in the noncontributory defined-contribution pension plan administered by Portico Benefit Services. The employer contributions to the plan for the years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022 were $3,624,167 and $3,629,570, respectively. All contributions to the plan are funded on a current basis.

NOTE 10 - PENSION AND POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFITS

Post-Retirement Medical Benefits: Members with service in a predecessor organization may be eligible to receive a post-retirement health contribution subsidy from Portico Benefit Services and in some cases a monthly reimbursement of their SMI (Medicare Part B) premiums. These subsidies are expressed as a percentage of the monthly cost for coverage paid by eligible retirees under the Church Medical and Dental Benefits Plan. Subsidies are based on age or a combination of age and service. Approximately 6,000 active or retired members and spouses are eligible or potentially eligible for these subsidies.

These post-retirement medical subsidies are funded through trust funds set aside for that purpose. The trust funds are held and reported by Portico. The full actuarial valuation of the obligation is reported on the financial statements of Portico. Portico financial statements include the trust assets of approximately $82,085,000 and $88,610,000, as well as Expected Post-Retirement Benefit Obligation (EPBO) as actuarial liabilities of approximately $58,600,000 and $81,006,000 at December 31, 2022 and 2021, respectively.

The Church contributed $0 and $0 during the fiscal years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022 toward the funding of this post-retirement health care benefit. No additional funding in the future is expected at this time based on current projections.

NOTE 11 - COLLECTIONS

The Church's art collections, which were acquired through purchases and contributions, are not recognized as assets on the statement of financial position. The collections represent a wide variety of art mediums: collagraph, etching, intaglio, dry-point engraving, katazome, linocut, oil, serigraph/silk-screen, stained glass, watercolor, and woodcut. The art is intended to share the Gospel visually with many of the pieces having biblical references. Purchases of collection items, if any, are recorded as decreases in net assets without donor restrictions in the year in which the items are acquired. Contributed collection items, if any, are not reflected on the financial statements. Proceeds from de-accessions or insurance recoveries, if any, are reflected as increases in the appropriate net asset classes and used according to the applicable restrictions.

NOTE 12 - LINE OF CREDIT

At January 31, 2023 and 2022, the Church had a $10,000,000 unsecured and uncommitted line of credit with no termination date. Interest on outstanding borrowings is charged at the greatest of: (i) the bank's prime commercial rate plus 1.0%; (ii) the quoted federal funds rate in the secondary market plus 1.5%; or (iii) one-month LIBOR plus 2.0%. In May of 2023, the bank changed the interest to Base Rate plus 1.00%, where the Base Rate is the greatest of (i) Prime, (ii) Fed Funds plus 0.50%, or (iii) LIBOR + 1.00% There were no borrowings outstanding under the line of credit at January 31, 2023 and 2022, or during the years then ended.

(Continued)

NOTE 13 - CONCENTRATIONS OF RISK

The Church's primary sources of revenue are contributions from synods. The synod contributions are dependent upon contributions from the membership of congregations of the ELCA. There are 9 regions comprising a total of 65 synods. The following is a summary of the contributions by synods in each of the regions during the years ended January 31:

	2023	2022
Region 1 – Northwest	$ 2,022,072	$ 2,117,630
Region 2 – Southwest	3,369,484	3,491,076
Region 3 – Northwest Midwest	6,581,281	6,768,165
Region 4 – Southwest Midwest	3,521,256	3,773,642
Region 5 – Northeast Midwest	8,060,168	8,362,318
Region 6 – Southeast Midwest	3,416,667	3,829,617
Region 7 – Northeast	3,810,412	3,921,606
Region 8 – East	3,564,949	3,819,018
Region 9 – Southeast	4,381,271	4,530,650
Total synod mission support	$ 38,727,560	$ 40,613,722

NOTE 14 - NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS

Net assets that were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors were as follows during the years ended January 31:

	2023	2022
Satisfaction of program restrictions:		
World Hunger	$ 23,441,205	$ 21,656,129
Disaster Relief	15,363,576	9,407,075
Christian Community Leadership	1,969,262	1,706,319
Service and Justice	2,145,995	2,799,183
Office of the Presiding Bishop	4,158,603	2,112,166
Other programs	761,983	3,248,324
Satisfaction of program restrictions	47,840,624	40,929,196
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity	3,619,781	3,766,598
Total releases from restriction	$ 51,460,405	$ 44,695,794

NOTE 15 - NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets without donor restrictions consist of the following at January 31:

	2023	2022
General	$ 96,529,509	$ 92,421,214
Funds functioning as endowment (Note 18)	33,828,451	32,506,694
Net investment in property, furniture, equipment and building (Note 6)	17,609,986	18,933,114
Ending balance	$ 147,967,946	$ 143,861,022

NOTE 16 - NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTION

Net assets with donor restrictions are available for the following purposes or periods at January 31:

	2023	2022
Program-restricted:		
Disaster Relief	$ 35,762,707	$ 26,549,055
World Hunger	12,987,897	13,694,993
Office of the Presiding Bishop	1,236,281	1,066,569
Christian Community Leadership	5,530,220	3,425,478
Service and Justice	8,517,614	9,149,507
Mission Advancement	593,171	828,077
Other Programs	2,080,000	2,517,681
	66,707,890	57,231,360
Time-restricted, expendable in subsequent years	106,810,354	144,759,845
	173,518,244	201,991,205
Investments in perpetuity, the income from which is expendable	216,822,894	210,209,354
Deferred gifts that will provide proceeds upon death of annuitant for a permanent endowment	10,345,414	10,960,668
Paid-up life insurance policies that will provide proceeds upon death of insured for permanent endowments	1,866,291	2,516,745
	229,034,599	223,686,767
Total net assets with donor restriction	$ 402,552,843	$ 425,677,972

NOTE 17 - ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Interpretation of Relevant Law: The Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) modernizes the laws governing a not-for-profit organization's investment and management of donor-restricted endowment funds. The Board of Trustees of the ELCA Foundation, serving as the body delegated to manage the Church's endowments, has interpreted UPMIFA as allowing, but not requiring, the preservation of the historic dollar value of the original gift of donor-restricted endowment funds, absent explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. As a result of this interpretation, the Church has chosen to classify as net assets with donor restrictions (a) the original value of gifts donated to the permanent endowment, (b) the original value of subsequent gifts to the permanent endowment, and (c) accumulations to the permanent endowment made in accordance with the direction of the applicable donor gift instrument at the time the accumulation is added to the fund.

In accordance with accounting principles governing not-for-profit organizations subject to an enacted version of UPMIFA, the portions of donor-restricted endowments not classified as net assets with donor restrictions are classified as net assets with donor restrictions until appropriated for expenditure. Realized and unrealized gains and losses on all Church endowments with donor restrictions are being recognized in net assets with donor restrictions, except for unrealized gains and losses on deferred gifts that will provide proceeds upon death of the annuitant for a permanent endowment.

The Church classifies as net assets with donor restrictions all donor-restricted endowment funds where donor stipulation allows for the release of such funds according to an event or time restriction. In the absence of donor stipulations to the contrary, losses on the investment of such a donor-restricted endowment fund reduce net assets with donor restrictions to the extent that the donor-imposed temporary restrictions on net appreciation of the fund have not been met before the loss occurs.

There were no funds for which the fair value of the assets held was less than the level required by donor stipulation or law at January 31, 2023 and 2022. At January 31, 2023 and 2022, $33,828,451 and $32,506,694 was reported in net assets without donor restrictions. During the year, $3,740,502 and $4,127,884 has been released from net assets with donor restrictions to net assets without donor restrictions.

Endowment Spending Policies: Endowment pool distributions are made quarterly at a rate established annually by the Trustee. The distribution rate reflects the Trustee's consideration of the anticipated returns of the Trust and anticipated changes in the purchasing power of the Trust. The rates established for fiscal years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022 were 4%, respectively, and is normally less than the anticipated total return of the Trust. The distribution unit value is equal to the average of the unit values on December 31 of the five preceding years multiplied by the annual distribution rate.

Earnings in excess of the distribution rate are allocated among the endowment accounts in proportion to the number of units assigned to each account as undistributed earnings. If the quarterly distribution exceeds the actual dividend, interest, and net realized gains earned in the quarter, the excess is distributed from accumulated undistributed earnings or participant capital. At January 31, 2023, 31 of 1,252 accounts had accumulated undistributed earnings. At January 31, 2022, 31 of 1,221 accounts had accumulated undistributed earnings.

In consideration of donor request or intent, certain donor-restricted endowments are invested through instruments held outside of the Trust. Investment income is distributed or reinvested according to the donor-imposed restriction(s) for the usage of endowment distributions.

(Continued)

NOTE 17 - ENDOWMENT FUNDS (Continued)

Endowment Investment Policies: The Trust's investment objective is to provide a stable stream of investment income with long-term capital appreciation, while assuming a moderate level of investment risk. In accordance with guidelines approved by the Trustee, the Trust's assets are invested in a manner that is intended to produce results that exceed the investment's benchmark by 40 basis points over rolling five-year time periods. Actual returns in any given year may vary from this objective.

Certain donor-restricted endowments that are held outside of the Trust are generally invested in term certificates intended to provide interest income and preserve principal amounts while assuming a low level of investment risk.

Net asset composition by type of endowment fund as of January 31, 2023 and 2022:

	2023		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Donor-restricted funds*	$ -	$ 320,865,941	$ 320,865,941
Funds functioning as endowment	33,828,451	-	33,828,451
	$ 33,828,451	$ 320,865,941	$ 354,694,392

	2022		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Donor-restricted funds*	$ -	$ 355,314,847	$ 355,314,847
Funds functioning as endowment	32,506,694	-	32,506,694
	$ 32,506,694	$ 355,314,847	$ 387,821,541

* With the exception of certain investments held by outside trusts, Church net assets with donor restrictions are based on the historic dollar value of donor-stipulated net assets with donor restrictions.

(Continued)

NOTE 17 - ENDOWMENT FUNDS (Continued)

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Net assets, February 1, 2021	$ 30,659,973	$ 338,317,336	$ 368,977,309
Net investment return	2,049,433	16,203,431	18,252,864
New gifts	740	5,941,569	5,942,309
Net assets released from restriction	4,127,884	(4,127,884)	-
Other changes			
Endowment distribution of income	(4,331,336)	(3,536,350)	(7,867,686)
Total other changes	(4,331,336)	(3,536,350)	(7,867,686)
Net assets, January 31, 2022	32,506,694	352,798,102	385,304,796
Cash surrender value of life insurance	-	2,516,745	2,516,745
Net assets, January 31, 2022	32,506,694	355,314,847	387,821,541
Net investment return	(3,322,267)	(31,207,986)	(34,530,253)
New gifts	4,477,398	5,392,423	9,869,821
Net assets released from restriction	3,740,502	(3,740,502)	-
Other changes			
Endowment distribution of income	(3,573,876)	(6,759,132)	(10,333,008)
Total other changes	(3,573,876)	(6,759,132)	(10,333,008)
Net assets, January 31, 2023	33,828,451	318,999,650	352,828,101
Cash surrender value of life insurance	-	1,866,291	1,866,291
Net assets, January 31, 2023	$ 33,828,451	$ 320,865,941	$ 354,694,392

NOTE 18 - CONTINGENCIES

The Church is a party to litigation in various matters arising in the ordinary course of operations. Typically, the Church's insurance carriers are defending these matters. Pending litigation will be vigorously defended and, in the opinion of management, is likely to be resolved without any material adverse effect upon the financial statements of the Church.

NOTE 19 - FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES BY NATURE

The statements of activities report certain categories of expenses attributable to the programs and supporting functions of the Church. The tables below present these functional expenses by their natural classification for the years ended January 31, 2023 and 2022.

	2023			
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Financial support and grants	$ 50,444,198	$ 385,642	$ 2,500	$ 50,832,340
Compensation and benefits	19,735,175	12,448,185	4,553,621	36,736,981
Travel	1,645,842	476,093	212,925	2,334,860
Events and conferences	3,100,947	2,303,614	74,688	5,479,249
Office operations	2,849,172	2,784,784	1,393,778	7,027,734
Depreciation	1,058,151	1,126,708	237,648	2,422,507
Occupancy	1,004,740	1,069,837	225,652	2,300,229
Transfers to restricted and designated funds	2,919,659	245,865	(3,165,524)	-
Miscellaneous and expense recovery	1,032,174	1,348,105	(307,680)	2,072,599
	$ 83,790,058	$ 22,188,833	$ 3,227,608	$ 109,206,499

	2022			
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Financial support and grants	$ 44,411,787	$ 76,710	$ -	$ 44,488,497
Compensation and benefits	20,178,308	13,427,801	4,199,770	37,805,879
Travel	491,128	165,889	76,650	733,667
Events and conferences	852,686	275,347	8,427	1,136,460
Office operations	2,808,126	3,380,506	1,276,140	7,464,772
Depreciation	1,079,895	1,149,763	242,581	2,472,239
Occupancy	927,841	987,872	208,425	2,124,138
Transfers to restricted and designated	2,653,021	302,388	(2,955,409)	-
Miscellaneous and expense recovery	1,523,504	2,640,809	259,096	4,423,409
	$ 74,926,296	$ 22,407,085	$ 3,315,680	$ 100,649,061

Certain categories of expenses are allocated to more than one program or supporting function. The allocation is based on estimated full-time equivalents or square footage, as applicable.

NOTE 20 - LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY

The Church's financial assets available within one year of the statement of financial position date for general expenditure are as follows:

	2023	2022
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 74,070,232	$ 66,552,968
Operating Investments	54,540,928	54,282,206
	$ 128,611,160	$ 120,835,174

As part of the Church's liquidity management, the Church invests a portion of its financial assets to be available as its general expenditures, liabilities, and other obligations come due. The Church had $33,828,451 and $32,506,694 in board designated endowments without donor restriction at January 31, 2023 and 2022, respectively. While the Church does not have any intention of liquidating the board designated endowments, and they are not currently available for general expenditure, these funds could be made available with Church Council approval.

NOTE 21 - PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM LOAN

As a result of the economic uncertainty stemming from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in April, 2020, the Church received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan in the principal amount of $7,506,200 from the United States Small Business Administration (SBA).

The Church elected to account for its PPP loan in accordance with ASC 470 and ASC 405. Under ASC 470 and ASC 405, the PPP loan proceeds are initially recorded as a financial liability and subsequently recognized as revenue upon legal release from the liability should such release occur. On July 27, 2021, the Church received notification that the United States Small Business Administration had reviewed the Church's application for forgiveness of the PPP loan and forgiven the loan and related accrued interest in full. The income from this loan forgiveness was recognized in the year ended January 31, 2022, as a gain on extinguishment of debt. The gain shown on the statements of activities is $5,696,814 which reflects the forgiveness of debt in the amount of $7,506,200 less expenses of $1,809,386 for grants of the PPP shared with certain separately incorporated ministries of the Church.

NOTE 22 - SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

Management has performed an analysis of the activities and transactions subsequent to January 31, 2023, to determine the need for any adjustments to and/or disclosures within the audited financial statements for the year ended January 31, 2023. Management has performed their analysis through June 28, 2023, the date the financial statements were available to be issued. Activities subsequent to this date have not been evaluated by management.

Appendix B
Audited Financial Statements of the ELCA Churchwide Organization for the Fiscal Year Ended Jan. 31, 2024

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
January 31, 2024 and 2023

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
January 31, 2024 and 2023

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Crowe LLP
Independent Member Crowe Global

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Church Council
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Churchwide Organization

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Organization (the Church), which comprise the statements of financial position as of January 31, 2024 and 2023, and the related statements of activities, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Church as of January 31, 2024 and 2023, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Church and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audits. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Emphasis of Matter

As discussed in Note 1, the financial statements being presented are only for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Organization and do not include the assets, liabilities and net assets, and the revenue and expenses of the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that are recorded in the accounts of the other organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Accordingly, the accompanying financial statements are not intended to present the financial position of the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as of January 31, 2024 and 2023, or the change in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

(Continued)

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Church's ability to continue as a going concern for one year from the date the financial statements are available to be issued.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Church's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Church's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control–related matters that we identified during the audit.



Crowe LLP

Chicago, Illinois
June 21, 2024

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
January 31, 2024 and 2023

	2024	2023
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 25,092,395	$ 74,070,232
Accounts receivable (Note 2)	6,373,281	6,860,999
Loans receivable (Notes 4 and 5)	537,704	658,781
Due from related organizations, net (Note 8)	7,588,045	7,354,689
Investments (Note 3)	601,114,379	522,700,757
Prepaid expenses and other assets	7,239,358	7,140,162
Property, furniture, and equipment, net (Note 6)	15,750,911	17,609,986
Beneficial interest in irrevocable, split-interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation (Note 3)	10,778,491	12,089,038
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts (Note 3)	19,763,485	18,326,340
Total assets	$ 694,238,049	$ 666,810,984
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	$ 542,334	$ 234,123
Deferred revenue	3,637,445	848,681
Due to related organizations, net (Note 8)	1,290,278	1,283,291
Accrued liabilities	5,800,538	3,837,483
Annuities payable (Note 7)	4,948,896	2,643,865
Funds held for others (Note 1)	5,925,920	5,278,076
Funds held for others in perpetuity (Note 1)	108,719,387	102,164,676
Total liabilities	130,864,798	116,290,195
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions (Note 15)	157,876,584	147,967,946
With donor restrictions (Note 16)	405,496,667	402,552,843
Total net assets	563,373,251	550,520,789
Total liabilities and net assets	$ 694,238,049	$ 666,810,984

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended January 31, 2024, with comparative
totals for year ended January 31, 2023

	2024			
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	2023 Total
Operating revenue and support				
Contributed support				
Synod mission support (Note 13)	$ 37,080,134	$ -	$ 37,080,134	$ 38,727,560
World Hunger Appeal	-	17,366,973	17,366,973	19,130,330
Disaster response	-	13,529,388	13,529,388	23,328,478
Endowment distributions	4,926,144	7,552,957	12,479,101	10,333,008
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	-	1,500,000	1,500,000
Bequests, trusts, and residuums	3,462,678	2,438,861	5,901,539	6,740,847
Grants—corporate and other	240,314	1,248,083	1,488,397	3,550,627
Other gifts	6,453,063	1,767,940	8,221,003	12,584,758
Total contributed revenue	53,662,333	43,904,202	97,566,535	115,895,608
Other revenue				
Net return on operating investments	4,151,998	-	4,151,998	(4,063,998)
SPPO offices	341,279	-	341,279	92,219
Services and other revenue	4,686,586	295,984	4,982,570	5,538,350
Lease income	1,041,369	-	1,041,369	1,225,553
Total other revenue	10,221,232	295,984	10,517,216	2,792,124
Net assets released from restrictions				
Satisfaction of restrictions (Note 14)	60,094,376	(60,094,376)	-	-
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity (Note 14)	3,456,320	(3,456,320)	-	-
Net assets released from restrictions	63,550,696	(63,550,696)	-	-
Total operating revenue and support	127,434,261	(19,350,510)	108,083,751	118,687,732
Operating expenses				
Program services				
Christian Community Leadership	31,237,398	-	31,237,398	28,696,177
Service and Justice	58,140,604	-	58,140,604	51,620,436
Church periodicals	1,003,007	-	1,003,007	1,365,826
Office of the Presiding Bishop	2,281,202	-	2,281,202	1,234,525
Innovation	1,353,525	-	1,353,525	801,143
SPPO offices	108,982	-	108,982	71,951
Total program services	94,124,718	-	94,124,718	83,790,058

(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended January 31, 2024, with comparative
totals for year ended January 31, 2023

	2024			
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	2023 Total
Operating expenses (Continued)				
Management and general				
Office of the Presiding Bishop	$ 6,087,627	$ -	$ 6,087,627	$ 4,846,396
Office of the Treasurer	11,349,682	-	11,349,682	10,682,296
Office of the Secretary	4,903,165	-	4,903,165	6,061,669
Total management and general	22,340,474	-	22,340,474	21,590,361
Fundraising				
Office of the Presiding Bishop	3,877,801	-	3,877,801	3,227,608
Total fundraising	3,877,801	-	3,877,801	3,227,608
Total operating expenses	120,342,993	-	120,342,993	108,608,027
Net operating revenue and support less operating expenses	7,091,268	(19,350,510)	(12,259,242)	10,079,705
Non-operating transactions				
Endowment contributions	1,305,416	9,599,298	10,904,714	9,869,821
Net investment return on endowment and other deferred gifts	1,511,954	12,463,290	13,975,244	(34,729,089)
Change in value of beneficial interest in split interest agreements and outside trusts	-	231,746	231,746	(4,238,642)
Total non-operating transactions	2,817,370	22,294,334	25,111,704	(29,097,910)
Changes in net assets	9,908,638	2,943,824	12,852,462	(19,018,205)
Net assets at beginning of year	147,967,946	402,552,843	550,520,789	569,538,994
Net assets at end of year	$ 157,876,584	$ 405,496,667	$ 563,373,251	$ 550,520,789

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended January 31, 2023

	2023		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Operating revenue and support			
Contributed support			
Synod mission support (Note 13)	$ 38,727,560	$ -	$ 38,727,560
World Hunger Appeal	-	19,130,330	19,130,330
Disaster response	-	23,328,478	23,328,478
Endowment distributions	3,573,876	6,759,132	10,333,008
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	-	1,500,000
Bequests, trusts, and residuums	3,705,391	3,035,456	6,740,847
Grants—corporate and other	304,304	3,246,323	3,550,627
Other gifts	9,558,058	3,026,700	12,584,758
Total contributed revenue	57,369,189	58,526,419	115,895,608
Other revenue			
Net return on operating investments	(4,063,998)	-	(4,063,998)
SPPO offices' revenue	92,219	-	92,219
Services and other revenue	5,538,350	-	5,538,350
Lease income	1,225,553	-	1,225,553
Total other revenue	2,792,124	-	2,792,124
Net assets released from restrictions			
Satisfaction of restrictions (Note 14)	47,840,624	(47,840,624)	-
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity (Note 14)	3,619,781	(3,619,781)	-
Net assets released from restrictions	51,460,405	(51,460,405)	-
Total operating revenue and support	111,621,718	7,066,014	118,687,732
Operating expenses			
Program services			
Christian Community Leadership	28,696,177	-	28,696,177
Service and Justice	51,620,436	-	51,620,436
Church periodicals	1,365,826	-	1,365,826
Office of the Presiding Bishop	1,234,525	-	1,234,525
Innovation	801,143	-	801,143
SPPO offices' expense	71,951	-	71,951
Total program services	83,790,058	-	83,790,058

(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended January 31, 2023

	2023		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Operating expenses (Continued)			
Management and general			
Office of the Presiding Bishop	$ 4,846,396	$ -	$ 4,846,396
Office of the Treasurer	10,682,296	-	10,682,296
Office of the Secretary	6,061,669	-	6,061,669
Total management and general	21,590,361	-	21,590,361
Fundraising			
Development	3,227,608	-	3,227,608
Total fundraising	3,227,608	-	3,227,608
Total operating expenses	108,608,027	-	108,608,027
Net operating revenue and support less operating expenses	3,013,691	7,066,014	10,079,705
Non-operating transactions			
Endowment contributions	4,477,398	5,392,423	9,869,821
Net investment return on endowment and other deferred gifts	(3,384,165)	(31,344,924)	(34,729,089)
Change in value of beneficial interest in split interest agreements and outside trusts	-	(4,238,642)	(4,238,642)
Total non-operating transactions	1,093,233	(30,191,143)	(29,097,910)
Changes in net assets	4,106,924	(23,125,129)	(19,018,205)
Net assets at beginning of year	143,861,022	425,677,972	569,538,994
Net assets at end of year	$ 147,967,946	402,552,843	$ 550,520,789

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
Years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023

	2024	2023
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	$ 12,852,462	$ (19,018,205)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	2,185,042	2,422,507
Change in fair value of investments	(16,930,344)	29,542,162
Contribution restricted for long-term investment	(10,904,714)	(9,869,821)
Loss (gain) on beneficial interest in perpetual trusts	(3,486,334)	4,238,642
Loss on change in value of deferred gifts	2,711,897	889,135
Changes in:		
Accounts receivable	487,718	1,442,216
Interest receivable	204,320	(69,246)
Prepaid expenses and other assets	(99,196)	560,757
Accounts payable	1,053,928	(1,956,563)
Deferred revenue	2,788,764	(2,750,460)
Due to/from related organizations	(226,369)	723,480
Accrued liabilities	1,963,055	(3,702,919)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	(7,399,771)	2,451,685
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase and acquisition of equipment	(325,967)	(1,099,379)
Net change on mortgage notes and construction loans	(83,243)	203,341
Purchase of investments	(64,338,605)	(3,891,550)
Investment in the Mission Development Fund Endowment	(1,305,391)	(3,265,203)
Proceeds from sale of investments	13,787,827	4,683,191
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	(52,265,379)	(3,369,600)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Annuities payable	(217,401)	(1,434,642)
Proceeds from contribution restricted for long-term investment	10,904,714	9,869,821
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	10,687,313	8,435,179
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(48,977,837)	7,517,264
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	74,070,232	66,552,968
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	$ 25,092,395	$ 74,070,232

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Organization: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the ELCA) is a Minnesota nonprofit corporation that functions interdependently with the congregations and synods of the ELCA. The ELCA serves on behalf of and in support of the ELCA's members, congregations, and synods. To fulfill its purpose, the ELCA receives, establishes, and supports congregations and ministries necessary to carry out its mission. The ELCA has constituent Lutheran congregations in 65 synods throughout the United States and the Caribbean. The ELCA's principal source of revenue is contributions.

The accompanying financial statements include all administrative and program offices and units of the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (collectively, the Church). These financial statements do not include the accounts of organizations, such as the ELCA Foundation, Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services), Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Mission Investment Fund), Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1517 Media), Lutheran Men in Mission, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Federal Credit Union (Credit Union), congregations, synods, schools, cemeteries, homes, seminaries, or any other institution owned and operated by religious orders of men or women, except insofar as financial transactions have taken place between them and the Church (e.g., subsidies, loans, and deposits). These organizations may or may not be separate corporations under civil law and may or may not be under the control of the ELCA; however, each is an operating entity distinct from the Church, maintains separate accounts, carries on its own services and programs, and reports annually to its respective constituency.

Effective January 1, 2018, the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, doing business as the ELCA Foundation (ELCA Foundation), is a separately incorporated ministry/corporation of the ELCA. This corporation manages the endowments of the ELCA, the Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT), and the Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) programs. The Church's beneficial interest in CRTs and CGAs are included in the Church financial statements for the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023. Trusteeship of the existing CRTs has been transferred from the Church to the ELCA Foundation, effective February 1, 2018.

Basis of Presentation: The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.

To ensure the observance of limitations and restrictions placed on the use of resources available, the Church maintains its financial accounts in accordance with the principles and practices of fund accounting.

The financial statements focus on the organization as a whole and present balances and transactions classified based upon the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Net assets, revenue, contributed support, expenses, gains, and losses have been classified into two net asset classes based on these donor-imposed restrictions. A description of each net asset class follows:

> *Without Donor Restrictions* – Net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions including the carrying value of all property, furniture, and equipment. Items that affect this category of net assets include contributions and bequests without donor restrictions, contributions with donor restrictions and bequests whose donor-imposed restrictions were met during the fiscal year and investment income whose use is without donor restrictions, as well as all expenses incurred in connection with the operations of the Church. Certain funds, generally set aside by Church Council action, function as endowments and are included in net assets without donor restrictions.

(Continued)

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

With Donor Restrictions – Net assets subject to donor-imposed restrictions that will be met either by actions of the Church or the passage of time. Items in this net asset category are contributions, bequests, and investment income whose use is limited to specific purposes by the donor. These amounts are reclassified when such restrictions are met or when time restrictions have expired.

Also included are net assets that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions which require them to be maintained permanently by the Church. Items in this net asset category include gifts wherein donors stipulate that the corpus be held in perpetuity and only the income be made available for purposes without donor restrictions or with donor restrictions (primarily gifts for endowments and gifts solicited by the Church that will fund perpetual endowments).

Cash and Cash Equivalents: Cash and cash equivalents include investments in money market accounts, commercial paper, and other short-term investments with original maturities of three months or less from the date of purchase. Cash and cash equivalents used by the Church in managing its investments are reported in investments. The Church maintains cash balances at several financial institutions in excess of the insurance limits provided by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Beneficial Interest in Irrevocable, Split-Interest Agreements, Held by ELCA Foundation: The Church holds a beneficial remainder interest in various charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts, commonly referred to as split-interest agreements. These agreements are administered by the ELCA Foundation on behalf of the Church and other beneficiaries. The Church records the fair value of the beneficial interest as a receivable and as revenue when documentation of the beneficial interest is received.

Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts Administrated by Outside Organizations: The Church has been granted a beneficial interest in various irrevocable trust accounts created under wills or deeds of trust. These trust accounts are administered and held by outside trustees. The Church records the fair value of the beneficial interest as a receivable and as revenue when documentation of the beneficial interest is received.

Investments and Related Income, Gains, and Losses: Investments are reported at fair value, except for certain equity and real estate investments, which are reported at cost. Investments carried at fair value consist primarily of equity mutual funds, corporate and government obligations, term deposit accounts and investments in pools. The cost of securities sold is based on either the specific-identification or average-cost method. Investment income, gains and losses, and any investment-related expenses are recorded net of investment fees as changes in net assets without donor restrictions in the statement of activities unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulations.

Property, Furniture, Equipment, and Depreciation: Property, furniture, and equipment are recorded at cost less accumulated depreciation to date. On an ongoing basis, the Church reviews long-lived assets for impairment whenever events or circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may be overstated. Depreciation is provided over the following useful lives on a straight-line basis:

Building	50 years
Building improvements	10-25 years
Hardware, software and related components	3-5 years
Furniture, fixtures and improvements	5-7 years
Tenant improvements	Lesser of length of lease or useful life
Transportation	5-7 years

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Funds Held for Others: Funds held for others consist of contributions received on behalf of and other resources held for other Lutheran organizations that are separate, nonconsolidated entities. The Church does not have variance power over these funds. In the case of funds held for others in perpetuity, the earnings are distributed per the donor's specifications, but the corpus or principal are held in perpetuity or intact and reflected as a liability of the Church.

Deferred Revenue: Deferred revenue consists of funds received relating to subsequent periods. Additionally, the Church also recognizes its remainder interest in the assets received from donors under pooled income fund agreements and life income fund agreements as contribution revenue in the period in which the assets are received from the donor. The difference between the assets recognized and the revenue recognized is recorded as deferred revenue, representing the amount of the discount for future interest.

Vacation Pay: The Church recognizes vacation pay expense when earned by its non-missionary personnel. The liability for vacation pay of missionary personnel cannot be reasonably estimated, and such amounts are recognized when paid.

Revenue and Expenses: Revenues are reported as increases in net assets without donor restrictions unless use of the related assets is limited by donor-imposed restrictions. Expenses are reported as decreases in net assets without donor restrictions. Gains and losses on investments and other assets or liabilities are reported as increases or decreases in net assets without donor restrictions unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulation. Expirations of net assets with donor restrictions (i.e., the donor-stipulated purpose has been fulfilled and/or the stipulated time period has elapsed) are reported as reclassifications between applicable classes of net assets.

Contributed Support: Contributions, including unconditional promises to give, are recognized in the period received. Conditional contributions are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend are met.

Contributions to be received after one year are discounted at an appropriate discount rate commensurate with the risk involved. Amortization of discount is recorded as additional contribution revenue in accordance with donor-imposed restrictions, if any, on the contributions.

Contributions received with donor-imposed restrictions are reported as revenue of the net asset class with donor restrictions, as appropriate. Contributions of land, buildings, and equipment without donor-imposed restrictions concerning the use of such long-lived assets are reported as revenue of net assets without donor restrictions.

Services and Other Revenue: Revenues from separately incorporated ministries and unincorporated self-supporting ministries for services provided by the Church (e.g., human resources, information technology, financial services, building management) relate to agreements to provide such services negotiated on an annual basis. These revenues are recognized throughout the year as these services are performed. Subscription revenue relates to publications and is recognized as the related publications are distributed. Registration revenue relates to events and is recognized as the events are held. Amounts paid for events that have not yet been held at January 31 are included in deferred revenues.

Income Tax: The Church has received a determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service indicating that it is exempt from Federal income taxes on income related to its exempt purpose under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. There were no significant unrelated business income activities during the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023.

(Continued)

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Uncertainty in Income Taxes: The ELCA follows guidance issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) with respect to accounting for uncertainty in income taxes. A tax position is recognized as a benefit only if it is more likely than not that the tax position would be sustained in a tax examination, with a tax examination being presumed to occur. The amount recognized is the largest amount of tax benefit that is greater than 50% likely of being realized on examination. For tax positions not meeting the more likely than not test, no tax benefit is recorded.

The Church recognizes interest and penalties related to unrecognized tax benefits in interest and income tax expense, respectively. The Church has no amounts accrued for interest or penalties as of January 31, 2024 and 2023.

Due to its tax-exempt status, the Church is not subject to U.S. federal income tax or state income tax. The Church does not expect the total amount of unrecognized tax benefits to significantly change in the next 12 months.

Use of Estimates: The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from estimates.

Reclassifications: Certain amounts in the prior year financial statements have been reclassified for consistency of presentation with the current year. The reclassifications did not affect the net assets or the changes in net assets for all years presented.

Recently Adopted Accounting Pronouncements: In June 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board ("FASB") issued Accounting Standards Update ("ASU") 2016-13, *Financial Instruments-Credit Losses Topic 326* ("Topic 326"), which requires entities to measure all expected credit losses for financial instruments held at the reporting date. The Church adopted this standard effective February 1, 2023. The new expected loss measurement model, known as the current expected credit loss ("CECL"), model is based on expected losses rather than incurred losses. Topic 326 is applicable to financial assets measured at amortized cost, such as accounts receivable. It requires historical loss data to be adjusted to reflect changes in asset-specific considerations, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts of future economic conditions. The expected credit losses are adjusted each financial reporting period for changes in expected lifetime credit losses. The Church adopted Topic 326 using the modified retrospective transition approach, which involves recognizing cumulative effect of the initial adoption of Topic 326 as an adjustment to its opening retained earnings at February 1, 2023. Therefore, comparative information prior to the adoption date has not been adjusted. As a result of adoption of Topic 326, the Church did not recognize an incremental allowance for credit losses on its accounts receivable for the year ended January 31, 2024. The adoption of this standard did not have a significant impact on the Church's financial statements.

NOTE 2 – ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

Included in accounts receivable at January 31, 2024 and 2023, were $5,758,755 and $5,975,214, respectively, relating to synods' contributions for mission support, world hunger appeal, global church sponsorship and other programs that have been collected subsequent to year end. Interest is not normally charged on receivables. Management reviews all of receivables on an individual basis for collectability and determines whether an allowance is necessary. No allowance for bad debts has been established because management considers all accounts receivable to be collectible.

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

Investments at January 31, 2024 and 2023, consist of the following:

	2024	2023
Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)	$ 11,469,954	$ 10,531,870
Fixed income securities		
U.S. government obligations	31,797,740	16,036,253
Corporate bonds	55,210,283	27,972,804
Term investments	587,459	571,347
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost	1,204,546	1,354,825
Investments held in EFPT pools	497,307,731	465,218,792
Cash and cash equivalents	3,536,666	1,014,866
	$ 601,114,379	$ 522,700,757

The following schedule summarizes the investment return reported in the statement of activities for the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023:

	2024	2023
Realized investment gains, net	$ 81,418	$ 8,204,027
Unrealized investment gains (losses)	20,821,061	(37,746,189)
Dividend and interest income	3,111,963	1,082,083
Investment return (loss), net	$ 24,014,442	$ (28,460,079)

Investments are reported at fair value except for certain equity securities and certain investments in real estate which are reported at cost. Investments carried at fair value consist primarily of corporate and government obligations, inflation-indexed and high-yield securities and investments in ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust.

Fair value is the price that would be received for an asset (an exit price) in the principal or most advantageous market for the asset in an orderly transaction between market participants on the measurement date. Investments that have readily determinable market values are determined using quoted market prices. Fair values of investments for which market prices are not readily available are determined based upon quoted market close prices for similar issues, dealer quotes, appraisals, or pricing models utilizing market-observable inputs from comparable securities.

(Continued)

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

The fair value hierarchy is based on maximizing observable inputs and minimizing unobservable inputs when measuring fair value. Three levels of inputs may be used to measure fair value.

Level 1: Quoted prices (unadjusted) for identical assets in active markets that the Church has the ability to access as of the measurement date.

Level 2: Significant other observable inputs other than Level 1 prices, such as quoted prices for similar assets, quoted prices in markets that are not active, or other inputs that are observable or can be corroborated by observable market data.

Level 3: Significant unobservable inputs that reflect the Church's own assumptions that the market participants would use in pricing an asset.

In many cases, a valuation technique used to measure fair value includes inputs from multiple levels of the fair value hierarchy. Investments are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

The Church's investments which are reported at fair value are valued using the following inputs and valuation techniques:

Exchange Traded Fund and Equity Mutual Fund: The fair values of exchange traded fund investments reflect quoted prices on nationally recognized securities exchanges (Level 1 inputs).

Fixed Income Securities: Fair values of U.S. Government securities reflect closing prices reported in the active markets in which the securities are traded (Level 1 inputs). Fair values of corporate bonds are determined based on quoted prices for similar instruments in active markets, quoted prices for identical or similar instruments in markets that are not active and other market-corroborated sources, such as indices, yield curves and matrix pricing (Level 2 inputs – market approach).

Term Investments: Demand accounts are estimated to approximate deposit-account balances. Term certificates are estimated to approximate principal amounts plus capitalized interest as of the reporting date. No discounts for credit quality or liquidity were determined to be applicable. Term certificates have varying maturity dates, may be redeemed prior to maturity at the discretion of the Mission Investment Fund, and are subject to an early redemption penalty. (Level 2 inputs – income approach).

Investments Held in Pools: The underlying investments within the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust, as well as certain other pooled investments held by the Church, have observable inputs and market activity that allow for fair values based on the underlying market prices of the securities in the pools. The Church has the ability to redeem their pooled investments at any time at the monthly per unit net asset value (NAV).

Beneficial Interests in Trusts: The fair value of beneficial interests in trusts is determined based upon the Church's proportional interest in the fair value of the underlying trust assets. The underlying trust assets are readily marketable and have fair values which are determined by obtaining quoted market prices in active markets. This valuation method has been estimated to represent the present value of future distributed income. The liquidation of these assets is contingent upon circumstances that are out of the Church's control and cannot be liquidated on a periodic basis (Level 3 inputs).

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

Beneficial Interest in Irrevocable, Split-interest Agreements, held by the Church: The beneficial interest in these agreements is measured at the present value of future cash flows considering the fair value of invested assets, the present value of contractual payment obligations under the agreement and the Church's ownership interest in the split-interest agreement (Level 3 inputs – income approach).

The following table sets forth, by level within the fair value hierarchy, financial instruments owned, at fair value as of January 31, 2024 and 2023:

	2024			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)	$ 11,469,954	$ -	$ -	$ 11,469,954
Fixed income securities				
U.S. government obligations	31,797,740	-	-	31,797,740
Corporate bonds	-	55,210,283	-	55,210,283
Term investments	-	587,459	-	587,459
Cash and cash equivalents	3,536,666	-	-	3,536,666
Investments held at fair value	$ 46,804,360	$ 55,797,742	$ -	102,602,102
Investments at net asset value per share				497,307,731
Total investments at fair value				599,909,833
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost*				1,204,546
Total investments				$ 601,114,379
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 19,763,485	$ 19,763,485
Beneficial interest in irrevocable split interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 10,778,491	$ 10,778,491

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

	2023			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Equity mutual fund	$ 10,531,870	$ -	$ -	$ 10,531,870
Fixed income securities				
U.S. government obligations	16,036,253	-	-	16,036,253
Corporate bonds	-	27,972,804	-	27,972,804
Term investments	-	571,347	-	571,347
Cash and cash equivalents	1,014,866	-	-	1,014,866
Investments held at fair value	$ 27,582,989	$ 28,544,151	$ -	56,127,140
Investments at net asset value per share				465,218,792
Total investments at fair value				521,345,932
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost*				1,354,825
Total investments				$ 522,700,757
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 18,326,340	$ 18,326,340
Beneficial interest in irrevocable split interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 12,089,038	$ 12,089,038

* Physical real estate investments, comprised of land and buildings held by the Church at cost of $0 and $150,297 at January 31, 2024 and 2023, respectively, were not included in the fair value tables above. Additionally, equity securities, comprised of closely held stock held by the Church at cost, of $1,204,546 at January 31, 2024 and 2023 were not included in the fair value tables above.

The table below rolls forward balances for Level 3 beneficial interest in perpetual trusts from February 1, 2022 through January 31, 2024:

Balance as of February 1, 2022	$ 21,700,986
Unrealized losses	(3,374,646)
Balance as of January 31, 2023	18,326,340
Unrealized gains	1,437,145
Balance as of January 31, 2024	$ 19,763,485

(Continued)

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

The table below rolls forward balances for Level 3 beneficial interest in split-interest agreements from February 1, 2022 through January 31, 2024:

Balance as of February 1, 2022	$ 18,671,091
Decrease in beneficial interest resulting from:	
New gifts	120,000
Unrealized losses	(1,839,932)
Terminations	(4,862,121)
Change in value of beneficial interest	(6,582,053)
Balance as of January 31, 2023	12,089,038
Decrease in beneficial interest resulting from:	
New gifts	130,795
Unrealized gains	2,049,189
Terminations	(3,490,531)
Change in value of beneficial interest	(1,310,547)
Balance as of January 31, 2024	$ 10,778,491

Strategies Employed for Achieving Objectives of ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust: Investments held in endowment funds are stated at fair value. Certain endowment funds are classified by the Church as "Funds Held for Others" or "Funds Held for Others in Perpetuity" and are invested in the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust ("EFPT") administered under the terms of that Trust by its Trustee.

The EFPT investment objective is to provide participants with a stable stream of distributable investment income with long-term capital appreciation, while assuming a moderate level of investment risk. The assets of the EFPT are invested in a diversified portfolio that places an emphasis on equity-based and fixed income investments selected in accordance with the criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values and programs of the ELCA.

The target asset allocation ranges are 22% to 32% in U.S. equity securities, 25% to 35% in Non-U.S. equity securities, 4% to 14% in investment grade fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in high yield fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in U.S. inflation-indexed fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in global real estate securities, 0% to 8% in hedge funds, 0% to 8% in private infrastructure, and 0% to 20% in private markets, with the balance in cash and cash equivalents.

Ownership interests in the EFPT are initially assigned through unitization of participants' investment additions. The total value of the EFPT net assets at the end of each month is used to determine the number of units allocated to participants' additions placed in the EFPT and to value withdrawals from the pool. Distributions from the pool are first made from dividend and interest income and net realized gains. If distributions exceed the actual dividends, interest, and net realized gains, the excess is distributed first from accumulated undistributed earnings and gains, then from capital.

(Continued)

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

Quarterly distributions from the EFPT are made at a rate established annually by the Trustee of the EFPT that reflects the Trustee's consideration of anticipated returns of the EFPT and anticipated changes in the purchasing power of the EFPT. The rate established for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022 was 4%. It was applied each year to the average unit value of the assets in the EFPT at December 31 of the five preceding years. The rate established for 2024 is 4%.

NOTE 4 – MORTGAGES AND NOTES

Mortgages, notes, and contracts for deed as of January 31, 2024 and 2023 are summarized as follows:

	Interest Rate	2024	2023
Partnership support loans to congregations	0%	$ 135,736	$ 167,021

There is one segment and one class in this portfolio.

Partnership support loans to congregations relate to Partnership Support grants, which are given for new starts, strategic renewal and transformation. Congregations that receive these grants sign a covenant where they agree to return the funds if the congregation leaves the Church.

Concentration of Credit Risk: There are no delinquencies with the mortgage notes as of January 31, 2024 and 2023. The Church does not believe that an allowance is necessary for these mortgage notes. If a Congregation decides to leave and is not able to pay the full amount received, the Church provides the opportunity for them to repay in installments.

NOTE 5 – OVERSEAS CHURCH CONSTRUCTION LOANS

Overseas church construction loans bear interest at rates ranging from 2% to 5% and mature at various dates through October 15, 2029. The balances of overseas church construction loans outstanding as of January 31, 2024 and 2023 is $401,968 and $287,440, respectively.

Concentration of Credit Risk: The loan portfolio consists of one segment and one class. The Church's overseas lending activities are primarily conducted with companion churches. Notes receivable are generally not collateralized with real estate but are secured by the grants from the Church. The following is a summary of net notes by region for the years ended January 31:

	2024	2023
Africa	$ 20,297	$ 36,772
Latin America/Caribbean	381,671	250,668
Total overseas construction loans	$ 401,968	$ 287,440

NOTE 6 – PROPERTY, FURNITURE, AND EQUIPMENT

Property, furniture, and equipment are recorded at cost less accumulated depreciation. Details relating to these assets as of January 31, 2024 and 2023 is presented below:

	2024	2023
Land	$ 133,000	$ 133,000
Buildings and improvements	52,553,895	52,564,361
Furniture and equipment	12,782,748	15,341,229
Work in progress	117,622	154,424
	65,587,265	68,193,014
Less accumulated depreciation	(49,836,354)	(50,583,028)
Totals	$ 15,750,911	$ 17,609,986

Depreciation expense for the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023 was $2,185,042 and $2,422,507, respectively.

NOTE 7 – SPLIT-INTEREST AGREEMENTS

Charitable Gift Annuities: Charitable gift annuities are arrangements between a donor and the Church in which the donor contributes assets to the Church in exchange for a promise by the Church to pay a fixed amount for the life of the donor or other individuals designated by the donor. Due to state insurance regulations, the assets received are held as segregated assets. The annuity liability is a general obligation of the Church. Assets are recognized at fair value on the date of the contribution. An annuity payment liability is recognized for the present value of future cash flows expected to be paid to the donor or to the designated individual. The discount rate is the appropriate risk adjusted rate on the date of the contract. The 2012 IAR Tables are used to calculate the life expectancies of the annuity beneficiaries.

At the death of the donor or designated individual, the book value of the contract is distributed to the Church or related organization either with or without donor restricted use depending upon the donor restrictions.

Pooled Income Funds and Life Income Contracts: Donors contribute assets to an investment pool and are assigned a specific number of units based on the proportion of the fair value of their contribution to the total fair value of the pooled income fund on the date of the donor's entry to the pooled fund. Until a donor's death, the donor or designated beneficiary is paid the actual ordinary income earned on the donor's units. Realized gains or losses are added to each unit's principal. Upon the donor's death, the value of the units is released to the Church or a related organization to be used as specified by the donor.

The contributed assets are recorded at fair value. A contribution is recorded at the fair value of the assets discounted for the estimated time period until the donor's death. The appropriate risk adjusted rate at the date of the contribution is used for the discount rate, and the 2012 IAR Tables are used to calculate life expectancies. The difference between the fair value of the assets received and the revenue recognized is recorded as deferred revenue, representing the amount of the discount for future revenue.

(Continued)

NOTE 7 – SPLIT-INTEREST AGREEMENTS (Continued)

A summary of recorded amounts related to these arrangements as of January 31, 2024 and 2023, is as follows:

	2024		2023	
	Deferred Revenue	Annuities Payable	Deferred Revenue	Annuities Payable
Charitable gift annuities	$ -	$ 4,948,896	$ -	$ 2,643,865
Pooled income funds	604,579	-	608,802	-
Life income funds	961	-	972	-
	$ 605,540	$ 4,948,896	$ 609,774	$ 2,643,865

Adjustments to the liability, to reflect amortization of the discount and changes in actuarial assumptions are recognized in the statements of activities as a change in the value of split-interest agreements in net assets with donor restrictions.

NOTE 8 – RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Church is the beneficiary of endowment, trust and annuity accounts with a fair value of $508,773,065 and $482,554,701 at January 31, 2024 and 2023. These are managed by the ELCA Foundation.

The Church had a net receivable due from related organizations in the amount of $6,297,767 at January 31, 2024, and $6,071,398 at January 31, 2023. The net receivable represents expenses related to service level agreements between the Church and certain affiliated organizations for building space, accounting and management services performed on their behalf.

NOTE 9 – DEFINED-CONTRIBUTION PENSION PLAN

Substantially all active employees of the Church are enrolled in the noncontributory defined-contribution pension plan administered by Portico Benefit Services. The employer contributions to the plan for the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023 were $3,587,852 and $3,624,167, respectively. All contributions to the plan are funded on a current basis.

NOTE 10 – PENSION AND POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFITS

Post-Retirement Medical Benefits: Members with service in a predecessor organization may be eligible to receive a post-retirement health contribution subsidy from Portico Benefit Services and in some cases a monthly reimbursement of their SMI (Medicare Part B) premiums. These subsidies are expressed as a percentage of the monthly cost for coverage paid by eligible retirees under the Church Medical and Dental Benefits Plan. Subsidies are based on age or a combination of age and service. Approximately 5,060 active or retired members and spouses are eligible or potentially eligible for these subsidies.

NOTE 10 – PENSION AND POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFITS (Continued)

These post-retirement medical subsidies are funded through trust funds set aside for that purpose. The trust funds are held and reported by Portico. The full actuarial valuation of the obligation is reported on the financial statements of Portico. Portico financial statements include the trust assets of approximately $78,790,000 and $82,085,000, as well as Expected Post-Retirement Benefit Obligation (EPBO) as actuarial liabilities of approximately $46,715,000 and $58,600,000 at December 31, 2023 and 2022, respectively.

The Church contributed $0 during the fiscal years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023 toward the funding of this post-retirement health care benefit. No additional funding in the future is expected based on current projections.

NOTE 11 – COLLECTIONS

The Church's art collections, which were acquired through purchases and contributions, are not recognized as assets on the statement of financial position. The collections represent a wide variety of art mediums: collagraph, etching, intaglio, dry-point engraving, katazome, linocut, oil, serigraph/silk-screen, stained glass, watercolor, and woodcut. The art is intended to share the Gospel visually with many of the pieces having biblical references. Purchases of collection items, if any, are recorded as decreases in net assets without donor restrictions in the year in which the items are acquired. Contributed collection items, if any, are not reflected on the financial statements. Proceeds from de-accessions or insurance recoveries, if any, are reflected as increases in the appropriate net asset classes and used according to the applicable restrictions.

NOTE 12 – LINE OF CREDIT

At January 31, 2024 and 2023, the Church had a $10,000,000 unsecured and uncommitted line of credit with no termination date. Interest on outstanding borrowings is charged at the bank's prime commercial rate less .5%. If the loan is not paid when due, an additional 3.0% rate is charged. There were no borrowings outstanding under the line of credit at January 31, 2024 and 2023, or during the years then ended.

(Continued)

NOTE 13 – CONCENTRATIONS OF RISK

The Church's primary sources of revenue are contributions from synods. The synod contributions are dependent upon contributions from the membership of congregations of the ELCA. There are 9 regions comprising a total of 65 synods. The following is a summary of the contributions by synods in each of the regions during the years ended January 31:

	2024	2023
Region 1 – Northwest	$ 2,013,853	$ 2,022,072
Region 2 – Southwest	3,394,990	3,369,484
Region 3 – Northwest Midwest	6,276,470	6,581,281
Region 4 – Southwest Midwest	3,362,175	3,521,256
Region 5 – Northeast Midwest	7,594,578	8,060,168
Region 6 – Southeast Midwest	3,383,737	3,416,667
Region 7 – Northeast	3,637,634	3,810,412
Region 8 – East	3,368,752	3,564,949
Region 9 – Southeast	4,047,945	4,381,271
Total synod mission support	$ 37,080,134	$ 38,727,560

NOTE 14 – NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS

Net assets that were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors were as follows during the years ended January 31:

	2024	2023
Satisfaction of program restrictions:		
World Hunger	$ 24,954,809	$ 23,441,205
Disaster Relief	18,325,596	15,363,576
Christian Community Leadership	3,838,908	1,969,262
Service and Justice	5,529,772	2,145,995
Office of the Presiding Bishop	6,718,118	4,158,603
Other programs	727,173	761,983
Satisfaction of program restrictions	60,094,376	47,840,624
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity	3,456,320	3,619,781
Total releases from restriction	$ 63,550,696	$ 51,460,405

NOTE 15 – NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets without donor restrictions consist of the following at January 31:

	2024	2023
General	$ 105,506,433	$ 96,529,509
Funds functioning as endowment (Note 17)	36,619,240	33,828,451
Net investment in property, furniture, equipment and building (Note 6)	15,750,911	17,609,986
Ending balance	$ 157,876,584	$ 147,967,946

NOTE 16 – NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTION

Net assets with donor restrictions are available for the following purposes or periods at January 31:

	2024	2023
Program-restricted:		
Disaster Relief	$ 31,135,865	$ 35,762,707
World Hunger	8,234,820	12,987,897
Office of the Presiding Bishop	2,617,688	1,236,281
Christian Community Leadership	3,930,954	5,530,220
Service and Justice	8,149,578	8,517,614
Mission Advancement	368,234	593,171
Other Programs	529,144	2,080,000
	54,966,283	66,707,890
Time-restricted, expendable in subsequent years	100,931,451	106,810,354
	155,897,734	173,518,244
Investments in perpetuity, the income from which is expendable	237,387,228	216,822,894
Deferred gifts that will provide proceeds upon death of annuitant for a permanent endowment	10,321,359	10,345,414
Paid-up life insurance policies that will provide proceeds upon death of insured for permanent endowments	1,890,346	1,866,291
	249,598,933	229,034,599
Total net assets with donor restriction	$ 405,496,667	$ 402,552,843

NOTE 17 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Interpretation of Relevant Law: The Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) modernizes the laws governing a not-for-profit organization's investment and management of donor-restricted endowment funds. The Board of Trustees of the ELCA Foundation, serving as the body delegated to manage the Church's endowments, has interpreted UPMIFA as allowing, but not requiring, the preservation of the historic dollar value of the original gift of donor-restricted endowment funds, absent explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. As a result of this interpretation, the Church has chosen to classify as net assets with donor restrictions (a) the original value of gifts donated to the permanent endowment, (b) the original value of subsequent gifts to the permanent endowment, and (c) accumulations to the permanent endowment made in accordance with the direction of the applicable donor gift instrument at the time the accumulation is added to the fund.

In accordance with accounting principles governing not-for-profit organizations subject to an enacted version of UPMIFA, the portions of donor-restricted endowments not classified as net assets with donor restrictions are classified as net assets with donor restrictions until appropriated for expenditure. Realized and unrealized gains and losses on all Church endowments with donor restrictions are being recognized in net assets with donor restrictions, except for unrealized gains and losses on deferred gifts that will provide proceeds upon death of the annuitant for a permanent endowment.

The Church classifies as net assets with donor restrictions all donor-restricted endowment funds where donor stipulation allows for the release of such funds according to an event or time restriction. In the absence of donor stipulations to the contrary, losses on the investment of such a donor-restricted endowment fund reduce net assets with donor restrictions to the extent that the donor-imposed temporary restrictions on net appreciation of the fund have not been met before the loss occurs.

There were no funds for which the fair value of the assets held was less than the level required by donor stipulation or law at January 31, 2024 and 2023. At January 31, 2024 and 2023, $36,619,240 and $33,828,451 was reported in net assets without donor restrictions. During the year, $4,276,549 and $3,740,502 has been released from net assets with donor restrictions to net assets without donor restrictions.

Endowment Spending Policies: Endowment pool distributions are made quarterly at a rate established annually by the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust ("the Trustee"). The distribution rate reflects the Trustee's consideration of the anticipated returns of the Church ("the Trust") and anticipated changes in the purchasing power of the Trust. The rates established for fiscal years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023 were 4%, respectively, and is normally less than the anticipated total return of the Trust. The distribution unit value is equal to the average of the unit values on December 31 of the five preceding years multiplied by the annual distribution rate.

Earnings in excess of the distribution rate are allocated among the endowment accounts in proportion to the number of units assigned to each account as undistributed earnings. If the quarterly distribution exceeds the actual dividend, interest, and net realized gains earned in the quarter, the excess is distributed from accumulated undistributed earnings or participant capital. At January 31, 2024, 32 of 1,272 accounts had accumulated undistributed earnings. At January 31, 2023, 31 of 1,252 accounts had accumulated undistributed earnings.

In consideration of donor request or intent, certain donor-restricted endowments are invested through instruments held outside of the Trust. Investment income is distributed or reinvested according to the donor-imposed restriction(s) for the usage of endowment distributions.

(Continued)

NOTE 17 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS (Continued)

Endowment Investment Policies: The Trust's investment objective is to provide a stable stream of investment income with long-term capital appreciation, while assuming a moderate level of investment risk. In accordance with guidelines approved by the Trustee, the Trust's assets are invested in a manner that is intended to produce results that exceed the investment's benchmark by 40 basis points over rolling five-year time periods. Actual returns in any given year may vary from this objective.

Certain donor-restricted endowments that are held outside of the Trust are generally invested in term certificates intended to provide interest income and preserve principal amounts while assuming a low level of investment risk.

Net asset composition by type of endowment fund as of January 31, 2024 and 2023:

	2024		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Donor-restricted funds*	$ -	$ 342,979,162	$ 342,979,162
Funds functioning as endowment	36,619,240	-	36,619,240
	$ 36,619,240	$ 342,979,162	$ 379,598,402

	2023		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Donor-restricted funds*	$ -	$ 320,865,941	$ 320,865,941
Funds functioning as endowment	33,828,451	-	33,828,451
	$ 33,828,451	$ 320,865,941	$ 354,694,392

* With the exception of certain investments held by outside trusts, Church net assets with donor restrictions are based on the historic dollar value of donor-stipulated net assets with donor restrictions.

NOTE 17 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS (Continued)

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Net assets, February 1, 2022	$ 32,506,694	$ 355,314,847	$ 387,821,541
Net investment return	(3,322,267)	(31,207,986)	(34,530,253)
New gifts	4,477,398	5,392,423	9,869,821
Net assets released from restriction	3,740,502	(3,740,502)	-
Other changes			
Endowment distribution of income	(3,573,876)	(6,759,132)	(10,333,008)
Total other changes	(3,573,876)	(6,759,132)	(10,333,008)
Net assets, February 1, 2023	33,828,451	318,999,650	352,828,101
Cash surrender value of life insurance	-	1,866,291	1,866,291
Adjusted net assets, February 1, 2023	33,828,451	320,865,941	354,694,392
Net investment return	2,134,968	24,319,374	26,454,342
New gifts	1,305,416	9,599,298	10,904,714
Net assets released from restriction	4,276,549	(4,276,549)	-
Other changes			
Endowment distribution of income	(4,926,144)	(7,552,957)	(12,479,101)
Total other changes	(4,926,144)	(7,552,957)	(12,479,101)
Net assets, January 31, 2024	36,619,240	342,955,107	379,574,347
Cash surrender value of life insurance	-	24,055	24,055
Adjusted net assets, January 31, 2024	$ 36,619,240	$ 342,979,162	$ 379,598,402

NOTE 18 – CONTINGENCIES

The Church is a party to litigation in various matters arising in the ordinary course of operations. Typically, the Church's insurance carriers are defending these matters. Subsequent to January 31, 2024, Church management became aware of a court decision which could result in a change to an estimate of financial liability related to outstanding legal matters. At this time, management is unable to estimate the amount of the potential liability or the likelihood of an unfavorable outcome. Pending litigation will be vigorously defended and, in the opinion of management, is likely to be resolved without any material adverse effect upon the financial statements of the Church.

NOTE 19 – FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES BY NATURE

The statements of activities report certain categories of expenses attributable to the programs and supporting functions of the Church. The tables below present these functional expenses by their natural classification for the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023.

	2024			
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Financial support and grants	$ 57,752,301	$ 61,952	$ 22,012	$ 57,836,265
Compensation and benefits	21,084,651	13,573,632	4,640,807	39,299,090
Travel	2,321,887	201,060	161,067	2,684,014
Events and conferences	2,674,156	253,853	19,043	2,947,052
Office operations	3,818,095	2,095,571	1,279,962	7,193,628
Depreciation	954,460	1,016,141	214,441	2,185,042
Occupancy	1,183,139	1,259,794	265,719	2,708,652
Transfers to restricted and designated funds	2,045,143	435,307	(2,480,450)	-
Miscellaneous and expense recovery	2,290,886	3,443,164	(244,800)	5,489,250
	$ 94,124,718	$ 22,340,474	$ 3,877,801	$ 120,342,993

NOTE 19 – FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES BY NATURE (Continued)

	2023			
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Financial support and grants	$ 50,444,198	$ 385,642	$ 2,500	$ 50,832,340
Compensation and benefits	19,735,175	12,448,185	4,553,621	36,736,981
Travel	1,645,842	476,093	212,925	2,334,860
Events and conferences	3,100,947	2,303,614	74,688	5,479,249
Office operations	2,849,172	2,784,784	1,393,778	7,027,734
Depreciation	1,058,151	1,126,708	237,648	2,422,507
Occupancy	1,004,740	1,069,837	225,652	2,300,229
Transfers to restricted and designated funds	2,919,659	245,865	(3,165,524)	-
Miscellaneous and expense recovery	1,032,174	749,633	(307,680)	1,474,127
	$ 83,790,058	$ 21,590,361	$ 3,227,608	$ 108,608,027

Certain categories of expenses are allocated to more than one program or supporting function. The allocation is based on estimated full-time equivalents or square footage, as applicable.

NOTE 20 – LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY

The Church's financial assets available within one year of the statement of financial position date for general expenditure are as follows:

	2024	2023
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 25,092,395	$ 74,070,232
Operating Investments	100,997,365	54,540,928
	$ 126,089,760	$ 128,611,160

As part of the Church's liquidity management, the Church invests a portion of its financial assets to be available as its general expenditures, liabilities, and other obligations come due. The Church had $36,619,240 and $33,828,451 in board designated endowments without donor restriction at January 31, 2024 and 2023, respectively. While the Church does not have any intention of liquidating the board designated endowments, and they are not currently available for general expenditure, these funds could be made available with Church Council approval.

NOTE 21 – SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

Management has performed an analysis of the activities and transactions subsequent to January 31, 2024, to determine the need for any adjustments to and/or disclosures within the audited financial statements for the year ended January 31, 2024. See Note 18 for a contingency that resulted subsequent to year end. Management has performed their analysis through June 21, 2024, the date the financial statements were available to be issued. Activities subsequent to this date have not been evaluated by management.

Appendix C
Audited Financial Statements of the ELCA Churchwide Organization for the Fiscal Year Ended Jan. 31, 2025

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
January 31, 2025 and 2024

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
January 31, 2025 and 2024

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Church Council
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Churchwide Organization

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Organization (the Church), which comprise the statements of financial position as of January 31, 2025 and 2024, and the related statements of activities, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Church as of January 31, 2025 and 2024, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Church and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audits. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Emphasis of Matter

As discussed in Note 1, the financial statements being presented are only for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Organization and do not include the assets, liabilities and net assets, and the revenue and expenses of the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that are recorded in the accounts of the other organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Accordingly, the accompanying financial statements are not intended to present the financial position of the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as of January 31, 2025 and 2024, or the change in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

(Continued)

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Church's ability to continue as a going concern for one year from the date the financial statements are available to be issued.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Church's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Church's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control–related matters that we identified during the audit.

Crowe LLP

Crowe LLP

Chicago, Illinois
June 18, 2025

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
January 31, 2025 and 2024

	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 26,117,622	$ 25,092,395
Accounts receivable (Note 2)	6,167,848	6,373,281
Loans receivable (Notes 4 and 5)	267,635	537,704
Due from related organizations, net (Note 8)	2,743,362	7,588,045
Investments (Note 3)	657,464,201	601,114,379
Prepaid expenses and other assets	7,783,742	7,239,358
Property, furniture, and equipment, net (Note 6)	14,522,388	15,750,911
Beneficial interest in irrevocable, split-interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation (Note 3)	9,689,310	10,778,491
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts (Note 3)	20,379,044	19,763,485
Total assets	$ 745,135,152	$ 694,238,049
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	$ 237,996	$ 542,334
Deferred revenue	992,769	3,637,445
Due to related organizations, net (Note 8)	810,652	1,290,278
Accrued liabilities	4,248,201	5,800,538
Annuities payable (Note 7)	2,509,987	4,948,896
Funds held for others (Note 1)	6,978,643	5,925,920
Funds held for others in perpetuity (Note 1)	119,594,385	108,719,387
Total liabilities	135,372,633	130,864,798
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions (Note 15)	134,864,828	157,876,584
With donor restrictions (Note 16)	474,897,691	405,496,667
Total net assets	609,762,519	563,373,251
Total liabilities and net assets	$ 745,135,152	$ 694,238,049

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended January 31, 2025, with comparative
totals for year ended January 31, 2024

	2025			
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	2024 Total
Operating revenue and support				
Contributed support				
Synod mission support (Note 13)	$ 35,225,726	$ -	$ 35,225,726	$ 37,080,134
World Hunger Appeal	-	18,512,489	18,512,489	17,366,973
Disaster response	-	16,376,435	16,376,435	13,529,388
Endowment distributions	4,798,472	7,439,476	12,237,948	12,479,101
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	-	1,500,000	1,500,000
Bequests, trusts, and residuums	2,870,003	2,178,405	5,048,408	5,901,539
Grants—corporate and other	58,400	4,971,565	5,029,965	1,488,397
Other gifts	7,899,298	2,213,084	10,112,382	8,221,003
Total contributed revenue	52,351,899	51,691,454	104,043,353	97,566,535
Other revenue				
Net return on operating investments	8,135,745	186,431	8,322,176	4,151,998
SPPO offices	123,338	-	123,338	341,279
Services and other revenue	14,088,373	82,792	14,171,165	4,982,570
Lease income	1,045,304	-	1,045,304	1,041,369
Total other revenue	23,392,760	269,223	23,661,983	10,517,216
Net assets released from restrictions				
Satisfaction of restrictions (Note 14)	52,602,602	(52,602,602)	-	-
Transfer of endowments (Note 1)	(28,824,713)	28,824,713	-	-
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity (Note 14)	3,448,411	(3,448,411)	-	-
Net assets released from restrictions	27,226,300	(27,226,300)	-	-
Total operating revenue and support	102,970,959	24,734,377	127,705,336	108,083,751
Operating expenses				
Program services				
Christian Community Leadership	38,599,839	-	38,599,839	31,237,398
Service and Justice	58,577,276	-	58,577,276	58,140,604
Church periodicals	610,673	-	610,673	1,003,007
Office of the Presiding Bishop	2,256,120	-	2,256,120	2,281,202
Innovation	1,654,426	-	1,654,426	1,353,525
SPPO offices	178,715	-	178,715	108,982
Total program services	101,877,049	-	101,877,049	94,124,718

(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended January 31, 2025, with comparative
totals for year ended January 31, 2024

	2025			
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	2024 Total
Operating expenses (Continued)				
Management and general				
Office of the Presiding Bishop	$ 6,628,354	$ -	$ 6,628,354	$ 6,087,627
Office of the Treasurer	11,255,344	-	11,255,344	11,349,682
Office of the Secretary	4,876,171	-	4,876,171	4,903,165
Total management and general	22,759,869	-	22,759,869	22,340,474
Fundraising				
Office of the Presiding Bishop	3,112,091	-	3,112,091	3,877,801
Total fundraising	3,112,091	-	3,112,091	3,877,801
Total operating expenses	127,749,009	-	127,749,009	120,342,993
Net operating revenue and support less operating expenses	(24,778,050)	24,734,377	(43,673)	(12,259,242)
Non-operating transactions				
Endowment contributions	4,935	10,046,400	10,051,335	10,904,714
Net investment return on endowment and other deferred gifts	3,332,428	31,260,633	34,593,061	13,975,244
Change in value of beneficial interest in split interest agreements and outside trusts	(1,571,069)	3,359,614	1,788,545	231,746
Total non-operating transactions	1,766,294	44,666,647	46,432,941	25,111,704
Changes in net assets	(23,011,756)	69,401,024	46,389,268	12,852,462
Net assets at beginning of year	157,876,584	405,496,667	563,373,251	550,520,789
Net assets at end of year	$ 134,864,828	$ 474,897,691	$ 609,762,519	$ 563,373,251

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended January 31, 2024

	2024		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Operating revenue and support			
Contributed support			
Synod mission support (Note 13)	$ 37,080,134	$ -	$ 37,080,134
World Hunger Appeal	-	17,366,973	17,366,973
Disaster response	-	13,529,388	13,529,388
Endowment distributions	4,926,144	7,552,957	12,479,101
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	-	1,500,000
Bequests, trusts, and residuums	3,462,678	2,438,861	5,901,539
Grants—corporate and other	240,314	1,248,083	1,488,397
Other gifts	6,453,063	1,767,940	8,221,003
Total contributed revenue	53,662,333	43,904,202	97,566,535
Other revenue			
Net return on operating investments	4,151,998	-	4,151,998
SPPO offices	341,279	-	341,279
Services and other revenue	4,686,586	295,984	4,982,570
Lease income	1,041,369	-	1,041,369
Total other revenue	10,221,232	295,984	10,517,216
Net assets released from restrictions			
Satisfaction of restrictions (Note 14)	60,094,376	(60,094,376)	-
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity (Note 14)	3,456,320	(3,456,320)	-
Net assets released from restrictions	63,550,696	(63,550,696)	-
Total operating revenue and support	127,434,261	(19,350,510)	108,083,751
Operating expenses			
Program services			
Christian Community Leadership	31,237,398	-	31,237,398
Service and Justice	58,140,604	-	58,140,604
Church periodicals	1,003,007	-	1,003,007
Office of the Presiding Bishop	2,281,202	-	2,281,202
Innovation	1,353,525	-	1,353,525
SPPO offices	108,982	-	108,982
Total program services	94,124,718	-	94,124,718

(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year ended January 31, 2024

	2024		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Operating expenses (Continued)			
Management and general			
Office of the Presiding Bishop	$ 6,087,627	$ -	$ 6,087,627
Office of the Treasurer	11,349,682	-	11,349,682
Office of the Secretary	4,903,165	-	4,903,165
Total management and general	22,340,474	-	22,340,474
Fundraising			
Office of the Presiding Bishop	3,877,801	-	3,877,801
Total fundraising	3,877,801	-	3,877,801
Total operating expenses	120,342,993	-	120,342,993
Net operating revenue and support less operating expenses	7,091,268	(19,350,510)	(12,259,242)
Non-operating transactions			
Endowment contributions	1,305,416	9,599,298	10,904,714
Net investment return on endowment and other deferred gifts	1,511,954	12,463,290	13,975,244
Change in value of beneficial interest in split interest agreements and outside trusts	-	231,746	231,746
Total non-operating transactions	2,817,370	22,294,334	25,111,704
Changes in net assets	9,908,638	2,943,824	12,852,462
Net assets at beginning of year	147,967,946	402,552,843	550,520,789
Net assets at end of year	$ 157,876,584	$ 405,496,667	$ 563,373,251

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
Years ended January 31, 2025 and 2024

	2025	2024
Cash flows from operating activities		
Change in net assets	$ 46,389,268	$ 12,852,462
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	2,018,326	2,185,042
Change in fair value of investments	(37,435,343)	(16,930,344)
Contribution restricted for long-term investment	(11,893,952)	(10,904,714)
Gain on beneficial interest in perpetual trusts	(1,501,064)	(3,486,334)
(Gain) loss on change in value of deferred gifts	(892,605)	2,711,897
Changes in:		
Accounts receivable	205,433	487,718
Interest receivable	-	204,320
Prepaid expenses and other assets	(406,612)	(99,196)
Accounts payable	(800,057)	1,053,928
Deferred revenue	(2,644,676)	2,788,764
Due to/from related organizations	4,365,057	(226,369)
Accrued liabilities	(1,552,337)	1,963,055
Net cash used in operating activities	(4,148,562)	(7,399,771)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase and acquisition of equipment	(789,803)	(325,967)
Net change on mortgage notes and construction loans	270,069	(83,243)
Purchase of investments	(15,772,428)	(64,338,605)
Investment in the Mission Development Fund Endowment	-	(1,305,391)
Proceeds from sale of investments	9,811,821	13,787,827
Net cash used in investing activities	(6,480,341)	(52,265,379)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Annuities payable	(239,822)	(217,401)
Proceeds from contribution restricted for long-term investment	11,893,952	10,904,714
Net cash provided by financing activities	11,654,130	10,687,313
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	1,025,227	(48,977,837)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	25,092,395	74,070,232
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	$ 26,117,622	$ 25,092,395

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Organization: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the ELCA) is a Minnesota nonprofit corporation that functions interdependently with the congregations and synods of the ELCA. The ELCA serves on behalf of and in support of the ELCA's members, congregations, and synods. To fulfill its purpose, the ELCA receives, establishes, and supports congregations and ministries necessary to carry out its mission. The ELCA has constituent Lutheran congregations in 65 synods throughout the United States and the Caribbean. The ELCA's principal source of revenue is contributions.

The accompanying financial statements include all administrative and program offices and units of the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (collectively, the Church). These financial statements do not include the accounts of organizations, such as the ELCA Foundation, Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services), Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Mission Investment Fund), Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Augsburg Fortress), Lutheran Men in Mission, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Federal Credit Union (Credit Union), congregations, synods, schools, cemeteries, homes, seminaries, or any other institution owned and operated by religious orders of men or women, except insofar as financial transactions have taken place between them and the Church (e.g., subsidies, loans, and deposits). These organizations may or may not be separate corporations under civil law and may or may not be under the control of the ELCA; however, each is an operating entity distinct from the Church, maintains separate accounts, carries on its own services and programs, and reports annually to its respective constituency.

Effective January 1, 2018, the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, doing business as the ELCA Foundation (ELCA Foundation), is a separately incorporated ministry/corporation of the ELCA. This corporation manages the endowments of the ELCA, the Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT), and the Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) programs. The Church's beneficial interests in CRTs and CGAs are included in the Church financial statements for the years ended January 31, 2025 and 2024. Trusteeship of the existing CRTs has been transferred from the Church to the ELCA Foundation, effective February 1, 2018.

Basis of Presentation: The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.

To ensure the observance of limitations and restrictions placed on the use of resources available, the Church maintains its financial accounts in accordance with the principles and practices of fund accounting.

The financial statements focus on the organization as a whole and present balances and transactions classified based upon the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Net assets, revenue, contributed support, expenses, gains, and losses have been classified into two net asset classes based on these donor-imposed restrictions. A description of each net asset class follows:

> *Without Donor Restrictions* – Net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions including the carrying value of all property, furniture, and equipment. Items that affect this category of net assets include contributions and bequests without donor restrictions, contributions with donor restrictions and bequests whose donor-imposed restrictions were met during the fiscal year and investment income whose use is without donor restrictions, as well as all expenses incurred in connection with the operations of the Church. Certain funds, generally set aside by Church Council action, function as endowments and are included in net assets without donor restrictions.

(Continued)

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

With Donor Restrictions – Net assets subject to donor-imposed restrictions that will be met either by actions of the Church or the passage of time. Items in this net asset category are contributions, bequests, and investment income whose use is limited to specific purposes by the donor. These amounts are reclassified when such restrictions are met or when time restrictions have expired.

Also included are net assets that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions which require them to be maintained permanently by the Church. Items in this net asset category include gifts wherein donors stipulate that the corpus be held in perpetuity and only the income be made available for purposes without donor restrictions or with donor restrictions (primarily gifts for endowments and gifts solicited by the Church that will fund perpetual endowments).

Cash and Cash Equivalents: Cash and cash equivalents include investments in money market accounts, commercial paper, and other short-term investments with original maturities of three months or less from the date of purchase. Cash and cash equivalents used by the Church in managing its investments are reported in investments. The Church maintains cash balances at several financial institutions in excess of the insurance limits provided by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Beneficial Interest in Irrevocable, Split-Interest Agreements, Held by ELCA Foundation: The Church holds a beneficial remainder interest in various charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts, commonly referred to as split-interest agreements. These agreements are administered by the ELCA Foundation on behalf of the Church and other beneficiaries. The Church records the fair value of the beneficial interest as a receivable and as revenue when documentation of the beneficial interest is received.

Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts Administrated by Outside Organizations: The Church has been granted a beneficial interest in various irrevocable trust accounts created under wills or deeds of trust. These trust accounts are administered and held by outside trustees. The Church records the fair value of the beneficial interest as a receivable and as revenue when documentation of the beneficial interest is received.

Investments and Related Income, Gains, and Losses: Investments are reported at fair value, except for certain equity and real estate investments, which are reported at cost. Investments carried at fair value consist primarily of equity mutual funds, corporate and government obligations, term deposit accounts and investments in pools. The cost of securities sold is based on either the specific-identification or average-cost method. Investment income, gains and losses, and any investment-related expenses are recorded net of investment fees as changes in net assets without donor restrictions in the statement of activities unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulations.

Property, Furniture, Equipment, and Depreciation: Property, furniture, and equipment are recorded at cost less accumulated depreciation to date. On an ongoing basis, the Church reviews long-lived assets for impairment whenever events or circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may be overstated. Depreciation is provided over the following useful lives on a straight-line basis:

Building	50 years
Building improvements	10-25 years
Hardware, software and related components	3-5 years
Furniture, fixtures and improvements	5-7 years
Tenant improvements	Lesser of length of lease or useful life
Transportation	5-7 years

(Continued)

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Funds Held for Others: Funds held for others consist of contributions received on behalf of and other resources held for other Lutheran organizations that are separate, nonconsolidated entities. The Church does not have variance power over these funds. In the case of funds held for others in perpetuity, the earnings are distributed per the donor's specifications, but the corpus or principal is held in perpetuity or intact and reflected as a liability of the Church.

Deferred Revenue: Deferred revenue consists of funds received relating to subsequent periods. Additionally, the Church also recognizes its remainder interest in the assets received from donors under pooled income fund agreements and life income fund agreements as contribution revenue in the period in which the assets are received from the donor. The difference between the assets recognized and the revenue recognized is recorded as deferred revenue, representing the amount of the discount for future interest.

Vacation Pay: The Church recognizes vacation pay expense when earned by its non-missionary personnel. The liability for vacation pay of missionary personnel cannot be reasonably estimated, and such amounts are recognized when paid.

Revenue and Expenses: Revenues are reported as increases in net assets without donor restrictions unless use of the related assets is limited by donor-imposed restrictions. Expenses are reported as decreases in net assets without donor restrictions. Gains and losses on investments and other assets or liabilities are reported as increases or decreases in net assets without donor restrictions unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulation. Expirations of net assets with donor restrictions (i.e., the donor-stipulated purpose has been fulfilled and/or the stipulated time period has elapsed) are reported as reclassifications between applicable classes of net assets.

Contributed Support: Contributions, including unconditional promises to give, are recognized in the period received. Conditional contributions are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend are met.

Contributions to be received after one year are discounted at an appropriate discount rate commensurate with the risk involved. Amortization of discount is recorded as additional contribution revenue in accordance with donor-imposed restrictions, if any, on the contributions.

Contributions received with donor-imposed restrictions are reported as revenue of the net asset class with donor restrictions, as appropriate. Contributions of land, buildings, and equipment without donor-imposed restrictions concerning the use of such long-lived assets are reported as revenue of net assets without donor restrictions.

Services and Other Revenue: Revenues from separately incorporated ministries and unincorporated self-supporting ministries for services provided by the Church (e.g., human resources, information technology, financial services, building management) relate to agreements to provide such services negotiated on an annual basis. These revenues are recognized throughout the year as these services are performed. Subscription revenue relates to publications and is recognized as the related publications are distributed. Registration revenue relates to events and is recognized as the events are held. Amounts paid for events that have not yet been held at January 31 are included in deferred revenues.

Income Tax: The Church has received a determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service indicating that it is exempt from Federal income taxes on income related to its exempt purpose under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. There were no significant unrelated business income activities during the years ended January 31, 2025 and 2024.

(Continued)

NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

Uncertainty in Income Taxes: The ELCA follows guidance issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) with respect to accounting for uncertainty in income taxes. A tax position is recognized as a benefit only if it is more likely than not that the tax position would be sustained in a tax examination, with a tax examination being presumed to occur. The amount recognized is the largest amount of tax benefit that is greater than 50% likely of being realized on examination. For tax positions not meeting the more likely than not test, no tax benefit is recorded.

The Church recognizes interest and penalties related to unrecognized tax benefits in interest and income tax expense, respectively. The Church has no amounts accrued for interest or penalties as of January 31, 2025 and 2024.

Due to its tax-exempt status, the Church is not subject to U.S. federal income tax or state income tax. The Church does not expect the total amount of unrecognized tax benefits to significantly change in the next 12 months.

Use of Estimates: The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from estimates.

Reclassifications/Transfer of Endowments: Certain net assets in the Statement of Activities have been reclassified to account for restricted endowments in the current year. The reclassification did not affect total net assets in the Statement of Financial Position for all years presented.

NOTE 2 – ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

Included in accounts receivable at January 31, 2025 and 2024, were $5,231,351 and $5,758,755, respectively, relating to synods' contributions for mission support, world hunger appeal, and other programs that have been collected subsequent to year end. Interest is not normally charged on receivables. Management reviews all of receivables on an individual basis for collectability and determines whether an allowance is necessary. No allowance for uncollectible amounts has been established because management considers all accounts receivable to be collectible.

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

Investments at January 31, 2025 and 2024, consist of the following:

	2025	2024
Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)	$ 11,527,404	$ 11,469,954
Fixed income securities		
U.S. government obligations	24,080,712	31,797,740
Corporate bonds	53,839,406	55,210,283
Term investments	605,582	587,459
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost	1,204,546	1,204,546
Investments held in EFPT pools	554,985,521	497,307,731
Cash and cash equivalents	11,221,030	3,536,666
	$ 657,464,201	$ 601,114,379

The following schedule summarizes the investment return reported in the statements of activities for the years ended January 31, 2025 and 2024:

	2025	2024
Realized investment gains, net	$ 1,321,047	$ 81,418
Unrealized investment gains	38,300,725	20,821,061
Dividend and interest income	3,649,681	3,111,963
Investment return, net	$ 43,271,453	$ 24,014,442

Investments are reported at fair value except for certain equity securities and certain investments in real estate which are reported at cost. Investments carried at fair value consist primarily of corporate and government obligations, inflation-indexed and high-yield securities and investments in ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust (“EFPT”).

Fair value is the price that would be received for an asset (an exit price) in the principal or most advantageous market for the asset in an orderly transaction between market participants on the measurement date. Investments that have readily determinable market values are determined using quoted market prices. Fair values of investments for which market prices are not readily available are determined based upon quoted market close prices for similar issues, dealer quotes, appraisals, or pricing models utilizing market-observable inputs from comparable securities. The fair value hierarchy is based on maximizing observable inputs and minimizing unobservable inputs when measuring fair value. Three levels of inputs may be used to measure fair value.

Level 1: Quoted prices (unadjusted) for identical assets in active markets that the Church has the ability to access as of the measurement date.

Level 2: Significant other observable inputs other than Level 1 prices, such as quoted prices for similar assets, quoted prices in markets that are not active, or other inputs that are observable or can be corroborated by observable market data.

(Continued)

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

Level 3: Significant unobservable inputs that reflect the Church's own assumptions that the market participants would use in pricing an asset.

In many cases, a valuation technique used to measure fair value includes inputs from multiple levels of the fair value hierarchy. Investments are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

The Church's investments which are reported at fair value are valued using the following inputs and valuation techniques:

Exchange Traded Fund: The fair values of exchange traded fund investments reflect quoted prices on nationally recognized securities exchanges (Level 1 inputs).

Fixed Income Securities: Fair values of U.S. Government securities reflect closing prices reported in the active markets in which the securities are traded (Level 1 inputs). Fair values of corporate bonds are determined based on quoted prices for similar instruments in active markets, quoted prices for identical or similar instruments in markets that are not active and other market-corroborated sources, such as indices, yield curves and matrix pricing (Level 2 inputs – market approach).

Term Investments: Demand accounts are estimated to approximate deposit-account balances. Term certificates are estimated to approximate principal amounts plus capitalized interest as of the reporting date. No discounts for credit quality or liquidity were determined to be applicable. Term certificates have varying maturity dates, may be redeemed prior to maturity at the discretion of the Mission Investment Fund, and are subject to an early redemption penalty. (Level 2 inputs – income approach).

Investments Held in Pools: The underlying investments within the EFPT, as well as certain other pooled investments held by the Church, have observable inputs and market activity that allow for fair values based on the underlying market prices of the securities in the pools. The Church has the ability to redeem their pooled investments at any time at the monthly per unit net asset value (NAV).

Beneficial Interests in Trusts: The fair value of beneficial interests in trusts is determined based upon the Church's proportional interest in the fair value of the underlying trust assets. The underlying trust assets are readily marketable and have fair values which are determined by obtaining quoted market prices in active markets. This valuation method has been estimated to represent the present value of future distributed income. The liquidation of these assets is contingent upon circumstances that are out of the Church's control and cannot be liquidated on a periodic basis (Level 3 inputs).

Beneficial Interest in Irrevocable, Split-interest Agreements, held by the Church: The beneficial interest in these agreements is measured at the present value of future cash flows considering the fair value of invested assets, the present value of contractual payment obligations under the agreement and the Church's ownership interest in the split-interest agreement (Level 3 inputs – income approach).

(Continued)

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

The following table sets forth, by level within the fair value hierarchy, financial instruments owned, at fair value as of January 31, 2025 and 2024:

	2025			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)	$ 11,527,404	$ -	$ -	$ 11,527,404
Fixed income securities				
U.S. government obligations	24,080,712	-	-	24,080,712
Corporate bonds	-	53,839,406	-	53,839,406
Term investments	-	605,582	-	605,582
Cash and cash equivalents	11,221,030	-	-	11,221,030
Investments held at fair value	$ 46,829,146	$ 54,444,988	$ -	101,274,134
Investments at net asset value per share				554,985,521
Total investments at fair value				656,259,655
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost*				1,204,546
Total investments				$ 657,464,201
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 20,379,044	$ 20,379,044
Beneficial interest in irrevocable split interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 9,689,310	$ 9,689,310

	2024			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)	$ 11,469,954	$ -	$ -	$ 11,469,954
Fixed income securities				
U.S. government obligations	31,797,740	-	-	31,797,740
Corporate bonds	-	55,210,283	-	55,210,283
Term investments	-	587,459	-	587,459
Cash and cash equivalents	3,536,666	-	-	3,536,666
Investments held at fair value	$ 46,804,360	$ 55,797,742	$ -	102,602,102
Investments at net asset value per share				497,307,731
Total investments at fair value				599,909,833
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost*				1,204,546
Total investments				$ 601,114,379
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 19,763,485	$ 19,763,485
Beneficial interest in irrevocable split interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation, fair value	$ -	$ -	$ 10,778,491	$ 10,778,491

* Equity securities, comprised of closely held stock held by the Church at cost, of $1,204,546 at January 31, 2025 and 2024 were not included in the fair value tables above.

(Continued)

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

The table below rolls forward balances for Level 3 beneficial interest in perpetual trusts from February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2025:

Balance as of February 1, 2023	$ 18,326,340
Unrealized gains	1,437,145
Balance as of January 31, 2024	19,763,485
Unrealized gains	615,559
Balance as of January 31, 2025	$ 20,379,044

The table below rolls forward balances for Level 3 beneficial interest in split-interest agreements from February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2025:

Balance as of February 1, 2023	$ 12,089,038
Decrease in beneficial interest resulting from:	
New gifts	130,795
Unrealized gains	2,049,189
Terminations	(3,490,531)
Change in value of beneficial interest	(1,310,547)
Balance as of January 31, 2024	10,778,491
Decrease in beneficial interest resulting from:	
New gifts	61,433
Unrealized gains	885,504
Terminations	(2,036,118)
Change in value of beneficial interest	(1,089,181)
Balance as of January 31, 2025	$ 9,689,310

Strategies Employed for Achieving Objectives of ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust: Investments held in endowment funds are stated at fair value. Certain endowment funds are classified by the Church as "Funds Held for Others" or "Funds Held for Others in Perpetuity" and are invested in the EFPT administered under the terms of that Trust by its Trustee.

The EFPT investment objective is to provide participants with a stable stream of distributable investment income with long-term capital appreciation, while assuming a moderate level of investment risk. The assets of the EFPT are invested in a diversified portfolio that places an emphasis on equity-based and fixed income investments selected in accordance with the criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values and programs of the ELCA.

NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)

The target asset allocation ranges are 20% to 50% in U.S. equity securities, 10% to 40% in Non-U.S. equity securities, 5% to 35% in investment grade fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in high yield fixed income securities, 0% to 5% in U.S. inflation-indexed fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in global real estate securities, 0% to 10% in hedge funds, 0% to 10% in private infrastructure, and 0% to 25% in private markets, with the balance in cash and cash equivalents.

Ownership interests in the EFPT are initially assigned through unitization of participants' investment additions. The total value of the EFPT net assets at the end of each month is used to determine the number of units allocated to participants' additions placed in the EFPT and to value withdrawals from the pool. Distributions from the pool are first made from dividend and interest income and net realized gains. If distributions exceed the actual dividends, interest, and net realized gains, the excess is distributed first from accumulated undistributed earnings and gains, then from capital.

Quarterly distributions from the EFPT are made at a rate established annually by the Trustee of the EFPT that reflects the Trustee's consideration of anticipated returns of the EFPT and anticipated changes in the purchasing power of the EFPT. The rate established for the years ended December 31, 2024 and 2023 was 4%. It was applied each year to the average unit value of the assets in the EFPT at December 31 of the five preceding years. The rate established for 2025 is 4%.

NOTE 4 – MORTGAGES AND NOTES

Mortgages, notes, and contracts for deed as of January 31, 2025 and 2024, are summarized as follows:

	Interest Rate	2025	2024
Partnership support loans to congregations	0%	$ 100,030	$ 135,736

There is one segment and one class in this portfolio.

Partnership support loans to congregations relate to Partnership Support grants, which are given for new starts, strategic renewal and transformation. Congregations that receive these grants sign a covenant where they agree to return the funds if the congregation leaves the Church.

Concentration of Credit Risk: There are no delinquencies with the mortgage notes as of January 31, 2025 and 2024. The Church does not believe that an allowance is necessary for these mortgage notes. If a Congregation decides to leave and is not able to pay the full amount received, the Church provides the opportunity for them to repay in installments.

NOTE 5 – OVERSEAS CHURCH CONSTRUCTION LOANS

Overseas church construction loans bear interest at rates ranging from 2% to 5% and mature at various dates through October 15, 2029. The balance of overseas church construction loans outstanding as of January 31, 2025 and 2024, is $167,605 and $401,968, respectively.

(Continued)

NOTE 5 – OVERSEAS CHURCH CONSTRUCTION LOANS (Continued)

Concentration of Credit Risk: The loan portfolio consists of one segment and one class. The Church's overseas lending activities are primarily conducted with companion churches. Notes receivable are generally not collateralized with real estate but are secured by the grants from the Church. The Church has an allowance of $50,673 reserved for this loan portfolio. The following is a summary of net notes by region for the years ended January 31:

	2025	2024
Africa	$ 12,924	$ 20,297
Latin America/Caribbean	154,681	381,671
Total overseas construction loans	$ 167,605	$ 401,968

NOTE 6 – PROPERTY, FURNITURE, AND EQUIPMENT

Property, furniture, and equipment are recorded at cost less accumulated depreciation. Details relating to these assets as of January 31, 2025 and 2024, are presented below:

	2025	2024
Land	$ 133,000	$ 133,000
Buildings and improvements	52,938,806	52,553,895
Furniture and equipment	13,066,620	12,782,748
Work in progress	238,642	117,622
	66,377,068	65,587,265
Less accumulated depreciation	(51,854,680)	(49,836,354)
Totals	$ 14,522,388	$ 15,750,911

Depreciation expense for the years ended January 31, 2025 and 2024, was $2,018,326 and $2,185,042, respectively.

NOTE 7 – SPLIT-INTEREST AGREEMENTS

Charitable Gift Annuities: Charitable gift annuities are arrangements between a donor and the Church in which the donor contributes assets to the Church in exchange for a promise by the Church to pay a fixed amount for the life of the donor or other individuals designated by the donor. Due to state insurance regulations, the assets received are held as segregated assets. The annuity liability is a general obligation of the Church. Assets are recognized at fair value on the date of the contribution. An annuity payment liability is recognized for the present value of future cash flows expected to be paid to the donor or to the designated individual. The discount rate is the appropriate risk adjusted rate on the date of the contract. The 2012 IAR Tables are used to calculate the life expectancies of the annuity beneficiaries.

At the death of the donor or designated individual, the book value of the contract is distributed to the Church or related organization either with or without donor restricted use depending upon the donor restrictions.

(Continued)

NOTE 7 – SPLIT-INTEREST AGREEMENTS (Continued)

Pooled Income Funds and Life Income Contracts: Donors contribute assets to an investment pool and are assigned a specific number of units based on the proportion of the fair value of their contribution to the total fair value of the pooled income fund on the date of the donor's entry to the pooled fund. Until a donor's death, the donor or designated beneficiary is paid the actual ordinary income earned on the donor's units. Realized gains or losses are added to each unit's principal. Upon the donor's death, the value of the units is released to the Church or a related organization to be used as specified by the donor.

The contributed assets are recorded at fair value. A contribution is recorded at the fair value of the assets discounted for the estimated time period until the donor's death. The appropriate risk adjusted rate at the date of the contribution is used for the discount rate, and the 2012 IAR Tables are used to calculate life expectancies. The difference between the fair value of the assets received and the revenue recognized is recorded as deferred revenue, representing the amount of the discount for future revenue.

A summary of recorded amounts related to these arrangements as of January 31, 2025 and 2024, is as follows:

	2025		2024	
	Deferred Revenue	Annuities Payable	Deferred Revenue	Annuities Payable
Charitable gift annuities	$ -	$ 2,509,987	$ -	$ 4,948,896
Pooled income funds	556,266	-	604,579	-
Life income funds	946	-	961	-
	$ 557,212	$ 2,509,987	$ 605,540	$ 4,948,896

Adjustments to the liability, to reflect amortization of the discount and changes in actuarial assumptions are recognized in the statements of activities as a change in the value of split-interest agreements in net assets with donor restrictions.

NOTE 8 – RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Church is the beneficiary of endowment, trust and annuity accounts with a fair value of $565,361,128 and $508,773,065 at January 31, 2025 and 2024. These are managed by the ELCA Foundation.

The Church had a net receivable due from related organizations in the amount of $1,932,710 at January 31, 2025, and $6,297,767 at January 31, 2024. The net receivable represents expenses related to service level agreements between the Church and certain affiliated organizations for building space, accounting and management services performed on their behalf.

NOTE 9 – DEFINED-CONTRIBUTION PENSION PLAN

Substantially all active employees of the Church are enrolled in the noncontributory defined-contribution pension plan administered by Portico Benefit Services. The employer contributions to the plan for the years ended January 31, 2025 and 2024 were $3,804,066 and $3,587,852, respectively. All contributions to the plan are funded on a current basis.

(Continued)

NOTE 10 – PENSION AND POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFITS

Post-Retirement Medical Benefits: Members with service in a predecessor organization may be eligible to receive a post-retirement health contribution subsidy from Portico Benefit Services and in some cases a monthly reimbursement of their SMI (Medicare Part B) premiums. These subsidies are expressed as a percentage of the monthly cost for coverage paid by eligible retirees under the Church Medical and Dental Benefits Plan. Subsidies are based on age or a combination of age and service. Approximately 4,608 active or retired members and spouses are eligible or potentially eligible for these subsidies.

These post-retirement medical subsidies are funded through trust funds set aside for that purpose. The trust funds are held and reported by Portico. The full actuarial valuation of the obligation is reported on the financial statements of Portico. Portico financial statements include the trust assets of approximately $76,199,000 and $78,789,000, as well as Expected Post-Retirement Benefit Obligation (EPBO) as actuarial liabilities of approximately $42,922,000 and $46,715,000 at December 31, 2024 and 2023, respectively.

The Church contributed $0 during the fiscal years ended January 31, 2025 and 2024, toward the funding of this post-retirement health care benefit. No additional funding in the future is expected based on current projections.

NOTE 11 – COLLECTIONS

The Church's art collections, which were acquired through purchases and contributions, are not recognized as assets on the statements of financial position. The collections represent a wide variety of art mediums: collagraph, etching, intaglio, dry-point engraving, katazome, linocut, oil, serigraph/silk-screen, stained glass, watercolor, and woodcut. The art is intended to share the Gospel visually with many of the pieces having biblical references. Purchases of collection items, if any, are recorded as decreases in net assets without donor restrictions in the year in which the items are acquired. Contributed collection items, if any, are not reflected on the financial statements. Proceeds from de-accessions or insurance recoveries, if any, are reflected as increases in the appropriate net asset classes and used according to the applicable restrictions.

NOTE 12 – LINE OF CREDIT

At January 31, 2025 and 2024, the Church had a $10,000,000 unsecured and uncommitted line of credit with no termination date. Interest on outstanding borrowings is charged at the bank's prime commercial rate less .5%. If the loan is not paid when due, an additional 3.0% rate is charged. There were no borrowings outstanding under the line of credit at January 31, 2025 and 2024, or during the years then ended.

NOTE 13 – CONCENTRATIONS OF RISK

The Church's primary sources of revenue are contributions from synods. The synod contributions are dependent upon contributions from the membership of congregations of the ELCA. There are nine regions comprising a total of 65 synods.

(Continued)

NOTE 13 – CONCENTRATIONS OF RISK (Continued)

The following is a summary of the contributions by synods in each of the regions during the years ended January 31:

	2025	2024
Region 1 – Northwest	$ 1,936,748	$ 2,013,853
Region 2 – Southwest	3,272,478	3,394,990
Region 3 – Northwest Midwest	6,259,392	6,276,470
Region 4 – Southwest Midwest	3,258,756	3,362,175
Region 5 – Northeast Midwest	6,993,993	7,594,578
Region 6 – Southeast Midwest	3,106,961	3,383,737
Region 7 – Northeast	3,461,459	3,637,634
Region 8 – East	3,221,607	3,368,752
Region 9 – Southeast	3,714,332	4,047,945
Total synod mission support	$ 35,225,726	$ 37,080,134

NOTE 14 – NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS

Net assets that were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by transfer of funds consistent with donor intent were as follows during the years ended January 31:

	2025	2024
Satisfaction of program restrictions:		
World Hunger	$ 24,463,491	$ 24,954,809
Disaster Relief	20,183,413	18,325,596
Christian Community Leadership	730,218	3,838,908
Service and Justice	2,105,655	5,529,772
Office of the Presiding Bishop	4,861,709	6,718,118
Other programs	258,116	727,173
Satisfaction of program restrictions	52,602,602	60,094,376
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity	3,448,411	3,456,320
Transfer of endowments	(28,824,713)	-
Total releases from restriction	$ 27,226,300	$ 63,550,696

NOTE 15 – NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets without donor restrictions consist of the following at January 31:

	2025	2024
General	$ 44,654,927	$ 72,113,161
Funds functioning as endowment (Note 17)	39,956,602	36,619,240
Board designated funds	35,730,911	33,393,272
Net investment in property, furniture, equipment and building (Note 6)	14,522,388	15,750,911
Ending balance	$ 134,864,828	$ 157,876,584

NOTE 16 – NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTION

Net assets with donor restrictions are available for the following purposes or periods at January 31:

	2025	2024
Program-restricted:		
Disaster Relief	$ 28,397,280	$ 31,135,865
World Hunger	4,450,602	8,234,820
Office of the Presiding Bishop	3,213,381	2,617,688
Christian Community Leadership	4,646,911	3,930,954
Service and Justice	8,299,543	8,149,578
Mission Advancement	623,096	368,234
Other Programs	2,187,436	529,144
	51,818,249	54,966,283
Time-restricted, expendable in subsequent years	136,645,716	100,931,451
	188,463,965	155,897,734
Investments in perpetuity, the income from which is expendable	274,222,021	237,387,228
Deferred gifts that will provide proceeds upon death of annuitant for a permanent endowment	10,221,873	10,321,359
Paid-up life insurance policies that will provide proceeds upon death of insured for permanent endowments	1,989,832	1,890,346
	286,433,726	249,598,933
Total net assets with donor restriction	$ 474,897,691	$ 405,496,667

(Continued)

NOTE 17 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Interpretation of Relevant Law: The Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) modernizes the laws governing a not-for-profit organization's investment and management of donor-restricted endowment funds. The Board of Trustees of the ELCA Foundation, serving as the body delegated to manage the Church's endowments, has interpreted UPMIFA as allowing, but not requiring, the preservation of the historic dollar value of the original gift of donor-restricted endowment funds, absent explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. As a result of this interpretation, the Church has chosen to classify as net assets with donor restrictions (a) the original value of gifts donated to the permanent endowment, (b) the original value of subsequent gifts to the permanent endowment, and (c) accumulations to the permanent endowment made in accordance with the direction of the applicable donor gift instrument at the time the accumulation is added to the fund.

In accordance with accounting principles governing not-for-profit organizations subject to an enacted version of UPMIFA, the portions of donor-restricted endowments not classified as net assets with donor restrictions are classified as net assets with donor restrictions until appropriated for expenditure. Realized and unrealized gains and losses on all Church endowments with donor restrictions are being recognized in net assets with donor restrictions, except for unrealized gains and losses on deferred gifts that will provide proceeds upon death of the annuitant for a permanent endowment.

The Church classifies as net assets with donor restrictions all donor-restricted endowment funds where donor stipulation allows for the release of such funds according to an event or time restriction. In the absence of donor stipulations to the contrary, losses on the investment of such a donor-restricted endowment fund reduce net assets with donor restrictions to the extent that the donor-imposed temporary restrictions on net appreciation of the fund have not been met before the loss occurs.

There were no funds for which the fair value of the assets held was less than the level required by donor stipulation or law at January 31, 2025 and 2024. At January 31, 2025 and 2024, $39,956,602 and $36,619,240, respectively, was reported in net assets without donor restrictions. During the years ended January 31, 2025 and 2024, $4,121,788 and $4,276,549, respectively, has been released from net assets with donor restrictions to net assets without donor restrictions.

Endowment Spending Policies: Endowment pool distributions are made quarterly at a rate established annually by the EFPT ("the Trustee"). The distribution rate reflects the Trustee's consideration of the anticipated returns of the Church ("the Trust") and anticipated changes in the purchasing power of the Trust. The rates established for fiscal years ended January 31, 2025 and 2024, were 4%, respectively, and are normally less than the anticipated total return of the Trust. The distribution unit value is equal to the average of the unit values on December 31 of the five preceding years multiplied by the annual distribution rate.

Earnings in excess of the distribution rate are allocated among the endowment accounts in proportion to the number of units assigned to each account as undistributed earnings. If the quarterly distribution exceeds the actual dividend, interest, and net realized gains earned in the quarter, the excess is distributed from accumulated undistributed earnings or participant capital.

In consideration of donor request or intent, certain donor-restricted endowments are invested through instruments held outside of the Trust. Investment income is distributed or reinvested according to the donor-imposed restriction(s) for the usage of endowment distributions.

(Continued)

NOTE 17 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS (Continued)

Endowment Investment Policies: The Trust's investment objective is to provide a stable stream of investment income with long-term capital appreciation, while assuming a moderate level of investment risk. In accordance with guidelines approved by the Trustee, the Trust's assets are invested in a manner that is intended to produce results that exceed the investment's benchmark by 40 basis points over rolling five-year time periods. Actual returns in any given year may vary from this objective.

Certain donor-restricted endowments that are held outside of the Trust are generally invested in term certificates intended to provide interest income and preserve principal amounts while assuming a low level of investment risk.

Funds with Deficiencies: A donor-restricted endowment fund is considered to be underwater if the fair value of the fund is less than either the original gift amount or the amount required to be maintained by the donor or by law. At times, the Church may have individual donor-restricted endowment funds that are underwater. The Church did not have any underwater endowments as of January 31, 2025 and 2024.

Net asset composition by type of endowment fund as of January 31, 2025 and 2024:

	2025		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Donor-restricted funds*	$ -	$ 386,228,298	$ 386,228,298
Funds functioning as endowment	39,956,602	-	39,956,602
	$ 39,956,602	$ 386,228,298	$ 426,184,900

	2024		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Donor-restricted funds*	$ -	$ 342,979,162	$ 342,979,162
Funds functioning as endowment	36,619,240	-	36,619,240
	$ 36,619,240	$ 342,979,162	$ 379,598,402

* With the exception of certain investments held by outside trusts, Church net assets with donor restrictions are based on the historic dollar value of donor-stipulated net assets with donor restrictions.

NOTE 17 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS (Continued)

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Net assets, February 1, 2023	$ 33,828,451	$ 320,865,941	$ 354,694,392
Net investment return	2,134,968	24,319,374	26,454,342
New gifts	1,305,416	9,599,298	10,904,714
Net assets released from restriction	4,276,549	(4,276,549)	-
Other changes			
Endowment distribution of income	(4,926,144)	(7,552,957)	(12,479,101)
Total other changes	(4,926,144)	(7,552,957)	(12,479,101)
Net assets, February 1, 2024	36,619,240	342,955,107	379,574,347
Cash surrender value of life insurance	-	24,055	24,055
Adjusted net assets, February 1, 2024	36,619,240	342,979,162	379,598,402
Net investment return	4,009,111	38,700,109	42,709,220
New gifts	4,935	11,889,017	11,893,952
Net assets released from restriction	4,121,788	(4,121,788)	-
Other changes			
Endowment distribution of income	(4,798,472)	(3,317,688)	(8,116,160)
Total other changes	(4,798,472)	(3,317,688)	(8,116,160)
Net assets, January 31, 2025	39,956,602	386,128,812	426,085,414
Cash surrender value of life insurance	-	99,486	99,486
Adjusted net assets, January 31, 2025	$ 39,956,602	$ 386,228,298	$ 426,184,900

(Continued)

NOTE 18 – CONTINGENCIES

The Church is party to litigation in various matters arising in the ordinary course of operations. As of January 31, 2025 and 2024, Church management is aware of ongoing legal matters and claims but is unable to estimate the amount of the potential liability or the likelihood of an unfavorable outcome at this time. Pending litigation will be vigorously defended and, in the opinion of management, is likely to be resolved without any material adverse effect upon the financial statements of the Church.

NOTE 19 – FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES BY NATURE

The statements of activities report certain categories of expenses attributable to the programs and supporting functions of the Church. The tables below present these functional expenses by their natural classification for the years ended January 31, 2025 and 2024:

	2025			
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Financial support and grants	$ 56,014,158	$ 251,327	$ 6,700	$ 56,272,185
Compensation and benefits	21,747,505	14,461,853	4,569,535	40,778,893
Travel	2,871,410	410,183	200,731	3,482,324
Events and conferences	10,490,575	557,589	38,789	11,086,953
Office operations	2,672,125	2,347,847	1,326,662	6,346,634
Depreciation	881,605	938,723	197,998	2,018,326
Occupancy	1,033,298	1,100,245	232,066	2,365,609
Transfers to restricted and designated funds	3,215,963	41,291	(3,257,254)	-
Miscellaneous and expense recovery	2,950,410	2,650,811	(203,136)	5,398,085
	$ 101,877,049	$ 22,759,869	$ 3,112,091	$ 127,749,009

NOTE 19 – FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES BY NATURE (Continued)

	2024			
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Financial support and grants	$ 57,752,301	$ 61,952	$ 22,012	$ 57,836,265
Compensation and benefits	21,084,651	13,573,632	4,640,807	39,299,090
Travel	2,321,887	201,060	161,067	2,684,014
Events and conferences	2,674,156	253,853	19,043	2,947,052
Office operations	3,818,095	2,095,571	1,279,962	7,193,628
Depreciation	954,460	1,016,141	214,441	2,185,042
Occupancy	1,183,139	1,259,794	265,719	2,708,652
Transfers to restricted and designated funds	2,045,143	435,307	(2,480,450)	-
Miscellaneous and expense recovery	2,290,886	3,443,164	(244,800)	5,489,250
	$ 94,124,718	$ 22,340,474	$ 3,877,801	$ 120,342,993

Certain categories of expenses are allocated to more than one program or supporting function. The allocation is based on estimated full-time equivalents or square footage, as applicable.

NOTE 20 – LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY

The Church's financial assets available within one year of the statement of financial position date for general expenditure are as follows:

	2025	2024
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 26,117,622	$ 25,092,395
Operating Investments	99,648,728	100,997,365
	$ 125,766,350	$ 126,089,760

As part of the Church's liquidity management, the Church invests a portion of its financial assets to be available as its general expenditures, liabilities, and other obligations come due. The Church had $39,956,603 and $36,619,240 in board designated endowments without donor restriction at January 31, 2025 and 2024, respectively. While the Church does not have any intention of liquidating the board designated endowments, and they are not currently available for general expenditure, these funds could be made available with Church Council approval.

NOTE 21 – SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

Management has performed an analysis of the activities and transactions subsequent to January 31, 2025, to determine the need for any adjustments to and/or disclosures within the audited financial statements for the year ended January 31, 2025. Management has performed their analysis through June 18, 2025, the date the financial statements were available to be issued. Activities subsequent to this date have not been evaluated by management.

Exhibit F

Opening Worship Sermon

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton

Monday, July 28, 2025

> *Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But it is written,*
>
> *"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,*
> *nor the human heart conceived,*
> *what God has prepared for those who love him"—*
>
> *these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.*
>
> I Corinthians 2:6–13 NRSV *[Read in Spanish during the worship service]*

Grace to you from Creator, from Jesus our Savior and friend, and from the mighty Holy Spirit. Amen.

I hope that you were also—those of us who do not speak Spanish as a first language—following along with the second lesson. That ties together for me all of these notices and mentions of wisdom. And it is in First Corinthians, that wonderful and amazing place that Paul so loved that he had to come back a couple of times to keep them organized.

Here is first-century Corinth—it was the Isthmus of Corinth, but they had not carved a channel through it—and so, instead of going around the whole bottom of this and back up, they would put the ships, the merchant ships, on logs, and roll them across the isthmus. It took three days, which meant three days of shore leave for the entire crew *[laughter]*. So, yeah, it was pretty wonderful. And then think of the early church in Corinth, "First Church Corinth"—what a wonderful, cooperative, respectful group they were *[laughter]*. They were beguiled by spiritual superiority and liked to boast and see who had the most spiritual gifts. It was like the "Spiritual Gift Olympics," and, if you could speak in tongues, you were really the stuff. If you had the gift of administration, which is a gift of the Spirit, you were not quite so cool *[laughter]*.

So, here they were with all of these spiritual gifts, and they thought they were with this marvelous spirituality, and they were plunked right down in the middle of this Greek metropolis. The Greeks, swell. They had an amazing philosophy, incredible philosophy, and what did the gospel have compared with the incredible Greek philosophy? It was sophisticated and developed by the finest minds: Plato, and Socrates, and Aristotle. We sort of long for the days when theology was considered the "queen of the sciences," but that was not happening here.

In the midst of all this Grecian splendor and philosophy, what did the early Church have? A crucified carpenter. In divinity school, I was there with all other disciplines: the law school and the

medical school, and MIT was down the street with all of the engineers. It was in the late ’70s and the early ’80s, when the Church was still trying to see ourselves as, somehow, professionals. I was surrounded by these people, and it just occurred to me one day in a lecture, the gospel proclamation is not rocket science. And I was in a university filled with actual rocket scientists.

It is not rocket science. I remember, then, going on to my internship, and I was so jealous of the students who did clinical pastoral education at The Ohio State University, because they got to wear white doctor coats. And we all read journals to make sure that we were just as professional as every other discipline. But what is our message? What is the proclamation of the gospel? The incarnation, the crucifixion. Jesus, God, saying, “My grace is sufficient for you because my strength is made perfect in weakness.” The gospel for today [John 6:51–58], if you think about it, that is pretty hard to explain. That was pretty graphic, if you were paying attention. For all those who preach, you know that in Year B, we go through that ten weeks [in which] we keep hearing from the Gospel of John.

I had a colleague when I was back in the Northeastern Ohio Synod, and she had a couple coming in for their premarital counseling. In going through the detail [of the ceremony], she said, “Well, do you want to have Holy Communion at the wedding?” And they said, “What’s that?” So, she preceded to explain Holy Communion to them, and they just answered, “That’s weird” *[laughter]*. Here we have the wisdom of God juxtaposed against the wisdom of the world.

And what is “the wisdom of the world,” which we are seeing just maybe running rampant right now? It’s about power; it’s about division; it’s about fear, especially engendering fear to separate us one from another; it’s about wealth and control and domination and coercion. That is “the wisdom of the world.” And what is the gospel, to stand up against that kind of power and wisdom? But what is “the wisdom of the cross?” What is “the wisdom of God?” It is the hidden wisdom of the cross. This is how God choses to be God for us. Not in the same way that the world chooses. The deep things of God are arcane, gnostic trivia. The world cannot understand this, because the world wants to disperse, to extinguish people, and at the crucifixion, it looked like that was happening to Jesus, to the Lord of Glory, that he was being extinguished. Crucifixion was a method of cruelty and torture devised by the Romans so that not only would the person die eventually, but would do it in public, stripped naked, in order to be completely humiliated and take a long, lingering death on the cross. If anything, the Roman Empire could point to Jesus on the cross and say, “Really? This is all you’ve got?”

But we understand that to have the mind of Christ is to participate in the pattern of the cross. St. Paul can speak now about the identity of God, as he does in this verse, this chapter, not because he has received advanced philosophical instruction, but because he has been taught by the Spirit of God how to speak of God through the word of the cross.

For us, it is love, not knowledge. Roman Catholic theologian William Cavanaugh, who observed the horrors of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, wrote a book called *Torture and Eucharist*. He believed, when he was watching the Pinochet regime systematically disappear people, coming and getting them in the dead of night, taking them in unmarked vans to places of torture or places of incarceration, that this was a way to traumatize and terrorize people in such a way that they would not even understand that they were connected one to another. It was the work of complete isolation, of atomizing the whole community so that you felt, in your torture or in your fear, that you were all alone and there was nothing else. We know also that the Pinochet regime “disappeared” thousands of people. They would take them up, they would put them on helicopters, tied to railroad ties and dump them in the ocean, thousands of people. And so, when Cavanaugh was looking at this and trying to understand this, he realized that the Eucharist was an act of resistance because the Eucharist brings us together as a body of Christ, those whom the

oppressors and those who think they have power want to separate and isolate are nevertheless woven together in the Holy Eucharist, and all those who have been disappeared are remembered.

Now, the Greeks were pretty skeptical of the Christians and their message, and I think we find a lot of people skeptical of us right now. Foolishness was seen by the ancient Greeks as a moral defect. It's not just that they were silly or confused; it was a moral defect. And how many times have we tried to "gussy up" or sophisticate our proclamation, when there is nothing else to proclaim but the love of God, demonstrated in the cross of Jesus, poured into our hearts? That is what we have. Our own Jacqueline Bussie, who spoke at the ELCA Youth Gathering, if you remember, wrote a book called *The Laughter of the Oppressed*. Which, it had been seen for centuries that laughter was absolutely, in fact, insulting and insensitive when serious suffering was going on. And she based her study on three novels, *Gates of the Forest*, by Elie Wiesel, *Beloved*, by Toni Morrison, and *Silence*, by Shusaku Endo. [These are] about the Holocaust, and the horrors of slavery, and after the atomic bomb. And she read through those stories, and noticed that the characters in those stories, even though experiencing horrific, horrific oppression and torture, were laughing. What could that be? Why were they laughing? Well, she said, and I recommend the book to you, that the laughter of the oppressed actually functions as an ethical and a theological mode of resistance in the face of radically negating oppression.

I saw an example, experienced an example of this when I was in Chile. We went to the Villa Grimalde, which had been a nice estate, so all of the beautiful houses and large mansions, swimming pools, and everything, but had been turned by the Pinochet regime into a place of torture, and our guide was a woman who had lived through that torture. I cannot fathom how human beings can think up such diabolical ways physically, and mentally, and spiritually to torture each other. I will not describe some of the tortures she endured, but she remembers one time; She had been there for a while, had been beaten and everything else, and they were trying to break her, and they bring her blindfolded in front of what had been the swimming pool, and they said, "Now, we are going to throw you in there, in that swimming pool, which is filled with crocodiles!" And she started to laugh. There are not crocodiles in Chile, there are alligators *[laughter]*. This enraged, enraged her torturers. How dare she laugh? Well, because the arrogance of power is ridiculous because God is God. And laughter, actually, is what frightens and brings insecurity most to those who believe that they have all of the wisdom and the power in the world.

Now, this is how we resist now. We might not all be feeling the same pressure and terror that so many of our neighbors are, particularly those who are migrants at this time. Remember, the Holy Family were not documented when they were in Egypt, let's be clear about that. But this is how we resist. The laughter of the oppressed, understanding that God's wisdom is greater than ours, that, in fact, in the Eucharist, we are re-membered, and in God nothing is lost.

And I'm going to see how you do. You all remember Luther's explanation of the third article of the Apostle's Creed. Well, I'm going to see if you do. So, whatever translation you had—my mother had a hard-cover blue book, I went through the sort of pale green ones, when I taught there were the psychedelic orange and yellow ones, and now there are tasteful Augsburg Fortress ones—but let's see how you do. Let's say it together: "I believe that I cannot, by my own understanding or strength, believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him, but instead, the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy, and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian Church on Earth." You all have to get your *Small Catechism*s out, and I'm not completely joking. Luther, who wrote the *Small Catechism*, said that we should read it every day, and I fear in some ways, we, as the Lutheran church, are missing the core of how we understand the gospel. Luther said the gospel and the *Small Catechism* is just contained in that small book. So, people, by 2025, you had better have read your *Small Catechism*.

It goes on to say that, just as the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the Christian Church on Earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one, common, true faith, daily this Christian Church, the Holy Spirit, abundantly forgives all of our sins, mine and all of those other believers. On the last day, the Holy Spirit will raise me and all of the dead, and will give to me and all believers in Christ eternal life. What does Luther say? This is most certainly true. This is the wisdom of God, made perfect in weakness, demonstrated in a failed Messiah on a cross, humiliated by those in power, and one that sometimes we shortchange because we do not realize this incredible miracle of a crucified, wounded Christ who died for us so that we might have life.

I remember filming an early Synod Assembly video, and we were going around the church. We had a lot more money then; now we just stay at the churchwide office and film everything there *[laughter]*. But I remember there being this one, lovely lay couple; they were lay chaplains at the local hospital, and I remember saying to them, "When you are going into the room to be with someone who has just been given a diagnosis of stage four cancer, who comes with you?" "Oh," they said, "all of the congregation is there with us, we are representing them. They are there with us." I said, "okay, who *else* comes with you?" *[laughter]* "Who is in the room with you?" And they kept going on about the community of saints and everything. I said, "What about Jesus?" They said, "Oh, yeah, Jesus is there" *[laughter]*. The thing that we must guard against, and the only thing that will give us life and peace and hope and the courage and power to resist, is to remember that Jesus isn't wallpaper. Jesus is our life and our truth and our wisdom.

I pray, during this assembly, that we will cling to that, not to our own effort or understanding, not to our own brilliance (and, I know, a lot of you are really, really brilliant, I am clear about that), but to this truth and testimony, and witness of God, stooping to be weak and taking on our mortal flesh, dying on the cross, being raised from the dead, breathing into us the Holy Spirit, that we too might live in the assurance of the wisdom of God. Amen.

Exhibit G

Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

A Social Statement on

Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust

This social statement was amended and adopted by a two-thirds vote (676-338) by the 11th biennial Churchwide Assembly on August 19, 2009, at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Edits to Section IV were amended and adopted by a two-thirds vote (724-46) of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Phoenix, Arizona, on August 1, 2025.

I. Introduction

Invited to answer the question, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus answered, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36–40). Christians respond to these commands in the confident hope that by God's grace alone we are set free to worship God and love our neighbor.

This social statement addresses the question: how do we understand human sexuality within the context of Jesus' invitation to love God and love our neighbor (Romans 13:9–10; Galatians 5:14)?

II. A distinctly Lutheran approach

Our first response to this question is to remember that, as Lutherans, we are the inheritors of a rich theological tradition that assists us in discerning how to live faithfully in a complex world. Our starting point is the foundational

Lutheran understanding that we read and understand the Bible in light of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This "good news" of the Gospel that we are freed from captivity to sin (justification by grace through faith on account of Christ) allows us to respond to God's mercy through love for and service to the neighbor[1] (our vocation in the world).

As Lutherans, understanding that God's promised future is the transformation of the whole creation, we believe that the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is engaged deeply and relationally in the continuing creation of the world. We anticipate and live out the values of this promised future concretely in the present. It is therefore in the midst of daily life in the world that we are given the vocational task of serving the neighbor.

Central to our vocation, in relation to human sexuality, is the building and protection of trust[2] in relationships. As justified and forgiven sinners, our efforts to create trust are in response to God's faithful (trustworthy) relationship of love for the world in Christ. We are called therefore to be trustworthy in our human sexuality and to build social institutions and practices where trust and trustworthy relationships can thrive.

Justified by grace through faith

As Lutherans, we believe that we are justified by grace through faith. The Lutheran Confessions guide us in our understanding of justification by identifying three intersecting affirmations: *solus Christus*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide* (Christ alone, grace alone, and by faith alone).[3] Deeply grounded in Scripture, understood as the living Word of God, these together proclaim Jesus Christ as central to the Gospel:

- *Solus Christus* (Christ alone) insists that the purpose of Scripture is to reveal Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. Scripture is to be interpreted through the lens of Christ's death and resurrection for the salvation of all.
- *Sola gratia* (grace alone) affirms that we are saved by grace alone. As with *solus Christus*, *sola gratia* means that there is nothing a person can do through his or her action that will create a right relationship with God. Only God's grace can do that.
- *Sola fide* (by faith alone) affirms that, through the hearing of God's Word, the Holy Spirit ignites faith (trust) in God within us.

These three emphases also tell us that sin does not have to do simply with the keeping or breaking of rules or laws. Rather, we sin when we turn away from God and look to ourselves. Sin turns us toward obsessive self-concern, with disastrous consequences for ourselves and others.

We live therefore within the paradox that in our sexuality, as in other aspects of life, we always encounter both our own sinfulness and God's grace. It is only through Christ that we can turn in faith to trust God, which leads immediately to our baptismal vocation to love and serve the neighbor.

Christian freedom in service of the neighbor

Lutherans are not reluctant to live confidently within the difficult, complex, and ambiguous realities of daily life. Lutherans understand that active engagement in the world is integral to Christian identity. They are able to remain secure in Christ in the midst of the confusions, lack of clarity, and struggle that God's calling entails. "Did we in our own strength confide," sang Luther, "our striving would be losing." In Christ, "God is making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Peter 4:11). Lutheran theology prepares us precisely to hold in creative tension the paradoxes and complexities of the human situation. This is also the case with regard to human sexuality. God has created human beings as part of the whole creation and with the intention that we live actively in the world (Romans 12–13; Ephesians 5–6).

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul testifies that the foundation of Christian identity is what God has done for us through Christ (Galatians 2:20; 3:24–28). Luther echoes this affirmation in his treatise, "The Freedom of a Christian," claiming that Christians are at one and the same time radically freed by the Gospel and called to serve the good of the neighbor:

> A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.
> A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.[4]

Luther believed that these two affirmations were the key to understanding the entirety of Christian life in the world. Following Paul, he understood freedom to be the basis for Christian life and ethics.[5] Luther believed that this understanding of Christian freedom flowed from the doctrine of justification as that which "preserves and guides all churchly teaching and establishes our consciences before God."[6]

In other words, because we are radically freed in Christ, we are called in that freedom to love and serve our neighbor as Christ loved and served us (Galatians 5:1, 13). Only in the freedom from preoccupation with the self and the burden of unworthiness before the perfection of God's law can such concern for the neighbor become possible.

The Lutheran theological understanding of God's salvation and our utter dependence on God's grace, grounded as it is in Scripture (Romans 3:21–26; Ephesians 2:8–10), has crucial implications for Christian ethics and discernment:

- In emphasizing that salvation is not a reward for morally approved behavior, Lutheran theology teaches that salvation is by God's grace alone and not dependent upon human action. We receive in trust, as Paul declares, "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe" (Romans 3:21–22).
- Justified by faith, Lutherans understand that, because of God's gift, their freedom in Christ leads to a vocation of responsible and humble service to the neighbor (Romans 13:8–10).
- Our vocation of service leads us to live out our responsibilities primarily in light of and in response to the neighbor's needs, often in complex and sometimes tragic situations.
- God's mercy and compassion instill in us the capacity to empathize with others as "the love of Christ urges us on" (2 Corinthians 5:14). They teach us to walk with each other in joy, humility, and tender care.
- The love of God and neighbor, fulfilled by faith alone, are the two commandments by which Christ taught us to measure and interpret every other commandment in Scripture (Matthew 22:36–40).

God's continuing creation

Christians believe that God is the creator of all that is and that this ongoing handiwork is good, good, and very good! (Genesis 1:31). Both narratives of God's creative activity in the book of Genesis (Genesis 1 and 2) reveal God's goodness and desire for close relationship with human beings as integral to the ongoing handiwork of creation. In Genesis 1, this desire is expressed in humanity's creation—male and female—in the image of God. In Genesis 2, that close relationship is revealed as God scoops up and breathes life into earth to form humankind. As a mark of personal confidence, the Creator even entrusts to human beings the task of naming

and tending the inhabitants of the earth God so clearly loves. The tender love and goodness of God's creative activity includes sexuality and gendered bodies (Genesis 2:23–25).

Just as both creation narratives reveal how God intends a relationship of trust with humanity, so also the creation of male and female (Genesis 1) and the companionship of Adam and Eve (Genesis 2) reveal that human beings are created for trusting relationships with each other. In these narratives of God's creative activity, we understand from the beginning that love and trust are at the heart of God's relationship with human beings. We also understand that creation is God's ongoing activity and not yet complete.

The biblical narratives also depict how people violate God's trust, turning away from God (Genesis 3). They want to be like God. They make excuses and apportion blame. They hide from God. They cover their nakedness. The full breakdown of relationship enters, complete with curses and exile, as depicted in the betrayal of brother against brother (Genesis 4). The relationship of trust with God and each other, entailed in the image of God, is broken. People sin; that is, human beings resist their own God-given identity and destiny.

Nevertheless, God remains faithful, seeking out and inviting all into intimate relationship as sons and daughters. This dignity of the human being reflects God's deep love and stands against all forms of violence, discrimination, and injustice. Scripture reveals to believers that just as God does not abandon that which God loves, neither should we.

We recognize, therefore, our need for God's law to order and preserve the world, to expose our sins, and to show us the depth of our capacity to turn away from God and neighbor.

And yet we are consoled and encouraged because, even in the face of broken trust, God includes all of creation in the unfolding of the human community and the world. As human beings, we participate in creation's work that continues even now in fruitfulness and productivity.[7]

For believers, it is hope in God's future, not in an idealized past,[8] that inspires participation in God's changing, open, and inexhaustible creation. Christians believe that God's promised future includes the transformation of the whole

creation (Romans 8:19–25). Guided by this vision, Christians anticipate and live out the values of God's promised future concretely in the present.

Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, we understand how Scripture ultimately is future-oriented and filled with promise; creation is fulfilled in new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 21:1–5; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Isaiah 43:16–21). Even now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, our lives may reflect the love of Christ crucified and risen. "The life I now live in the flesh," declares Paul, "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Thus, Christlike love for the neighbor informs all our activities, sexual and otherwise, now and into God's future. In anticipation of that future, the ethics of sexuality is thus not purely a personal matter but one that affects the witness of the Christian community and the well-being of the larger community (1 Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 6:10; Revelation 21:8).

God's law at work in the world

As Lutherans, we believe that God has given the law not only to reveal sin and order society (1 Timothy 1:9) but also to point us to God's intentions and promises for our lives.

Luther described two functions of the law, one theological and the other political or civil.[9] The theological use of the law reveals sin, confronting us when we have broken our relationship with God and driving us to the forgiveness offered in the Gospel. When the law forces us to examine the extent to which we are ensnared—individually and collectively—in patterns of self-serving, exploitation, abuse, and shame, we experience the power of the theological use of the law in revealing to us the brokenness of our relationship with God. Knowing that we can do nothing to bring about our own salvation, Lutherans reject the notion that we can perfect either ourselves or society.

The civil use of the law, at the same time, provides order in society to support the maintenance of peace and justice in this imperfect world. The function of the civil law is, in a sinful world, to protect from harm all those whom God loves, particularly the most vulnerable.[10]

Lutherans understand that God's law, in its civil use, permeates and undergirds basic structures of human society to support life and protect all

people in a world that remains under the sway of sin. Such social structures,[11] as the Lutheran Confessions identify them, include ministry, marriage and family, civil authority, and daily work.[12] Because these structures are temporal, anticipating the arrival of God's promised future, they must respond continually to human needs for protection and flourishing.

The Ten Commandments

When asked to summarize what God requires in the law, most Christians will turn first to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17) as God's guide for their own behavior and that of others. What is distinctive about these commandments for Lutherans is that we understand them in light of faith, which confesses God as creator and redeemer of the world. Thus, in addition to revealing human sin, they constrain wrong behavior and point the way for us to serve the neighbor and care for the world.

The first three commandments together point to our need as sinful human beings "to fear, love, and trust in God above all things." The remaining seven describe our responsibility to serve the neighbor, especially the most vulnerable. They identify those actions that violate trust and destroy relationships between people and within community. They also instruct us how to protect and nurture relationships and build up the community: to honor those wielding legitimate authority (fourth); preserve and enhance life (fifth); support boundaries, decency, and faithfulness in sexual relations (sixth); prevent exploitation (seventh); and put the best construction on the actions of all (eighth).

The ninth and tenth commandments "fence the heart." They show us that not only individual acts but also thoughts, words, and legal actions done for base motives are wrong, and they invite us to right action. All these things honor God by loving the neighbor.

The sixth commandment relates in a particular way to human sexuality. To this end, as Luther wrote in the Small Catechism, "We are to fear and love God so that we lead pure and decent lives in word and deed, and each of us loves and honors his or her spouse."[13]

When this commandment is violated, many things are adulterated—relationships are damaged, people are betrayed and harmed. Promiscuity and sexual activity without a spirit of mutuality and commitment are sinful

because of their destructive consequences for individuals, relationships, and the community. The apostle Paul's list of vices (e.g., fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry) warns believers of the dangers of gratifying "the desires of the flesh," thereby turning away from belonging to Christ and God's kingdom (Galatians 5:19–21). The breakdown of trust through the sexual adulteration of the bonds of the committed, intimate, and protected relationship of marriage wreaks havoc for the family and the community, as well as for the people involved.

When this commandment is kept, however, care and attention are given to all aspects of life and behavior, including sexuality, which creates marriage relationships and practices of trust. "There is no law against such things," declares Paul, because "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" are the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22–26).

We are called to participate in God's continuing creation as people who seek to fear, love, and trust in God above all things. As such, we strive to lead lives that uphold relationships and a social order where human beings can thrive and to support one another in those endeavors. As sinners justified through the Gospel, we are able to receive creation fully as gift so that we can serve our neighbor in need freely.

Our vocation to serve the neighbor

We do not live in private worlds without thought or consideration for historic events or the impact of our actions on individuals, the community, or the environment. Rather, the responsibility to serve the neighbor through our daily callings seeks to shape human relationships and a world community that honors God and anticipates God's future transformation of all of creation. In so doing, all people, in whatever situation they find themselves, are called to promote actively the good of the neighbor.

We recognize the complex and varied situations people have relative to human sexuality: being in relationships, being single, being a friend, living in a young or aging body, being male or female, being young or old, or having different sexual orientations and gender identities. In whatever the situation, all people are called to build trust in relationships and in the community.

The way we live out these callings, of course, will be flawed and imperfect. As forgiven sinners, we recognize through faith that our imperfect lives are means by which God cares for and sustains creation. We can live both humbly and boldly, knowing that our efforts are still infused with God's love and blessing for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world. By the mercy of God, in the midst of evil, betrayal, brokenness, loneliness, and loss, we dare to believe that opportunities do open, forgiveness is sought and tendered, good may be rescued, and trust can be restored.

Lutheran social ethics

Lutherans understand human sexuality, and ethics in general, to be part of God's rule in this world, in contrast to God's rule in the coming world through the Gospel. "We know," declares Paul, "that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:22–23). Therefore, we believe that the way we order our lives in matters of human sexuality is important to faithful living, but is not central to determining our salvation. We are able to be realistic and merciful with respect to our physical and emotional realities, not striving for angelic perfection as if our salvation were at stake. Even marriage is an earthly blessing on this side of heaven (Matthew 22:30).[14]

A Lutheran approach to ethics makes use of Martin Luther's understanding of the two realms of God's action.[15] With the left hand (worldly realm), God rules in this world, maintaining order and restraining evil through the law and reason. With the right hand (spiritual realm), God brings in the coming world of Christ's rule where sin, death, and evil will reign no longer. This new world is experienced by faith alone, most clearly when God announces in Word and sacraments the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Set free by the death and resurrection of Christ (the spiritual realm), Christians are sent back into this created world, which is experienced no longer as a threat but as God's gift. There we are called to love and serve the neighbor and to uphold and promote human community and the preservation of creation. This is work we undertake not only with other Christians but together with all people of goodwill.

As we determine how to love and serve the neighbor in a complex world, Lutherans rely on Scripture. We also are guided by the Lutheran

Confessions, and we bring to this task a particular appreciation for the gifts of knowledge and learning. We believe that God also provides insights to us through reason, imagination, the social and physical sciences, cultural understanding, and the creative arts (Philippians 4:8). One reason Lutherans have engaged so deeply in education and research is that we believe God works through such means to guide us in reading Scripture and in understanding how we will live in a world of continuing complexity and change.[16]

Thus, we recognize that this church's deliberations related to human sexuality require our best moral discernment and practical wisdom in the worldly realm, even though these matters are not central to determining our salvation. We also understand that in this realm, faithful people can and sometimes will come to different conclusions about what constitutes responsible action. Therefore this social statement seeks to assist this church in discerning what best serves the neighbor in the complexity of human relationships and social needs in the midst of daily life.

III. Trust and human sexuality[17]

God loves human life so much that "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14). We know, therefore, that God's love embraces us totally, including our sexuality. We also know that God created each of us not only as individuals but also as people who live in a variety of social communities and contexts. In response to God's love for us, we seek life-giving relationships with others and create social structures and practices that support such relationships.

The complexity of human sexuality

God created human beings to be in relationship with each other and continually blesses us with diverse powers, which we use in living out those relationships. These include powers for action, reasoning, imagination, and creativity.

Sexuality especially involves the powers or capacities to form deep and lasting bonds, to give and receive pleasure, and to conceive and bear children.

Sexuality can be integral to the desire to commit oneself to life with another, to touch and be touched, and to love and be loved. Such powers are complex and ambiguous. They can be used well or badly. They can

bring astonishing joy and delight. Such powers can serve God and serve the neighbor. They also can hurt self or hurt the neighbor. Sexuality finds expression at the extreme ends of human experience: in love, care, and security, or lust, cold indifference, and exploitation.

Sexuality consists of a rich and diverse combination of relational, emotional, and physical interactions and possibilities. It surely does not consist solely of erotic desire. Erotic desire, in the narrow sense, is only one component of the relational bonds that humans crave as sexual beings. Although not all relationships are sexual, at some level most sexual relationships are about companionship. Although some people may remain single, either intentionally or unintentionally, all people need and delight in companionship, and all are vulnerable to loneliness.

The need to share our lives with others is a profound good (Genesis 2:18). The counsel to love and care for the neighbor is not a command that is foreign to our created natures; rather, reaching out in love and care is part of who we are as relational and sexual beings. Even if we never have sexual intimacy, we all seek and respond to the bonds and needs of relationships.

Sexual love—the complex interplay of longing, erotic attraction, self-giving, and receiving defined by trust—is a wondrous gift. The longing for connection, however, also can render human beings susceptible to pain, isolation, and harm. The desire for sexual love, therefore, does not by itself constitute a moral justification for sexual behavior. Giving and receiving love always involves mixed motives and limited understanding of individual and communal consequences.

The sharing of love and sexual intimacy within the mutuality of a mature and trusting relationship can be a rich source of romance, delight, creativity, imagination, restraint, desire, pleasure, safety, and deep contentment that provides the context for individuals, family, and the community to thrive.

Though sexual love remains God's good gift, sin permeates human sexuality as it does all of life. When expressed immaturely, irresponsibly, or with hurtful intent, then love—or its counterfeit, coercive power—can lead to harm and even death. Too often lust is mistaken for love, which in turn becomes the rationale for selfish behaviors. When infatuation, lust, and self-gratification take the place of the responsibilities of love, cascading

consequences result that can be devastating for partners, children, families, and society.

In recognizing the many ways in which people misuse power and love, we need to be honest about sin and the finite limitations of human beings. We also recognize the complexity of the human and societal forces that drive the desire for companionship, for intimate relation with another, for belonging, and for worth. The deep interconnectedness of the body with the mind and spirit suggests the complexity of such situations. The biblical narratives both rejoice in the splendor of sexual attraction (Song of Songs 4) and are candid about the harm that can result from human sexuality (2 Samuel 11, 13; Matthew 5:27–30).

Social trust and the common good

Trust is a critical element that holds together couples and relationships, households and families, social structures and institutions. We normally relate concepts of trust, promise, loyalty, and reliance to individual relationships. These concepts, however, also describe economic life, political arrangements, social policies, and social structures. Contemporary social scientists call attention to these almost invisible bonds of trust and reliance that are necessary for a well-functioning society.[18] They are beginning to articulate what close-knit communities have long known: social trust undergirds healthy societies.

Trust is essential for the good of society. This is true in general terms for the proper functioning of communities and pertains especially to the social practices and institutions that affect and are affected by human sexuality. The development of social trust must be a central concern for all who seek the good of the neighbor in the pursuit of justice and the common good. Lutherans understand that social structures cannot create faith, hope, and love, but they trust that God does bless and provide appropriate gifts through such structures and, in some cases, in spite of them.

The concept of social trust has long been central to both Jewish and Christian social and political thought through the focus on the common good and the need of the neighbor. As the apostle Paul writes, "So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all" (Galatians 6:10).[19]

When human beings serve their neighbor rather than themselves, they are acting in ways that enhance social trust. However, the challenge of establishing, maintaining, and fostering social trust involves more than private actions. It also requires shaping legal, commercial, technological, and civic structures for the common good. Examples include the social institutions of the family, the conduct of commerce, laws enacted and enforced by government, and community standards. A justice-oriented legal code, social contracts and institutions that protect the weak and most vulnerable, and the protection of human rights all illustrate the kinds of things that can contribute to and support social trust.[20]

Social trust is grounded in the practice of mutual respect for the dignity of all people and their consciences. Strong communities ensure social trust when they provide social support for disagreement and dissent, and nurture the values of mutual respect and regard for the opinions of others. Within the church community, we contribute to respect for the understandings and experiences of others by living out the eighth commandment: "We do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we ... come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light."[21]

As this church and its members engage the changes and challenges of contemporary society related to human sexuality, careful thought must be given to which changes enhance and which erode social trust. The development of social trust must be a central concern for Christians who seek the good of the neighbor in the pursuit of justice and the common good. This church must be a leader in refocusing attention on practices and attitudes that build social trust. Likewise, it must contribute to the development of responsible economic and social policies and practices that shape the expression of sexuality within social life.

Human sexuality and our calling to establish trust

Sexual relationships may be among our most profoundly intimate, crucial, and self-giving expressions of trust. Here our human lives are vulnerable to joy and delight and to hurt and exploitation. From spiritual intimacy with God to the closest physical intimacy with another, relationships flourish according to the depth and trustworthiness of commitments. In the arena of human sexuality, no human relationships can thrive in the absence of trust.

Human beings learn about trust from God. When the Lutheran Confessions discuss faith in God, they understand it fundamentally as trust[22] or absolute confidence in God. In faith nurtured by the Holy Spirit through Word and sacrament, we entrust our whole lives to God. We experience God's unfailing trustworthiness in God's relationship with us through the Gospel and through God's deep mercy and compassion in response to our human frailty. In response, as forgiven and justified people, we seek to respond to God's love for us through care for the neighbor, fostering trust in order that individuals and society might flourish.

What, then, does trust in relation to human sexuality look like when understood in terms of service to the neighbor? In responding to this question, we reflect on God's love for and continuing involvement in creation and on the saving action of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world. We look to Scripture, to the Lutheran Confessions, to the social and physical sciences, and to human reason, mercy, and compassion. In so doing, we boldly but humbly affirm that trustworthy relationships and social structures will:

- Promote, value, and respect the human dignity of each individual.
- Protect all from physical, emotional, and spiritual harm.
- Demonstrate mercy, compassion, and justice for all, especially the "least of these"—those who are most vulnerable in relationships and in society.
- Ensure accountability and responsibility in relationships and the community.
- Promote the welfare of individuals and the common good of society.
- Value the security and protection afforded through the making of promises, including social and contractual commitments.

These foundational and protective conditions provide the necessary context and support for trusting relationships that are:

- Loving, that include and reflect an abundance of *agape* (unlimited love, forgiveness, compassion, care, and concern), *eros* (passion, excitement, and joy), and *philia* (care for the neighbor).
- Life-giving, where affirmation is mutually shared, encouragement is given and received, and individual talents are nurtured and supported.

- Self-giving in the face of both opportunities and challenges.
- Fulfilling, that is, a place where a spirit of joy and an atmosphere of peace prevails.
- Nurturing of physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
- Marked by truth-telling and honesty.
- Faithful in word and deed, including sexual fidelity.
- Committed, demonstrating loyalty in the face of difficult as well as good times.
- Supportive for all who grow old, are vulnerable, or are weak.
- Hospitable, offering support and encouragement to others.
- A blessing to society and serve the good of the neighbor.

IV. Sexuality and social structures that enhance social trust

Lutherans believe that God works through social structures for the good of society. The Lutheran Confessions identify marriage and the family as foundational structures that support human community.

Marriage: Shelter and context for trust

Trust is a quality of relationship that, while never perfected, is nurtured and reinforced over time. The trust and mutuality afforded by marriage can make marriage one of the most beautiful, abiding, and transformative forms of human relationship. Depth of care, matched to an intimacy of touch, creates relationships much stronger than simple and momentary erotic interest. Sexual intimacy, together with promises of fidelity and public accountability, is intended to nurture bonds that allow people to thrive. Additionally, marriage can provide a rich context for the care and support of children and dependents.

In the United States, individual states determine the legal status and definition of marriage and may not discriminate against marriages between individuals of legal age based on race, sex, gender, or sexuality.[23] Within Christianity, marriage is often understood as a covenant of mutual promises, commitment, and hope between two individuals, authorized legally by the state and blessed by God. Ongoing interpretation of the Scriptures and the Confessions[24] has introduced complex considerations to

moral discernment about sex, gender, and sexuality, about which there is not universal agreement.

As mentioned previously (p. 10), this church recognizes that these matters are not central to our salvation, though they are central to the trust, flourishing, and well-being of human relationships. For this reason, they do require our best moral discernment, guided by Scripture, the sciences, and human experience, though this discernment may lead to different conclusions.

Lutherans long have affirmed that the public accountability of marriage, as expressed through a legal contract, provides the necessary social support and social trust for relationships that are intended to be sustained throughout life and within changing and often challenging life situations. In this country, pastors carry both legal and religious responsibilities for marriage. In carrying out these responsibilities, pastors hold and exercise pastoral discretion for the decision to marry in the church. In the community of the church, they preside over the mutual promises made between a couple seeking the lifelong, monogamous, and faithful relationship of marriage.

Marriage requires constant care and cultivation. It is intended to protect the creation and nurturing of mutual trust and love as one foundation of human community. Because of promises of fidelity and public accountability, marriage is intended to provide a context of love, trust, honesty, and commitment within which a couple can express the profound joy of relationship as well as address the troubles they encounter throughout life. It is a binding relationship that should provide conditions for personal well-being and the flourishing of the partner; it also can provide conditions for the raising and nurturing of children.[25] It is intended to be a blessing to the community and the world.

Christians believe that marriage is not solely to legitimize physical sexual intimacy but to support long-term and durable communion for the good of others.[26] It is a communion within which the play and delight of love are expressions of the depth of trust and in which lovemaking can be a tender and generous act of self-giving that tends to the joy and pleasure of the other.

The public character of marriage also implies a civil responsibility. Marriage is intended not only to protect the people who are married but to signal to the community their intention to live a peaceful and mutually fulfilling life, even as they endeavor to strengthen the community in which they live. The public promises of marriage, therefore, also protect the community by holding people accountable to their vows. Fidelity to promises blesses all who depend on this trust within and beyond the marriage.

The Christian commitment to marriage recognizes that sin enters all relationships, both within and outside the institution of marriage. All marriages fall short of intentions, and difficulties are inevitable, both because of the different needs and desires of the two individuals and because of sin, which places the anxious concern for self before the needs of the other. Infidelity to marriage promises betrays the intimate trust of the partner, the security of the family, and the public trust of the community.

Precisely because marriage is the place where deep human trust and needs abide, it also can be a place of great harm. Many experience neither love nor trust within marriage. Harming another emotionally, physically, or spiritually, including through the misuse or abuse of power, is a profound injury. It also is a betrayal and violation of the shelter and trust that are intended within the marriage relationship. Particular care must be taken to support and find safe haven for all who are at risk within a marriage. This includes those whose sense of self is destroyed or damaged within the marriage relationship and, therefore, whose ability to act or advocate for their own health and safety may be inhibited or lost.

This church recognizes that in some situations, the trust upon which marriage is built becomes so deeply damaged or is so deeply flawed that the marriage itself must come to a legal end (Matthew 19:3–12). This church does not treat divorce lightly, nor does it disregard the responsibilities of marriage. However, in such situations, it provides support to the people involved and all who are affected. Individuals experiencing marital distress are encouraged to avail themselves of pastoral care, to be assured of God's presence, forgiveness, and healing, and to remain in the communion of the church, recognizing the all-encompassing mercy of God.

This church will provide supportive pastoral care to those who are separated or divorced. Further, it believes that those who wish to remarry

may gain wisdom from the past and may be assured of the Gospel's freedom, amid brokenness and forgiveness, to enter into their new responsibilities in joy and hope. This church will tend pastorally to the special concerns of blended families, to children of separated or divorced parents, and to the particular tensions that may accompany family distress and transition.

Despite its awareness of the presence of sin and failure in marriage, the Christian tradition places great emphasis on the value of marriage for both spouses. It is in marriage that the highest degrees of physical intimacy are matched with and protected by the highest levels of binding commitment, including legal protection. It is in marriage that public promises of lifetime commitment can create the foundation for trust, intimacy, and safety.

Both the couple's intent in their lifelong promises and the civil requirements for marriage are important. Mutual promises of enduring care and fidelity, made before God, allow a couple to open themselves to each other. They permit the sharing of profound and tender affection as well as deep vulnerabilities and anxieties. The legal contract creates a public arrangement within which a couple can safely and equitably share their assets and resources, arrive at joint decisions, and plan for a shared future, and may anticipate, protect, and nurture children.

The church's historical experience supports its confidence that solemn promises, made before a company of witnesses who ask for God's blessing on the couple, have the power to create a unique framework within which two people, a new family, and the community may thrive. Consistent with that experience, this church has confidence that such promises, supported by the contractual framework of civil law, can create a lifetime relationship of commitment and cooperation.

Sex, gender, and sexuality in marriage

Within the last decades, this church has begun to understand and experience in new ways the need or desire of individuals to seek marriage as a relationship of lifelong companionship and commitment as well as public accountability and legal support. At the same time, public debates and deliberations have continued regarding understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality in medicine, social science, and corresponding public policy.

We in the ELCA recognize that many of our siblings of diverse sexual orientations in relationships sincerely desire the support of other Christians for living faithfully in all aspects of their lives, including their sexual fidelity. In response, we have drawn deeply on our Lutheran theological heritage and Scripture. This has led, however, to differing and conscience-bound understandings about the place of such relationships within the Christian community. We have come to various conclusions concerning how to regard marriage of LGBTQ+ couples, including whether and how to recognize publicly those lifelong commitments within the context of this church.

While Lutherans hold various convictions regarding marriage between individuals of diverse sex, gender, or sexuality, this church is united on many critical issues, such as opposing all forms of verbal or physical harassment and assault based on actual or perceived sex, gender, or sexuality; supporting legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services; and calling upon congregations and members to welcome, care for, and support all couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection.[27]

The ELCA recognizes that it has a responsibility to care for all children of God. This includes a responsibility to minister to those with diverse sex, gender, or sexual identities and to those who are seeking counsel about their gender or sexual self-understanding. All are encouraged to avail themselves of the means of grace and pastoral care. This church understands pastoral care to be marked by a gracious affirmation of the value of the individual's life and by concern for their well-being, regardless of their sex, gender, or sexuality.[28]

The Christian tradition has historically defined marriage as reflected in the language of Genesis 1:27; 2:23-24.[29] However, this church acknowledges that consensus does not exist concerning how to regard marriage for couples of diverse sexual orientations, even after many years of thoughtful, respectful, and faithful study and conversation.

In response, this church draws on the foundational Lutheran understanding that the baptized are called to discern God's love in service to the neighbor. In our Christian freedom, we therefore seek responsible actions that serve others and do so with humility and deep respect for the conscience-bound

beliefs of others. We understand that, in this discernment about ethics and church practice, faithful people can and will come to different conclusions about the meaning of Scripture[30] and about what constitutes responsible action. We further believe that this church, on the basis of "the bound conscience,"[31] will include these different understandings and practices within its life as it seeks to live out its mission and ministry in the world.

This church recognizes that, with conviction and integrity:

- On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that same-gender sexual behavior is sinful, contrary to biblical teaching and their understanding of natural law. They believe same-gender sexual behavior carries the grave danger of unrepentant sin. They therefore conclude that the neighbor and the community are best served by calling people in same-gender sexual relationships to repentance for that behavior and to a celibate lifestyle. Such decisions are intended to be accompanied by pastoral response and community support.
- On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that homosexuality and even lifelong, monogamous, homosexual relationships reflect a broken world in which some relationships do not pattern themselves after the creation God intended. While they acknowledge that such relationships may be lived out with mutuality and care, they do not believe that the neighbor or community are best served by publicly recognizing such relationships as traditional marriage.
- On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that the scriptural witness does not address the context of sexual orientation and lifelong loving and committed relationships that we experience today. They believe that the neighbor and community are best served when same-gender relationships are honored and held to high standards and public accountability, but they do not equate these relationships with marriage. They do, however, affirm the need for community support and the role of pastoral care and may wish to surround lifelong, monogamous relationships or covenant unions with prayer.

- On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that the scriptural witness does not address the context of sexual orientation and committed relationships that we experience today. They believe that the neighbor and community are best served when same-gender relationships are lived out with lifelong and monogamous commitments that are held to the same rigorous standards, sexual ethics, and status as heterosexual marriage. They surround such couples and their lifelong commitments with prayer to live in ways that glorify God, find strength for the challenges that will be faced, and serve others. They believe same-gender couples should avail themselves of social and legal support for themselves, their children, and other dependents and seek the highest legal accountability available for their relationships.

Although at this time this church lacks consensus on this matter, it encourages all people to live out their faith in the local and global community of the baptized with profound respect for the conscience-bound belief of the neighbor. This church calls for mutual respect in relationships and for guidance that seeks the good of each individual and of the community. Regarding our life together as we live with disagreement, the people in this church will continue to accompany one another in study, prayer, discernment, pastoral care, and mutual respect.

Loving families: Ground and source for social trust

One of the places where social trust is most important is in the context of the family. In contemporary society, the term "family" denotes a variety of forms, such as married couples, partners, children, extended relatives, and others who may be part of one's chosen family. This understanding is more akin to the older term of "household," employed by Luther to include immediate family members, relatives, and others.

Lutherans understand that intimacy, trust, and safety, particularly for those most vulnerable, are best sheltered within families. When safety and trust are eroded or destroyed within the family, it becomes a dangerous or even demonic place where abuse can reign. Thus Lutherans take great care to support whatever creates and sustains strong families as a foundation and source of trust.

Children learn either trust or distrust from their earliest relationships of dependence upon parents, caregivers, and others in the household. Patterns

of loyalty and confidence established in the family can reach into all future relationships. Those who do not learn to trust face significant obstacles to becoming trustworthy individuals in the more complicated relationships of modern life and may find it difficult to develop a mature and healthy sexuality.

The family is a primary source of trust precisely because of the remarkable level of commitment and care that characterizes familial bonds. While Scripture places family as secondary to the community of God's people (Matthew 10:37; 12:49), it also attests to the family's foundational role in protecting and nurturing human community (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1–4). The Lutheran Confessions recognize this role[32] and the connection between family and sexuality in their discussions of the commandments related to each.[33]

This church regards the family as an indispensable social institution because of its role in establishing conditions of trust and protection of the vulnerable. As such, society is responsible for both protecting and supporting families through public policy to ensure that these critical responsibilities will be met and that dependent family members will be protected and treated justly when households dissolve.[34]

Social service ministries of this and other churches work to secure the well-being of families in many ways. They give particular attention to those who have no family or to families with limited resources. They raise their moral voice to affirm and celebrate the life-giving importance of familial covenants of care. They teach others to embrace these callings of responsibility and love.

At the same time, realistic awareness of weakness and sin prevents Lutherans from romanticizing family life or setting up false ideals. In particular, sexual abuse or betrayal of promises and commitments within the family constitute flagrant harm precisely because they occur within the context where trust is most assumed.

This church recognizes its responsibility in congregations and through social ministry organizations to support its members and others in all the difficulties that beset family life and to seek ways to ensure and support the protection of the most vulnerable.

Social trends[35] in the United States and elsewhere properly raise concerns about the health of families. While these trends do involve individuals who carry personal responsibility for their choices, they also are driven by economic and social forces that are both complex in origin and significantly resistant to correction.

In the latter half of the 20th century, the legally married, heterosexual, nuclear family was supported by strong social conventions. With that strong social support, the nuclear family fosters positive experiences for many people. This does not mean, however, that it has always done so effectively. In fact, families of all kinds can shelter sexism or domestic violence, and in such situations, the safety of children or others who may be harmed is of utmost importance. Moreover, there have always been wide variations in household structure, as stated above, including households with extended family members or non-biologically-related members.

In this country and in our congregations, families are formed in many ways. Some examples include biologically-related and adoptive families, foster families, blended families, families with a missing generation, families without children, and families where the parents are the same sex or gender. Millions of households in the U.S., and many in our church, are headed by unmarried or single parents, whether widowed, divorced, or never married.[36] The critical issue with respect to the family is not whether it has a conventional form but how it performs indispensable individual and social tasks. All families have responsibility for the tasks of providing safety, shielding intimacy, and developing trustworthy relationships.

This church's first response toward families and households should be one of welcome and support that includes particularly the care for and safety of children. Children are to be invited into the community of the baptized regardless of their family situation or household structure.

This church responds to the needs of families through its ministry and service in various settings. It also has the task of addressing and advocating against social and economic trends that inhibit the development of strong families.

Through the proclamation of God's Word and the sacraments, God creates and strengthens faith and supports believers both inside and outside of families. Family life also is supported when its members strive to meet

reasonable expectations to forgive and to seek forgiveness and to bear each other's burdens responsibly. When trust has been betrayed in such situations, then forgiveness, loving correction, and reconciliation should be encouraged when appropriate to the specific situation.[37]

This church acknowledges with regret the way in which the misuse of historical teachings concerning sex, gender, and sexuality has harmed individuals, deepened suffering, or torn families apart. This includes actions that abandon or shun people for unwed pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Hate crimes and violence based on the victim's actual or perceived sex, gender, or sexuality sometimes are perpetrated in the name of Christ. Not only must such behaviors be denounced, but this church must work toward greater understanding of sex, gender, and sexuality.[38]

Regardless of one's belief, on the complex topics in this social statement, this church must seek that which is positive and life-giving for the neighbor while protecting each other from that which is harmful and destructive (Matthew 22:39–40.)[39]

Since social trust is directly related to social justice, this church must call for justice in matters relating to families and sexuality. Complex and profound changes have occurred in family law over the past 50 years relating to divorce, alimony and child support, custody, adoption, parental rights, and civil unions. The continuing evolution of family law is of vital importance as legislators and courts strive to protect dependent individuals and justly assign responsibility for their care.

These laws have a direct impact on patterns of social trust within households and networks of kinship. Criminal statutes, state enforcement, and judicial handling of matters related to sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual threats, and domestic violence require our close attention.[40] Victims of sexual violation must be able to rely on public institutions for intervention in troubled relationships. They must be able to expect protection when their trust in an individual has been abused.

Society at large must ensure that all who are dependent upon others in the household for spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being are protected by social policies and practices. Even social institutions and practices not directly

related to family institutions can and should facilitate and support familial care and responsibility. Examples include tax and poverty law, real estate and zoning regulations, and insurance industry policies and practices.

The ELCA will support familial relationships as central to nurturing and sustaining trust and security in human relationships. It will advocate for public policies that support and protect families. This church commits itself to continued attention to and discernment about diverse family configurations and the ways they serve to shelter and protect relationships of mutual trust.

Protecting children and youth in and for trusting relationships

A strong and healthy family is a significant factor in the development of healthy individuals. The context of a healthy family nurtures growth, enhances trust, and offers protection. This is especially true for children and youth as they grow into sexual maturity.

Safety within and outside the family is of overriding importance because the damage done to children and youth through sexual abuse or molestation can be remarkably deep and lasting. Such harmful behavior may include inappropriate touching, exposure to pornography, exposing genitals to children or inducing children to do the same, and sexual or genital relations involving minors.

Criminal statutes prohibiting abuse and molestation contribute to the protection of children and youth. This church supports the prosecution of any individual who commits a sexual crime against a minor, including people in leadership positions in the church. Further, this church affirms appropriate laws requiring the reporting of suspected child abuse to authorities in order to prevent future harm to vulnerable minors who cannot protect themselves.

The ELCA also recognizes that congregations and other ministry sites must continue in their efforts to be safe places for children and youth. Much work already has been done to help congregations protect children. This church will continue its efforts for the protection of minors who participate in church-sponsored events and programs. This church calls for the adoption of preventive measures, including educational programs, appropriate policies, and screening of individuals who care for, supervise, or work with children within this church. It expects that all church leaders will report all instances of suspected child abuse.

Matters of concern to both society and the church extend beyond abuse and molestation to organized sexual exploitation. Commercial sexual exploitation is widespread throughout the United States and around the world. It continues to grow and involves surprising numbers of youth by taking advantage of their vulnerabilities.[41]

This church strongly reaffirms its 2001 message "Commercial Sexual Exploitation," which states: "Sexual exploitation in any situation, either personally or commercially, inside or outside legally contracted marriage, is sinful because it is destructive of God's good gift [of sexuality] and human integrity." This message notes that this is especially true with respect to the demonic harm sexual exploitation causes to children and youth.[42]

Children and youth live in a highly sexualized world. They are exposed early to patterns of adult sexuality and are pressured to associate their bodies with practices that devalue them. Examples include child beauty contests, sexually suggestive clothing, sexually charged prime-time and cable television programs, and movies. At an early age, children listen to sexualized music that is deliberately marketed to them. They "date" as couples and engage in genital activity at earlier ages. Children and youth are targets of sexual bullying, destructive language, and vicious humor.

The ELCA regards the over-exposure of emotionally maturing children and teens to adult sexuality as a failing on the part of adults and society. It challenges all individuals and institutions in society to fulfill their responsibility to protect and nurture children and youth and provide for their appropriate development. Congregations should offer opportunities for adults to express these concerns and explore solutions together.

Expanding cyberspace and other electronic media create new challenges to the protection of children and youth. It is important that parents, society, and lawmakers continue to be extremely vigilant to protect the well-being of children and youth in this electronic world with its often-hidden dangers. The widespread electronic availability of violent and degrading pornography threatens children and youth as well as adults. It has the capacity to damage the normal sexual development in those who view it, often obsessively and in secret. How to address this problem is one of the most important child-protection issues of our time, and our church will be an active participant in this important conversation.

The sexual education of children and teens will be supported as a priority by this church. Anecdotal evidence among teens suggests that few parents or congregations meaningfully engage young people in either sex education or healthy conversations about sexuality, even though teens would welcome them.[43] This lack of engagement is remarkable, especially considering the associated dangers. This church will give particular attention to how children and youth are supported, nurtured, and accompanied in their sexual and relational formation.

Toward that end, this church reaffirms what it has said previously about providing comprehensive sex education within the context of Christian faith.[44] This education must begin early and emphasize responsibility and mutuality. Such education should focus on sustained conversation about what is good and what is harmful in ways appropriate to growing maturity levels. It should avoid simply requiring compliance with approved or rejected behaviors. Rather it should emphasize the exploration of why certain behaviors are rejected because they are damaging, why and how some pressures should be resisted, and what differentiates mature and rewarding sexual love from exploitative and demeaning forms.

Information about birth control, including the encouragement and support of sexual abstinence, is an important component of responsibility. Such education should engage all in conversation about the shared responsibility of couples to ensure the physical, emotional, and spiritual protection of each person.

It therefore follows that the ELCA reaffirms its interest in and responsibility for the care and protection of vulnerable children and youth. It understands itself as called to this mission through the vocations of its members, its own institutional practices, and its public policy positions. This work involves all adults, not only parents, since all contribute to the well-being of children and youth in untold creative ways. It understands that all children and youth, both inside and outside the church, are deserving of this church's concern.

V. Sexuality and trust in relationships

Sexuality and self

Both sexuality and trust are fundamentally relational and grow out of the web of family ties and social interaction. Healthy, trusting relationships shape confident, healthy, and responsible people. We bring our failings, imperfections, and sin with us into our relationships, but part of living out the calling and freedom of the Christian in those relationships includes being the best we can be as individuals. This requires appropriate care for all aspects of a person, including the body.[45]

We are sexual beings from the beginning of our lives. The ancient psalmist envisioned the divine mystery of our embodied lives long before science investigated our biological and genetic complexity: "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13). The realities of our sexual bodies are visible in physical features and powerful in less visible characteristics.

This means much more than that we are born with male, female, or sometimes with ambiguous genitalia.[46] Our cells carry sex chromosomes, and our endocrine systems infuse our bodies with hormones. In ways that are still not fully understood, we develop strong gender identities at a very early age. While there is still much to be learned about the biological complexity of human beings, we have come to understand that this complexity suggests a variety of sexual orientations and gender identities.

Sexuality and gender are features of each person's very being. This is both a discovery and a gift, and a perplexity and a challenge at all life stages and in all relational situations. The medical and social sciences continue to explore how the range of human sexual identities and behaviors are understood, cared for, and regulated in various cultures and religions.

Sexual capabilities and experiences are part of life for all ages and physical abilities. One can experience the sexual in music, art, literature, and the beauty of people and nature. One can take sensual pleasure in food, touch, sound, smells, and activities. One can find expression for the self and for sexuality through the spoken word, touch, dance, music, and movement.

One does not need to be in a relationship to experience one's sexuality. Bodies do not suddenly become sexual at puberty and do not cease to be sexual when, for example, there are physical or developmental limitations, menopause, erectile dysfunction, or the absence of a sexual partner. This means that throughout our lives, we need to find life-enhancing and appropriate ways of giving expression to this complicated dimension of ourselves.

We all have sexual identities that will find expression in our lives. We have sexual feelings that we are aware of and sometimes need to be negotiated when we are interacting with friends, courting a potential life partner, working closely with colleagues, or sharing our lives with another. Moreover, we must evaluate and respond constantly to the ways in which the sexuality of others is expressed. We must respond to sexual stimuli in the environment, including the varieties of human touch, which may vary from casual contact through flirtatious appreciation to invitations to intense physical intimacy.

A healthy sense of sexuality is related to having a healthy body image. This church teaches that caring for the body and following practices that lead to physical and emotional wellness are part of the stewardship of created goodness.[47] It recognizes that a positive sense of one's own body supports a healthy sense of one's gender identity and sexuality.

Sexually mature, healthy individuals learn to be comfortable with their bodies and are able to entrust themselves to others. They call frankly upon others to respect and honor their privacy, their bodily integrity, and their wishes concerning welcome and unwelcome touch.

Sometimes it can be very hard to develop and maintain positive attitudes about one's body. Too many people struggle for a healthy sense of body as a result of experiences of degradation or shaming by others, including family members and intimate partners. This church will support all in affirming and reclaiming a sense of healthy sexuality.

This church calls attention to the danger of embracing standards of physical attractiveness that exclude many, including the aged and people with disabilities, and that distort the understanding of what it means to be healthy. The young, whose bodies are changing and growing, may be especially vulnerable to idealized and commercialized images of a "perfect body" that play on insecurities and destructive self-loathing.

A holistic understanding of the interrelationship of body, mind, and spirit challenges such narrow understandings of beauty. It enables us better to affirm the many dimensions of beauty and to celebrate human variety and particularity. This church is committed to affirming throughout life the value, beauty, and health of the human body and human sexuality. It is mindful that physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual wellness contribute to a lower incidence of at-risk behaviors for all people, including youth.[48]

Gender and friendships

This church also calls attention to the immense value of friendship for people in all stages of life. Human life in relationship includes many different forms of rewarding human companionship. Friendships express our longing for human connection, touch, and growth. They allow space for self-revelation in the shelter of various degrees of mutual commitment and regard. The ELCA encourages and celebrates all situations and initiatives that engage people in relationships of friendship and trust, both inside and outside the church community. It also recognizes the importance of strong social support for friendships.

Many of our understandings of our own sexuality and sexual relationships may be formed or nurtured through conversations and confiding in friends. Friendships may help us develop a sense of our own beauty and the integrity of our bodies. As with parents or family members, we may learn from friends a sense of caring and safe touch in trusting relationships. Friendship, like family life, is a trust that can be betrayed, abused, and violated. It also must be recognized that dysfunctional friendships may be detrimental to health, development, and well-being.

This church calls people to be good, trustworthy friends who support one another in mature self-understanding and healthy companionship. Friends together have the shared power and responsibility to contradict demeaning and demoralizing messages from the media about sexuality and to overcome the effects of physical and emotional abuse. Friends also have the responsibility to respect one another's physical and emotional boundaries.

Community and workplace relationships are spheres of human life in which friendships and companionship can and do thrive. They are also places where trust and distrust mix in complicated ways.

Sometimes friendships become sexual in the narrower sense of giving rise to overtly erotic impulses and stimulation. Erotic interest between adults open to a romantic relationship can be a desired part of the growth of trust and intimacy. Erotic interest can also create conflicts and danger. These have to be faced honestly when one or both of the people involved already have made promises of fidelity to another. The conflicts and dangers have to be recognized, also, whenever one of the involved individuals does not welcome a deeper and more complicated closeness.

Reintroducing distance into such friendships or breaking them off may entail an acceptance of loss that requires courage and maturity. The violation of trusting relationships for sexual purposes is offensive and unacceptable, and, when criminal, should be punished accordingly. A particularly egregious violation of friendship is acquaintance rape.

Commitment and sexuality

Human beings remain sexual creatures for life. As a result, they must cultivate and manage relationships along a spectrum that runs from casual associations to intense intimacy. The deepening of trust and commitment is a lengthy process that requires deliberate attention and effort. Recognizing this provides a way of thinking about how people come to select life partners and about their sexual conduct in that process.

Couples, whether teenage, young adult, mature, or senior, move from a first acquaintance into a journey of increasing knowledge, appreciation, and trust in each other. This journey involves spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical dimensions of self-understanding. When these dimensions develop at similar rates, trust and entrusting are established and secured. When they are out of balance, trust may either not exist or disintegrate.

As trust and entrusting are established in a relationship, physical expression naturally becomes more intimate. That is, sexual intimacy would be expected to follow the same pattern of growth marked by the other dimensions of mutual self-understanding.

For this reason, this church teaches that degrees of physical intimacy should be carefully matched to degrees of growing affection and commitment. This also suggests a way to understand why this church teaches that the greatest sexual intimacies, such as coitus, should be matched with and

sheltered both by the highest level of binding commitment and by social and legal protection, such as is found in marriage. Here, promises of fidelity and public accountability provide the foundational basis and support for trust, intimacy, and safety, especially for the most vulnerable.

This is why this church opposes nonmonogamous, promiscuous, or casual sexual relationships of any kind. Indulging immediate desires for satisfaction, sexual or otherwise, is to "gratify the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16–19). Such transient encounters do not allow for trust in the relationship to create the context for trust in sexual intimacy.

Such relationships undermine the dignity and integrity of individuals because physical intimacy is not accompanied by the growth of mutual self-knowledge. Absent the presence of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual trust and commitment, such sexual relationships may easily damage the self and an individual's future capacity to live out committed and trustworthy relationships. Fleeting relationships misuse the gift of sexual intimacy and are much more likely to be unjust, abusive, and exploitative.

Although this church strongly discourages such relationships, it nevertheless insists that every sexual relationship entails responsibility. All sexually active people have the responsibility to protect their sexual partner from both emotional and physical harm as well as to protect themselves and their partners from sexually transmitted diseases and the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy.

Sexual intimacy and adult cohabitation

Many contemporary pressures encourage adult cohabitation. When marriage is delayed for years beyond the age of physical sexual maturity, the emotional and physical pressures for intimacy may grow. Social trends in this society, such as extensive schooling, downward wage pressure, and even the desire for expensive weddings, may further encourage that delay. While some of these trends are the result of individual choices, they also may be influenced by broader social forces: the increasing number of failed marriages, social acceptance of casual sex, and the strong cultural influence of individualism that largely ignores social responsibility and accountability. All are examples of why many may question the need for—and sometimes even the rationale for—binding relationships.

In addition, certain laws and economic realities in this society may create extreme economic hardship for some, including older adults, who desire to be legally married. This church calls for altering laws and the factors that create a significant impediment to marriage for such people.

Because this church urges couples to seek the highest social and legal support for their relationships, it does not favor cohabitation arrangements outside of marriage. It has a special concern when such arrangements are entered into as an end in themselves. It does, however, acknowledge the social forces at work that encourage such practices. This church also recognizes the pastoral and familial issues that accompany these contemporary social patterns.

In cases where a decision is made for cohabitation, regardless of the reasons, this church expects its pastors and members to be clear with the couple regarding the reasons for the position of this church and to support the couple in recognizing their obligation to be open and candid with each other about their plans, expectations, and levels of mutual commitment.

It should be noted that some cohabitation arrangements can be constructed in ways that are neither casual nor intrinsically unstable. In earlier generations, betrothal carried obligations similar to those of marriage. In certain situations, conventional or even legal obligations accompany cohabitation arrangements. In some states, for instance, laws govern "common-law marriages." Such arrangements may differ markedly from more transitory forms of cohabitation.

This church believes, however, that the deepest human longings for a sense of personal worth, long-term companionship, and profound security, especially given the human propensity to sin, are best served through binding commitment, legal protections, and the public accountability of marriage, especially where the couple is surrounded by the prayers of the congregational community and the promises of God.

VI. Sexuality and social responsibility

Sexuality and society

Neither individuals nor families can succeed alone; they need healthy and supportive communities.[49] Individuals are deeply social and therefore profoundly shaped by these communities, even in their most private and

intimate moments. Given this reality, we must appreciate the significant influence, both positive and negative, of social forces and social contexts on human sexual behavior.

This church must be prepared to speak out where such forces cause harm. In particular, it will oppose all forms of sexual exploitation within and outside this church. Justice for women in church and society must continue to be an important dimension of Lutheran concern and action.

This church also will attend to the need for equal protection, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities under the law, and just treatment for those with varied sexual orientation and gender identity. Such individuals are disproportionately and negatively affected by patterns of stigma, discrimination, and abuse. Likewise, it will attend to the particular needs of children and the families of those with actual or perceived differences in sexual orientation or gender identity because they are especially vulnerable to verbal, physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and sexual abuse.

This church notes with grave concern the public commodification[50] of the human body as an economic asset. The sexual body is never to be used as an object for commercial purposes, and this church will speak against the public idolatry of pleasure, freedom, and wealth that undergirds such practices.

Especially deplorable are the billion-dollar global sex market and the economic systems that thrive on it, both in the United States and abroad.[51] The people trapped in this system are damaged and often destroyed by degradation, abuse, and, sometimes, torture. Companies that profit from this enterprise need to be identified and strongly denounced. This church supports building international agreements and national laws to prevent these practices.

The possibility of profit is not a sufficient moral basis to use human sexuality for purposes that harm individuals or undermine social trust.[52] The ELCA opposes the sale and purchase of pornography. It also objects to commercial and technological efforts to sell sex, including mass media and commercial marketing, since these negatively impact individuals and society in significant ways.

Christian responsibility includes naming economic forces and monitoring the ways in which they constrain or support healthy individual choices and social structures. This church will advocate against all that systematically undermines efforts to raise healthy children and to build solid marriages and trusting relationships, including the portrayal of responsible sexuality as abnormal and burdensome and promiscuous sexual activity as normal and consequence-free.

This church will respond in situations where business and corporate enterprises seek profit through disrespectful treatment of the human body. This church will work with public and private institutions[53] to create structures, policies, and practices of accountability to support social norms of protection. These include codes of practice that protect society, especially children and the most vulnerable, from the misuse and abuse of sexuality for profit.

This church will work with all people to craft fair and comprehensive laws particularly aimed at protecting the weakest and most vulnerable among us, especially children, from sexual harm.

This church supports the development and use of medical products, birth control, and initiatives that support fulfilling and responsible sexuality. This church also recognizes the important role that the availability of birth control has played in allowing women and men to make responsible decisions about the bearing and rearing of children.

This church, in its concern for the neighbor, has a responsibility to be concerned about public health issues. All people who have contracted a sexually transmitted disease have an absolute responsibility to inform their sexual partners and all who are at risk.

Care must be taken in sex education materials and processes to inform about the dangers of diseases without teaching that sexual expression is intrinsically dirty and dangerous. Efforts at public education and protection from disease should be supported. This includes efforts that challenge stigma and discrimination, especially against those living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. This church, including its institutions and agencies, should be an active partner in discussions about how to address and contain epidemics of such diseases.

This church supports social policies and practices that encourage the growth of healthy relationships and will question publicly those that erode social trust or undermine the structures within which trust is learned and preserved. The traditional concerns of this church for social justice and the protection of the vulnerable also will guide its teachings and practices in relation to social trust and sexuality.

Sexuality and public ministry

This church does not tolerate the abuse of the ministerial office for personal sexual gratification. This church holds high expectations for those individuals called to serve as rostered leaders. Pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who abuse the trust placed in them by engaging in promiscuity, infidelity, adultery, or forms of sexual abuse violate those high standards. Such violations severely damage the credibility of the public ministry to which this church and its leaders are called.

Sexuality in the workplace

In all workplaces, supervisors, co-workers, professionals, and clients must negotiate complex relationships. The sexual dimension of these relationships, both in the general sense and in the sometimes more specifically erotic sense, needs to be honestly recognized.

Employers and supervisors, including within this church, must pay particular attention to work relationships between colleagues, especially where there are power differentials, and where the workplace environment is rendered sexually offensive or hostile by the conduct of co-workers.

The workplace requires appropriate boundaries that are maintained through respect, good sense, best practices, and legal protections. This church remains committed to its own efforts to help make congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization safe and healthy places to live and work. The ELCA will not tolerate sexual harassment within the workplace.

VII. Conclusion

Human sexuality and moral discernment

This social statement grows out of the foundational theological understanding that Lutherans read and understand the Bible in light of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The "good news" of the Gospel

that we are freed from bondage to sin (justification before God) allows us to respond to the Triune God's mercy through love for and service to the neighbor (vocation in the world). The social statement further affirms that because God's promises are trustworthy, each of us is called in Christian freedom to be trustworthy in our relationships with one another and to build social institutions and practices that create trust.

Because of the love of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are a people set free for lives of responsibility committed to seeking the good of all. This statement responds to this church's call for a foundational framework[54] that will help it discern what it means to follow faithfully God's law of love in the increasingly complex sphere of human sexuality. It does not offer once-and-for-all answers to contemporary questions. Rather it seeks to tap the deep roots of Scripture and the Lutheran theological tradition for specific Christian convictions, themes, and wisdom that will assist people of faith to discern what is responsible and faithful action in the midst of the complexity of daily life. It proposes guideposts to direct this church's discernment as it tries to be faithful. It provides markers by which individual and communal decisions can be tested under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It seeks to describe the social realities of this age and to address them pastorally. Insofar as it is possible, it also seeks to speak in ways that can address both religious and secular discussions of these matters.

The necessity of mercy, always

Human lives are littered with broken promises and betrayed trust. Not everyone knows how to trust, and not everyone is trustworthy. Relationships end because trust has been broken. Given finitude and sin, many things happen that threaten trust in even the strongest relationships. Forgiveness and reconciliation, then, join with mutuality and justice to support trust and trustworthiness in relationships.

Seeking the Spirit's guidance, we discern direction for living faithfully in terms of human sexuality. We do this not in some abstract ideal realm but amid all the complexities, conflicts, sorrows, discoveries, and joys of actual social and individual life. It is a task that this church accepts as a redeemed community. As simultaneously captive to sin and yet liberated and forgiven people of faith, we walk together both humbly and boldly toward God's promised future.

Addendum

"An addendum summarizing differing points of view shall be added to those statements that elicit significant division in the Churchwide Assembly." *Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns (2006), page 16*.

An amendment (as shown below) received significant support at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly but did not receive the vote needed for approval: ". . . The historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions ~~have~~ teach ~~taught~~ and ~~recognized~~ recognize marriage as a normative, lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, reflecting Mark 10:6–9: 'But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one put asunder.' (Jesus here recalls Genesis 1:27; 2:23–24.)" Marriage thus provides the possibility for the added blessing of children and the joy and responsibility for raising them in the faith.

End Notes

[1] "Neighbor," as used in this statement, includes various meanings. It often follows the use in Matthew 22, where Jesus clearly intends family, friends, co-workers, and local acquaintances. But it also can be enlarged to include groups and broad social networks, which are important in Scripture also (Galatians 6:10). The meaning here depends on the context.

[2] "Trust," as used in this statement, is a fundamental characteristic of right relationship. God is unfailingly trustworthy to us and all of creation. Just as we learn by faith that a right relationship with God is a relationship of trust rather than rebellious self-assertion, a right relationship with the neighbor is one in which each seeks to be truly worthy of the other's trust. The trustworthiness that fosters and can bear the weight of the other's trust emerges as a central value to cherish and promote. Broken promises and betrayed trust through lies, exploitation, and manipulative behavior are exposed, not just as an individual failing but as an attack on the foundations of our lives as social beings. Trust is misunderstood if reduced to an emotion, an abstract principle, or a virtue of one's disposition, although these all suggest its multidimensional role as an axis in human life.

In *The Responsible Self* (1963), H. Richard Niebuhr set Christian ethical reflection on a new course by treating trust as the center of Christian thinking, based on the question of trust or distrust of God as the fundamental option in human existence. In terms of human relationships, he wrote, "Faith as trust or distrust accompanies all our

encounters with others and qualifies all our responses" (118). Philosophers and theorists such as Hannah Arendt (*The Human Condition*, 1958) and Michael Polanyi (*Personal Knowledge*, 1958) have advanced reflection on the centrality of promise and networks of trusting reliance in human affairs and knowledge. Some social scientists have begun to identify social trust as an indispensable feature of healthy organizations, institutions, and whole societies, and social distrust as one of the destructive forces at work in the breakdown and dissolution of organized social arrangements. Such reflections operate in the background of this statement.

[3] Each "*sola*" points to the same saving event. That is, they together proclaim Jesus Christ as central to the Gospel, each perceived from a different dimension. Other dimensions of God's saving work, other "*solas*," also have been associated with Lutheranism. Especially in the 19th century, Lutherans began to emphasize *sola Scriptura,* although the Confessions rarely used that phrase. Luther more often spoke of the Word of God alone (*soli Verbo*), by which he meant fundamentally the oral proclamation of the Gospel. For a key source suggesting the *solas* listed here, see "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," IV. 120 in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), hereafter referred to as "BC 2000."

[4] Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian" in *Luther's Works*, 31 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 344. This treatise also is available as part of *Three Treatises*, a printing of three key essays from 1520 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 277.

[5] Luther wrote that this book "contains the whole of Christian life in a brief form, provided you grasp its meaning." Ibid., 343. See also the editor's introduction, 329.

[6] This citation is taken from Martin Luther's preface to the published doctoral thesis on justification for Peter Palladius, who defended it before Wittenberg's theological faculty on June 1, 1537 (*Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe/* [*/Schriften/*], 65 vols. Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993. [Hereafter identified by "WA."] 39 I, 205, 2–5). For the Lutheran Confessions, the article on justification is central for all church teaching. See, for instance, *Formula of Concord,* Solid Declaration, III.6 (BC 2000:563), quoting the *Apology*, IV.2–3 (BC 2000: 120) and Luther's comments on Psalm 117 (*Luther's Works* 14:37). The connection to ethics is demonstrated in the *Augsburg Confession*, IV–VI and XX, and the *Apology*, art. IV, especially par. 122–182 (BC 2000:140–49).

[7] For one example of how Martin Luther describes creatures as the hands, channels, and means through which God continually creates and blesses, see Large Catechism, Ten Commandments, par. 26 (BC 2000:389).

[8] "The attempt—with the origin and nature of humankind in mind—to take a gigantic leap back into the world of the lost beginning, to seek to know for ourselves what humankind was like in its original state and to identify our own ideal of humanity with what God actually created is hopeless. It fails to recognize that it is only from the Christ that we can know about the original nature of humankind. ... Only in the middle, as those who live from Christ, do we know about the beginning." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1–3*, ed. John W. de Gruchy (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 62.

[9] See Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed" in *The Christian in Society, Luther's Works*, 45 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), 75–129.

The term "third use" of the law, not named here, indicates the law's role in guiding Christians as they seek to orient and conduct their lives; it receives significant attention in the *Formula of Concord*. This social statement streamlines its discussion of law by focusing solely on the "two uses" but does recognize the role of law as a guide for Christians. Since the third use is defined in the Confessions as the civil use of the law by the repentant and reborn who keep the law with a willing spirit, this practice seems warranted. See *Formula of Concord*, Epitome, VI.6 (BC 2000:502).

[10] *Smalcald Articles* III.2 (BC 2000:311–312).

[11] In Lutheran theology, these structures have often been called "orders of creation" to express the point that they exist as structures that God uses to order human life. The origin of the term "orders of creation" and its original conceptualization can be traced to Christoph Adolf von Harleß (see *Christliche Ethik*, 7th ed. [Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1875], 491), who proposed this term to highlight the provisional nature of human social arrangements. It soon became linked to a static notion of creation, and the idea of "orders" began to be understood as fixed, one-time acts of God in the past.

As such, they came to indicate the establishment of human society in a hierarchy of fixed and unchanging social arrangements. On this basis, at various times some Lutheran theologians have objected to the democratic developments in modern states on the grounds of the divine right of kings, defended the legitimacy of Hitler's regime, or rejected the ordination of women as contrary to nature. While "orders of creation" also has been theologically enriching within Lutheran tradition, the concept of social structures is used here because it is less technical and more suggestive of God's ongoing creative activity to shape and reshape social structures for human protection and good.

[12] *Augsburg Confession*, XVI (BC 2000:48–52); *Apology*, XVI (BC 2000:231–233); Small Catechism, Household Chart (BC 2000:365–367); Large Catechism, Ten Commandments (BC 2000:400–425).

[13] Small Catechism, Ten Commandments, par. 12 (BC 2000:353).

[14] "The Lutheran reformers developed a helpful approach to dealing with matters of morality and ethics. It serves both to safeguard the Gospel against the temptations for additional requirements than the grace of God, and to see within which context the issues of family, marriage, and human sexuality can be addressed from a Lutheran point of view. Hence, we suggest that the doctrine of the two kingdoms can be applied as a useful tool to deal with these matters." Lutheran World Federation: Marriage, Family and Human Sexuality "Proposed Guidelines and Processes for Respectful Dialogue," LWF Report, 6, www.lutheranworld.org/Council/2007/20070322-Council.html (February, 1, 2009). This report was received at the LWF Council in March 2007 and commended to LWF member churches.

[15] This teaching about the two realms of God's action often is called the "doctrine of the two kingdoms." See *op cit. Luther's Works*, vol. 45, especially 88–93.

[16] The long-standing Lutheran emphasis on education stems, in part, from understanding it as an arena for service to the neighbor. See "Our Calling in Education" (Chicago: ELCA, 2007), 7–10.

[17] This statement attempts to maintain the distinctions frequently made between "sexual/sexuality," "sex," and "gender." Generally speaking "sexual/sexuality" here refers to biological facts, while "sex" refers to behavior, as in "having sex."

"Gender" is reserved, most often, to designate the social and cultural classifications and constructions of biology and behavior. These distinctions are, of course, hard to maintain with precision but are consistent with dictionary definitions. The following selected definitions are taken from William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1969–1970.): *Sexuality*: "The quality of possessing a sexual character or potency." *Sex*: "The sexual urge or instinct as it manifests itself in behavior" or "Sexual intercourse." *Gender*: "Classification of sex."

[18] One excellent source in the literature is theorist Niklas Luhmann. See *Trust and Power: Two Works by Niklas Luhmann*; trans. Howard Davis, John Raffan, and Kathryn Rooney Chichester (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979).

[19] Scripture uses the words "obedience" (Romans 13) or "honor" (Exodus 20) to refer not to the slavish following of rules but to the relationship of mutual trust spoken of here, in which the repentant sinner willingly responds to God's commands. Luther captures this scriptural attitude well in his exposition of the fourth commandment in Large Catechism, Ten Commandments, especially par. 167–178 (BC 2000:409).

[20] It is no accident, for example, that in economics, "credit" plays a crucial role and uses a word from the same Latin root as "creed." *Credit* literally means "he or she believes" that a person will repay a loan.

[21] Small Catechism, Ten Commandments, par. 16 (BC 2000:353).

[22] The Latin version of the *Augsburg Confession* uses the word *fiducia* (trust).

[23] In the United States, marriage is defined by state law. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. 644 (2015) holds that states may not discriminate against marriages between individuals according to sex, gender, or sexuality, but otherwise the legality of marriage in the U.S. is determined at the state level.

[24] "The Lutheran Confessions are Reformation-era writings, central to Lutheran theology and practice and constitutionally affirmed by the ELCA" (ELCA, *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* [Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2019], p. 71, footnote 14). Though the writings that constitute the Book of Concord (commonly referred to as the Lutheran Confessions) engage a range of issues regarding teaching and practice, they do not address every question or topic. Rather they focus on the Scriptures' purpose: to reveal Jesus Christ.

[25] This church acknowledges that there are multiple ways of nurturing children, including but not limited to caring for one's own biological or adopted children.

[26] Luther's concluding explanation of the sixth commandment says about marriage: "Above all it is essential that husband and wife live together in love and harmony, cherishing each other wholeheartedly and with perfect fidelity." Large Catechism, Ten Commandments, par. 219 (BC 2000:415).

[27] See ELCA Church Council minutes for 1993 and ELCA Churchwide Assembly minutes for 1991, 1993, 1995, and 1999 respectively: CC93.03.37; CA91.07.51; CA93.03.4; CA95.6.50; CA99.06.27. These actions may be found at www.elca.org.

[28] A similar approach to pastoral care is evident in other ELCA social teaching; see, for an early example, the 1991 ELCA social statement on abortion, p. 6.

[29] While not the only reference in Scripture to marriage, Genesis 1:27; 2:23–24 has been a core source for the historic Christian tradition. It is often cited alongside Mark 10:6-

9, where Jesus references the Genesis verses while responding to the male-privileged divorce practices of his day and forbidding all divorce: "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason … the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

[30] "The difference between interpreters should not be understood as a conflict between those who seek to be 'true to Scripture' and those who seek to 'twist the Bible' to their own liking. The disagreements are genuine." This is the conclusion of Dr. Arland J. Hultgren and Dr. Walter F. Taylor Jr. Both are members of the ELCA and both are highly regarded scholars and teachers. The citation is from Arland Hultgren and Walter Taylor, *Background Essay on Biblical Texts for* "Journey Together Faithfully, Part Two: The Church and Homosexuality." (Chicago: ELCA, September 2003), 18. This essay was written at the request of the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality. It can be accessed at resources.elca.org (Feb.1, 2009).

[31] The Apostle Paul testifies to conscience as the unconditional moral responsibility of the individual before God (Romans 2:15–16). In the face of different conclusions about what constitutes responsible action, the concept of "the conscience" becomes pivotal.

When the clear word of God's saving action by grace through faith is at stake, Christian conscience becomes as adamant as Paul, who opposed those who insisted upon circumcision (Galatians 1:8). In the same way, Luther announced at his trial for heresy, "Unless I am persuaded by the testimony of Scripture and by clear reason ... I am conquered by the Scripture passages I have adduced and my conscience is captive to the words of God. I neither can nor desire to recant anything, when to do so against conscience would be neither safe nor wholesome" (WA 7:838; *Luther's Works* 32:112). However, when the question is about morality or church practice, the Pauline and Lutheran witness is less adamant and believes we may be called to respect the bound conscience of the neighbor. That is, if salvation is not at stake in a particular question, Christians are free to give priority to the neighbor's well-being and will protect the conscience of the neighbor, who may well view the same question in such a way as to affect faith itself. For example, Paul was confident that Christian freedom meant the Gospel of Jesus Christ was not at stake in questions of meat sacrificed to idols or the rituals of holy days (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8:10–14 and 10:23–30). Yet he insisted that, if a brother or sister did not understand this freedom and saw eating this meat as idolatry to a pagan god, the Christian was obligated to "walk in love" by eating just vegetables for the neighbor's sake (Romans 14:17–20)!

This social statement draws upon this rich understanding of the role of conscience and calls upon this church, when in disagreement concerning matters around which salvation is not at stake, including human sexuality, to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), honor the conscience, and seek the well-being of the neighbor.

[32] This is evident in Luther's commentary on parental responsibilities. See Small Catechism, Preface, par. 19–20 (BC 2000:350), and Large Catechism, Ten Commandments, par. 167–78 (BC 2000:409–410).

[33] See, for instance, Luther's reference to the fourth commandment while discussing the sixth: Large Catechism, Ten Commandments, par. 167–178 (BC 2000:413ff.); see also par. 206 and 218.

[34] These include laws governing marriage, dissolution of marriage, inheritance, guardianship, custody, parental rights and duties, property, pensions, social security, taxes, and health benefits. The interdependence and mutual responsibilities of married couples are crucial in welding them into a legal unit as well as a loving household. Parents and guardians are legally compelled to attend to the welfare, support, protection, and education of their children and youth.
[35] Such trends include remarkably large numbers of physically or psychologically absent fathers and teenagers with parenting responsibilities for which they are not prepared. They include the reluctance of some individuals to commit themselves to marriage. Stresses on marriages and individuals in marriages contribute to high rates of divorce with accompanying concerns for children and other extended family members.
[36] In 2023, 8.242 million single-parent households with children—over 80 percent of single-parent households with children in the U.S.—were maintained by single mothers, while single fathers maintained 2.037 million households with children. U.S. Census Bureau, "Table FG5. One-Parent Unmarried Family Groups with Own Children Under 18, by Labor Force Status of the Reference Person: 2023," America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2023, www.census.gov/data/tables/2023/demo/families/cps-2023.html, accessed on July 30, 2025." The U.S. Census data do not reflect the many single nonparent adults who maintain households with children across the U.S. and within this church.
[37] Forgiveness and reconciliation can be appropriate responses in certain situations; however, in the context of care, neither can be demanded of victims of violence or betrayal. "Christians are not in a position to demand forgiveness by others for others. Coercing someone to forgive may actually subvert healing and accountability" ELCA, "Gender-based Violence" (Chicago: ELCA, 2015).
[38] ELCA social message, "Gender-based Violence," pp. 2, 6-10.
[39] See *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, pp. 2-5, 12-14, 28-30, 34-35, 61-62.
[40] For more on domestic violence and gender-based violence, see *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, p. 76. See also "Gender-based Violence."
[41] "Commercial Sexual Exploitation" (Chicago: ELCA, 2001), 3.
[42] Ibid., 1.
[43] Reports were quite consistent on these points both anecdotally and in informal polls among youth and youth leaders attending workshops in 2007 and 2008 for *Free in Christ to Care for the Neighbor: Lutheran Youth Talk About Human Sexuality* (Chicago: ELCA, 2007).
[44] The ELCA social statement *Abortion* (Chicago: ELCA, 1991), 4–5.
[45] See Luther's brief but pointed comments regarding how care for one's body should be understood as a Christian work in "The Freedom of a Christian" in *Career of the Reformer: Vol. I*, *Luther's Works* 31 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), 365.
[46] Some experts estimate that as many as 1 in every 1,500 babies is born with a disorder of sex development (DSDs). See www.apa.org/topics/intersx.html (February, 1, 2009). The phrase used here, "ambiguous genitalia," is one form of DSD and indicates a birth defect in which the outer genitals do not have the typical appearance of either a boy or a girl. See www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003269.htm (February, 1, 2009).
[47] *Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor* (Chicago: ELCA, 2003).
[48] A variety of research supports this claim in relation to sexual activity. See, for

instance, Peter C. Scales, et al., *Developmental Assets: A Synthesis of the Scientific Research on Adolescent Development* (Minneapolis: Search Institute Publications, 2004).
[49] Statistically, the healthier that family and community institutions are, the higher the number is of developmental assets found among its members, especially youth. Strong community institutions have a significant impact on lowering the incidence of at-risk behaviors among young people, including intimate sexual activity at young ages. The relative health of a community's institutions, such as schools, churches, and civic organizations, matters significantly. *op. cit.* Benson.
[50] Public commodification can be understood as the transformation of any created blessing of God into a commodity to be bought and sold.
[51] This multibillion-dollar system often is perpetuated by slaverylike conditions and outright slavery.
[52] "While a market economy emphasizes what individuals *want* and are willing and able to buy, as people of faith we realize that what human beings want is not necessarily what they *need* for the sake of life." *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (Chicago: ELCA, 1999), 3f.
[53] This includes many varieties of social, economic, and business institutions.
[54] The development of this social statement was mandated by the 2001 Churchwide Assembly. Reference can be found in the 2001 Churchwide Assembly minutes, CA01.06.36 and CA01.06.45.

Implementing resolutions for the social statement

1. To embrace as a church our legacy of a rich theological tradition that proclaims God's gracious love expressed in Jesus Christ as the basis of our salvation, hope, and unity, and to call upon members of this church on this basis to commit themselves to finding ways to live together faithfully in the midst of disagreements;

2. To call upon this church to affirm the various studies created for the Journey Together Faithfully series as resources for ongoing deliberation and discernment, and to direct the program unit for Church in Society to maintain their availability as long as demand continues;

3. To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop to explore the feasibility of developing liturgical resources for use by rostered leaders, individuals, and families at the time of divorce;

4. To encourage Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, to consider developing education curricula with particular attention to the needs of children, middle school and high school youth, and their parents for understanding Christian values and making responsible choices;

5. To recognize that organizations like Women of the ELCA, Lutheran Men in Mission, Lutheran Youth Organization, and campus ministries foster and support friendships; to encourage them to lift up and celebrate the value of strong friendships and to support the formation of voluntary associations for nurturing them;

6. To call upon all congregations, pastors, and other rostered leaders to reach out in welcome to all in accord with previous Churchwide Assembly actions as reaffirmed by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly [CA05.05.18], and to assist members to understand what it means to be hospitable to all in the name of Christ regardless of sexual orientation;

7. To call upon the ELCA to amend the eligibility provisions of the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program, consistent with the policies of this church;

8. To call upon this church to encourage the availability and funding of comprehensive sex education programs in public schools, as well as in Lutheran private schools;

9. To affirm the 2001 ELCA social message "Commercial Sexual Exploitation" and its continuing value for the mission and ministry of the ELCA;

10. To call upon this church's advocacy and corporate social responsibility ministries to support and advocate measures consistent with this social statement;

11. To express appreciation for the work being done by the churchwide organization, synods, institutions, and congregations to prevent sexual harassment and misconduct; to encourage strengthening these efforts by all expressions and ministries of this church; and to ensure the availability of effective resources for dealing with sexual misconduct and sexual harassment within this church;

12. To call upon teaching theologians, bishops, pastors, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, educators, and others to continue to extend theological and biblical reflection as well as theoretical and practical understanding of human sexuality through intellectual discourse, moral deliberation, continued research, discussion, and writing;

13. To recognize that the ELCA has adopted a strategy that will guide its response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic, and to call upon all units and expressions of this church to support that strategy;

14. To call upon all congregations, synods, early childhood education centers, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, seminaries, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, public policy advocacy ministries, and all churchwide units to carry out the substance and spirit of this statement; and

15. To call upon Church in Society and other appropriate churchwide units to oversee a process of implementation and accountability for this social statement and to report on implementation to the Church Council in early 2012.

A Social Statement on

Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust

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Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

ITEM001504

Exhibit H

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

A social statement on ...

Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All

This social statement was adopted by a more-than-two-thirds majority (762-16) at the 17th Churchwide Assembly on August 1, 2025, at Phoenix, Arizona. Assembly Action CA25.05.24.

An Annotated Guide to Content

*The following annotations **do not** summarize each article but provide a reference to the article's content.*

INTRODUCTION

Article 1 "Your will be done on earth as in heaven." These familiar words from the Lord's Prayer remind Christians that God is at work in caring for all creation, and they call us to strive to understand and join in that work. This social statement provides a comprehensive Lutheran view of civic life toward that purpose. [Page 10]

SECTION I. FOUNDATIONAL TEACHING: GOD ACTS FOR THE WELL-BEING OF ALL THROUGH CIVIC LIFE

Article 2 The Scriptures teach that all power arises from God and that God's purpose is *shalom*, the well-being of all creation. For human beings, this means that all our activity is accountable to God's power and purpose and that no earthly power should replace God as the aim of our trust and worship. [Page 11]

Article 3 From the first chapters of Genesis onward, the Scriptures make clear that all human beings bear the image of God, which includes being social and political creatures. For civic

life, this means that all people are called to participate in God's work of fostering the well-being of creation though social and political communities. [Page 12]

Article 4 The Scriptures teach that human sin warps the image of God that every human bears. Human sin includes distorting God's gift of society through individual practices, institutions, and systems so that they are not used for the common good of all neighbors. [Page 14]

Article 5 Lutherans teach that, as God comes to us, humans come to know both their sin and God's many, many gifts. What does this mean for us as Christians? God's response to sin includes the gifts of Law (God's directives) and Gospel (God's grace revealed in Christ), which are both strategies God uses to seek the well-being of humanity and all creation. [Page 15]

Article 6 People of faith approach the present world with trust in God and, at the same time, with measured realism and humility about human efforts to create a just society. God's people live in the "now but not yet" of God's reign and know that no person, community, or society is without sin. For civic life, this means that Christians are called to both engage in bringing about a better world and be vigilant in regard to any earthly arrangement. [Page 16]

Article 7 Christians and Christian church structures, too, are subject to sin and, too often, have failed to prioritize efforts toward the common social good. For our participation in civic life at this time, this means that Christ's church should acknowledge the need to repent for the harm caused by past and present action or inaction and should strive to take appropriate actions today. Such accountability is an important condition of striving toward the common good and the well-being of creation. [Page 17]

Article 8 God provides an abundance of human capacities such as reason, imagination, experience, and emotion for use toward seeking healthy civic life. We are to use these through communal discernment to determine what will further the well-being of society here and now. [Page 18]

Article 9 The gifts of God for the good of civic life are available to all people, and the Scriptures accordingly instruct all to do justice and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). Christians do not have privileged knowledge about civic life but rely on good reasoning and welcome the good ideas and contributions of all people who seek to bring about well-being in society. [Page 19]

SECTION II. GOD CALLS ALL PEOPLE TO ROBUST CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Article 10 Civic life includes all activities and institutions enabling life in public community, from the local to the international. Our church affirms that anyone contributing to a community's well-being through civic participation is using gifts provided by God, knowingly or not. The ELCA celebrates the many ways in which God calls people into lives of service for the good of the community. [Page 20]

Article 11 The ELCA affirms that civic service is a valued and dignified way to carry out God's calling. This means that the public's default stance toward those engaged in public service should be one of respect but also that civic leaders and officials are accountable for the ways they fail to work for the good of all. [Page 21]

Article 12 The church's worshiping assemblies are rooted in Word and Sacrament. Worship, from gathering to sending, prepares and encourages us to join God's activity in civic life. [Page 23]

Article 13 Religious traditions can offer gifts of vision and compassion sorely needed in contemporary civic life but can also be unproductively divisive, even damaging. This means that religious people must discern carefully how best to engage in civic life to promote justice and reconciliation. [Page 23]

Article 14 Our church teaches that there is no person for whom Christ did not die and that, in baptism, Christians are made one people in Christ. This means that we should seek to create Christian communities of moral discernment even when, and especially when, we have disagreements. [Page 25]

Article 15 The ELCA has a long-standing commitment to engage civic life through its members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and church-related institutions. Fundamental aspects of what that means were addressed initially in the social statement *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (1991). [Page 25]

Article 16 The Scriptures teach that following Jesus includes a prophetic dimension, which lifts up a vision of social well-being. This means Christians are to act in civic life for the benefit of the neighbor, especially our marginalized or oppressed neighbors. We should evaluate actions and policies according to whether they best serve the needs of these neighbors as a guide to determining the common good. [Page 26]

Article 17 The varied forms of advocacy discussed in this article, including faith-based organizing, can play a transformative role in a polarized political world by bringing people together in discernment and action for the common good. [Page 27]

Article 18 The Lutheran tradition teaches that God creates humans as political beings and that political authority is, in principle, God's gift. This church believes that political decisions must be guided by well-considered ethics. "Politics," properly understood, means negotiating how the benefits, burdens, rights, and responsibilities of living in a society are shared. Politics and ethics are necessarily related. Ethics discerns; politics implements. [Page 29]

Article 19 Jesus was not political in the sense of affiliating with a particular political party or ideology. At the same time, when Christians affirm that "Jesus is Lord" (Romans 10:9), it is a political as well as a theological claim.[6] This affirmation pulls Christians into civic and political life as Jesus was, so that they might love and serve neighbor justice. At the same time, "Jesus is Lord" means Christians cannot give their primary loyalty to any government, nation, civic order, or individuals. [Page 30]

Article 20 Baptism includes a commitment to participate in civic life. The public role of rostered ministers in the church produces unique opportunities and challenges for their civic leadership and participation. This article provides guiding reflections as they seek to live out their calling. [Page 31]

SECTION III. ASSESSING THE U.S. CONSTITUTIONAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Article 21 The Lutheran Confessions teach that governmental authority is an instrument of God to help order social benefits and guard against human evil. Yet political authority is itself subject to sin. This means that Lutherans ought to maintain a watchful stance toward all government and its actions. This stance values government and cooperates when appropriate, while it is ready to question and resist the misuse of political authority when necessary. [Page 34]

Article 22 The recognition that God's power seeks the good of society is central to the Lutheran tradition. This church teaches that any use of power can be assessed by whether it amplifies God's purpose for people and groups. This view provides a standard by which all power can be evaluated and is quite different from the usual political model of power. [Page 35]

Article 23 The criterion of God's power and purpose leads to additional criteria for assessing government action, including the value of mutual self-determination. This concept shares little in common with the ideology of "individualism." [Page 37]

Article 24 In the United States, the Constitution is the fundamental framework of political authority and expresses the aspirations for government in this country. This means that the values expressed in the Constitution can be used to assess whether governments (federal, state, and local) serve social well-being. [Page 39]

Article 25 The most radical feature of the Constitution is its first three words: "we the people." This phrase indicates a preference for mutual self-determination, though originally that preference was largely limited to property-owning white males. Over time, constitutional amendments have expanded the right of mutual self-determination through voting. [Page 41]

Article 26 This social statement identifies both theological and constitutional criteria to assess government authority and its activity. This article describes several specific applications of those criteria and specific questions to help assess governmental policies, laws, and regulations. [Page 42]

Article 27 The Constitution forbids religious tests for U.S. officeholders, and the First Amendment to the Constitution is neutral toward religion. This means that the Constitution favors religious freedom for every individual in this country. [Page 43]

Article 28 The U.S. sovereign is not "we the Christians" but "we the people." The U.S. governing structure and authority is not fundamentally Christian in origin, structure, or intent. [Page 44]

SECTION IV. RELIGION AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Article 29 The First Amendment begins with two clauses: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion [known as the Establishment Clause], or prohibiting the free exercise thereof [known as the Free Exercise Clause]." Section IV examines these clauses, their relationship, and their meaning for civic life today. [Page 44]

Article 30 The Establishment Clause imposes limits on government's involvement with religion. Government's authority extends only to secular matters, not to people's relationships with the sacred. This means that government may neither promote one religion's view nor decide for any religious institution on matters that are explicitly religious in nature. [Page 46]

Article 31 The Establishment and Free Exercise clauses work together to promote religious diversity. This means that each religious community can gather and worship as it chooses and that each community and its members can engage in public life on an equal basis with all others. [Page 47]

Article 32 "Free exercise" of religion has never been interpreted by the courts as an absolute right. When religiously motivated conduct conflicts with civil law or regulation, this church affirms that government should try to accommodate religious practices so long as doing this does not damage important public interests or burden the rights of others. [Page 49]

Article 33 The Establishment Clause applies to the government's conduct in relation to religious institutions. The First Amendment does not discourage, much less prohibit, religious individuals or communities from participating in public life. [Page 51]

SECTION V. CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY

Article 34 What does the ELCA believe to be the constructive relationship between religious institutions and political authority? The ELCA reaffirms concepts expressed in its constitution: that this church should "work with civil authorities" while "maintaining institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction." [Page 52]

Article 35 "Work with civil authorities" is a consequence of faithful recognition that God is at work in civic life and of the people's sovereignty as expressed in the U.S. Constitution. It means that the church and church-related organizations should work with governmental and other civic agents to address the needs of society and creation, which the U.S. Constitution describes as "promoting the general welfare." [Page 53]

Article 36 "Maintaining institutional separation of church and state" means that the distinctive integrities of both government and religious institutions should be preserved. This institutional separation has both theological reasons and legal ones, e.g. the Johnson Amendment. Yet these do not create an absolute "separation." Rather the "relation of functional interaction" means that religious bodies have a responsibility for critical interaction with government that may affirm or challenge government policies and practices. [Page 53]

Article 37 This view of critical interaction with government commends specific criteria for assessing programs and services to maintain a healthy relationship between religious bodies and political authorities in order to serve society's well-being. [Page 55]

Article 38 The ELCA affirms healthy forms of patriotism. It opposes unhealthy, distorted forms of patriotism that divide a country and endanger it, including religious nationalism. At this time, Christian nationalism is the dominant distorted form. It seeks to fuse selected Christian ideas with a comprehensive cultural framework and crosses into idolatry. It also subverts the U.S. constitutional sovereignty of "we the people." [Page 56]

SECTION VI. SELECTED CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS IN CIVIC LIFE

Article 39 Section VI addresses contemporary issues in civic life that are guided by the insights of sections I through V. These articles do not revisit questions about civic life that the ELCA has already addressed in existing social statements and messages. [Page 58]

Article 40 Hyperpartisan polarization, now increasing in the United States, is exceedingly harmful to our social fabric and especially to vulnerable people. The ELCA calls all people to insist on and practice respectful engagement. [Page 58]

Article 41 All civic leaders, and especially elected officials, bear a responsibility to model constructive civic leadership for the good of all. As public leaders, they should foster constructive discourse, enabling reasoned moral discernment toward solutions. They succeed in their roles when they renounce personal attacks, misleading statements, false information, and inflammatory discourse. [Page 61]

Article 42 Constructive civic life today depends on clearly distinguishing between fact and falsehood, which ranges from exaggeration to outright lies. Media organizations have a responsibility to root out falsehoods they provide or host. Media users have a responsibility to assess for accuracy what they receive from media (including social media). [Page 62]

Article 43 Money has become an outsize influence in U.S. elections and political processes. The ELCA recognizes the legitimacy of political contributions as a demonstration of donor commitment. The ELCA also advocates for transparency and limits on the size of contributions and gifts. These actions are vital to ensuring that all voices are heard, which strengthens democracy. New legislation is needed for these purposes. [Page 63]

Article 44 Governmental policies can harm or promote the well-being of society and creation. Public servants, citizens, and residents have a duty to ensure that government remains true to its purpose of fostering civic well-being. This statement identifies

principles for and questions to be asked of laws, regulations, and policies toward that end. [Page 65]

Article 45 The U.S. government's relationships with the nation's unincorporated territories and with the District of Columbia are complex and problematic. These problems stem, significantly, from a legacy of colonialism and issues of economic exploitation, lack of self-determination, and racism. The principle of mutual self-determination requires listening as a first step toward justice and healing. [Page 66]

Article 46 The ELCA laments the past and continuing mistreatment of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian people, which often has included explicitly Christian justification. This social statement calls for increased advocacy toward tribal sovereignty, self-determination, just policy for treaty rights, and the exercise of religious liberty. [Page 67]

Article 47 Comprehensive civics education is critical to healthy civic life. The ELCA calls for a renewed emphasis on civic education that includes a full rendering of the United States' successes and failures, abuses and aspirations. [Page 69]

Article 48 The ELCA urges vigorous civic engagement for the public good as a responsibility of all U.S. residents and as one of our Christian callings. [Page 70]

CONCLUSION

Article 49 May God's Word and Sacraments empower all people in this church to seek the well-being of the neighbor through active and faithful participation in civic life. [Page 71]

ENDNOTES [Page 72]

GLOSSARY [Page 80]

IMPLEMENTING RESOLUTIONS [Page 89]

A social statement on ...

Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All

Terms underlined in the text are defined in the glossary.

INTRODUCTION

Article 1 We are to pray daily as Jesus taught, saying, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread" (Matthew 6:10-11). What does this mean? The Lutheran catechisms teach that daily bread means "everything included in the necessities and nourishment for our lives such as food, drink, ... upright and faithful rulers, good government ... good friends, faithful neighbors and the like."[1]

> "Daily bread means everything included in the necessities and nourishment for our lives such as food, drink, ... upright and faithful rulers, good government.

These words also teach us that the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—creates and seeks the well-being of creation, including human society. Christians believe that this God calls people of faith to take responsibility for the good of all through civic participation. "He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8).

This social statement sets forth the ELCA's teaching about how disciples and this church may faithfully speak and act in civic life. While existing ELCA social statements and messages address specialized elements of social life,[2] this statement addresses the broad responsibility for seeking the good of all through civic participation. It sketches a vision of a just and robust civic life dedicated to the well-being of all while giving extended attention to the relationship of faith and political authority.

The statement's six sections draw from the Scriptures, from the wellspring of Lutheran theological themes, and from

contemporary social science. Sections I and II clarify theological themes and the calling to civic participation. Sections III and IV consider the meaning and significance of the founding documents of the United States from a perspective of faith. Section V sketches the elements in a constructive relationship between religious organizations and political authority, whereas Section VI speaks to selected contemporary topics.

I. FOUNDATIONAL TEACHING: GOD ACTS FOR THE WELL-BEING OF ALL THROUGH CIVIC LIFE

Article 2 The Scriptures tell us that "the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it" (Psalm 24:1) and reveal God's tender care for all creation (Psalm 145:15). In the Scriptures, the Hebrew word *shalom*[3] epitomizes the rich fullness of that loving aim of the Creator for all creation. *Shalom* describes God's intention in creation for an abundance of peace, well-being, goodness, truth, beauty, justice, freedom, joy, wholesomeness, and love, all woven together. This social statement is undergirded by that biblical term, but in the context of civic life it employs other terms such as "the well-being of all" or "the common good" because they are earthly measures toward God's intention.

We teach that God is all-powerful in that only God is the source of *all* power.

The ELCA witnesses to the Holy Trinity in the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose power is expressed in offering abundant life now and eternally. We teach that God is all-powerful in that only God is the source of *all* power. God's power alone brings forth and sustains the universe, redeems the sinner, and promises creation's ultimate fulfillment.

In God's activity toward the well-being of all, we encounter a use of power that is unlike many human practices of power (Matthew 20:25-26). God is sovereign, but God's sovereignty *gives* power to creatures rather than deprives them of it. In contrast to the usual political "zero-sum" understanding of power, God gives freely, sharing abundantly without loss. God's sovereign power produces human power; it does not diminish it. However, humans are given their power in order to serve God, creation, and their fellow humans (Articles 4, 22 and 23).

God's power is often hidden from human view and experienced in varied and surprising ways that can be beautiful or painful. Sometimes God's power is experienced as disruption and judgment. It can be experienced as the tearing down of human structures and of misplaced values (Jeremiah 6:14).

This is described by Martin Luther's teaching about the struggles of faith and the "theology of the cross." Whereas human beings expect domination, God's power appears in weakness (1 Corinthians 1:25). When we are overly confident, God unsettles our presumptions. In the light of faith, we are empowered to see the future of God's fulfillment, and we see that God's purpose and power always move toward the divine promise of the well-being of all people.

At the end of the Lord's Prayer, we affirm that "the power, the honor and the glory are yours." Not ours! When Christians forget that all power belongs to God and God's purpose, they risk creating idols. These include wealth, country, race, party, gender, class, and ideology. God's power in Jesus Christ redirects forgiven ones from such idolatry and reshapes the way we use the power entrusted to us.

Human civic activity and political power ... can be evaluated ethically by God's intention that humans use, increase, and share such power so that human structures and systems serve the well-being of all.

This church bears witness to God's purpose and power in the world. We teach that human civic activity and political power are sustained by divine power and can be evaluated ethically by God's intention that humans use, increase, and share such power so that human structures and systems serve the well-being of all with good order and justice.[4]

Article 3 The Scriptures teach that God creates human beings in God's image, in the *imago dei* (Genesis 1:27). This image is God's gift, which means that every human being has inherent dignity and agency and a vocation to share God's work toward the well-being of creation.[5] From the beginning, the Scriptures depict the human vocation as a shared activity in tending gardens, tilling soil,

and building communities. These activities require cooperation, conversation, and social coordination. This church celebrates that God creates human beings as relational beings who live in social and political communities.

Even the narrative of the fall (Genesis 3-4) shows the value of social and political life. Sin is depicted as moving from trust, honesty, and care into fear and disobedience, as a broken relationship with God and one another.

God acts through the basic structures of government, church, family, and economy.

The Christian faith sees God's power and purpose specifically revealed in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. There is no neighbor, no enemy, no politician for whom Christ did not die. The Christian practice of baptism affirms this ongoing work of Christ and its connection to the human vocation. This church teaches that "the gifts of the Spirit form and transform the people of God for discipleship in daily life."[6] The baptismal liturgy includes commitments to "serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth."[7]

Correctly understood as a calling to serve the well-being of all, human vocation does not invite arrogance or misplaced pride, nor does it represent one's domination of others. This vocation is lived out in the basic structures of social life as places of responsibility. Lutheran theology has referred to these places of responsibility by various terms such as "estates," "orderings," and "mandates." The point is that God acts through the basic structures of government, church, family, and economy, and that humans have varied responsibilities in each.

All people depend upon these social structures of communal life because they provide scaffolds or sites for growth and responsibility. Because these are dynamic, the precise form, arrangement, and values vary across time and place, and they are open to ongoing revision and change.

Within these places of responsibility, the Lutheran tradition speaks of all humans as serving in civic life as "channels of God's work."[8] God intends that humans should use their knowledge, wisdom,

and power to foster the common good. When that is done by institutions through policies and regulations, or by individuals in acts of caring, humans are fulfilling their vocation to serve God's activity in the world.

Article 4 God's intention for joyous well-being is too often not enacted or experienced in the world. Many religious traditions discuss this human brokenness and disorder. The Lutheran tradition speaks of sin in various ways but fundamentally understands sin to be the condition of human existence in which we fail to love and trust God above all else. Martin Luther understood sin to be an excessive focus on the self at the expense of the neighbor.[9] Human sin distorts a right relationship with God and others, damaging the well-being that God intends for all creation.

The pervasiveness and complexity of sin that damages human well-being must be recognized. Sin is present in our constant unwillingness to accept our human vocation to serve as creatures created by God. Sin can also take the form of an inordinate self-hatred or the inability to appreciate one's own giftedness and agency.[10] This happens when, for example, a person diminishes their own contributions to human life or denies that they possess the ability, dignity, and value of any human being created in God's image.

Sin is expressed both personally and collectively, which means that social and political institutions are bound in sin just as individuals are. There are a great many examples of this in civic life.

It is sin when the power in social structures, such as government, is distorted so that it is not used for the common good of neighbors and creation (Matthew 22:36-40). For instance, the individual domination of one person by another became multiplied in the social structure of slavery, which was supported by laws, policies, religious beliefs, and cultural practices in the United States. In our contemporary context, this church recognizes that white supremacy, in both its historical and present-day forms, is a structural sin that has shaped civic life, governmental institutions, and religious structures. Such systemic sins are particularly horrendous because the things done and left undone dramatically deepen the oppression of other people.

It is sin when civic or political power is used at the expense of others. One group's self-interest cannot justify denying the humanity or dignity of others. The need for order does not justify subjugation, denial of power, marginalization, or tyranny. The need for government cannot justify the idolatrous worship of a nation.

It is sin when civic or political power is used at the expense of others.

It also is sin when human beings completely avoid civic life and thereby do not work to serve neighbor justice through it.

At the same time, it is sin when we support leaders who put their own power and self-interest above the needs of their constituents. It is sin when we uncritically support a member of a political party because of party affiliation or for our own personal gain. It is sin when we demonize others' motives while glorifying and sanctifying our own.

Article 5 Lutherans teach that people of faith come to know both sin and God's grace as God comes to us. In Christ, God reveals and gives God's divine self to restore or foster right relationships with God, with neighbors, and with our very selves. The Scriptures teach about two different strategies God uses to achieve this, and Lutherans call these "Law" and "Gospel."

This church understands the Law (God's directives) and the Gospel (God's promises in Christ) together as expressing the living Word of God for human life and well-being. The Law addresses our relationships and actions to others in this mortal life and to God, whom we are to worship. The Gospel, by contrast, proclaims God's relationship and merciful action to us from now into eternity.

God uses the Law to sustain life and the good of all through different functions or uses.[11] The civil use (first use) of the Law is to govern our behavior toward one another in human communities. In contrast, the theological use (second use) of the Law accuses and convicts human beings of sinfulness, even when a wrong is allowed by a government's law or not covered by human laws. God's directives (God's Law) are realistic about human beings. They reveal the corruption of many human motives, drive people to contrition, and prepare them for repentance.

The Gospel is the good news of God's love in Christ, given by grace and gift alone and received in and through faith alone. The Gospel arrives as a blessed surprise, an unexpected gift that frees us from efforts to earn God's love or forgiveness. The Gospel has the liberating power to convert, transform, and re-create us in heart, mind, and spirit. Thus Lutherans assert that the life of a Christian is described paradoxically as being simultaneously saint and sinner.

Through God's "left-hand reign," God's power acts through the Law to curb, restrain, and lead people toward goodness and justice.

The Lutheran tradition commonly describes God's use of these two strategies, Law and Gospel, with the analogy of God's two-handed reign.[12] Through God's "left-hand reign," God's power acts through the Law to curb, restrain, and lead people toward goodness and justice. Through God's "right-hand reign," God's power acts through the Gospel to draw, transform, and re-create people in heart, mind, and soul. Both "hands" serve God's intent to bring a rightly ordered life of peace and the common good.

Though distinct in function and purpose, the Law and the Gospel are not independent, and both flow from God's power and for God's purposes. God's left-hand reign should not be identified solely with political authority or the state. God's directives encompass culture, family, economics, and all aspects of daily life.

There is a substantive discussion of the appropriate interaction of these two strategies in the ELCA social message "Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in Democracy" (ELCA.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-messages/government, p. 4). The dangers of misuse are also described there. Misuse includes believing that God's two strategies are unrelated, that civic life and government are not God's concern, or that a particular nation, political strategy, or civil institution is identified with God's will or God's kingdom.[13]

Article 6 While God's people are called to do justice and love kindness (Micah 6:8), it is not always clear what that means in any particular situation. God's people approach the present world with watchfulness—that is, with abounding trust in God's reign and

future and, at the same time, with measured realism and humility about human efforts, always fallible, to create a just society.

Through faith, God's church already takes part in the coming reign of God, announced by and embodied in Jesus. As the social statement *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* explains, "[The church] still awaits the resurrection of the dead and the fulfillment of the whole creation in God's promised future. In this time of 'now … not yet,' the Church lives in two ages—the present age and the age to come." In this sense, "the Church is 'in' the world but not 'from' the world."[14]

Christians are simultaneously involved in God's work in the present and in God's eternal work. It is unavoidable that Christians live in the here and now, with all its questions, ambiguities, and tensions. Some of those ways should be affirmed as better expressions of good than others and as more productive means toward creating well-being.

Christians are simultaneously people of hope and courage, realism and restlessness.

Neither the Law nor the Gospel allows the church to accommodate easily the ways civic life often unfolds. The presence and promise of God's reign make the church inevitably restless and discontented with society's continued brokenness and violence. We are called to work for a better world. This means we should support and commend civic and political efforts that bring greater measures of order, justice, and harmony. However, even those best efforts inevitably require revision and, within God's activity, improvement. Christians are simultaneously people of hope and courage, realism and restlessness.

Article 7 Since the Reformation, many of the historically dominant expressions of Lutheran theology and church structures have, despite some important exceptions, failed to make a priority of seeking the civic common good. The confessions commend civic good as "the righteousness of reason." They teach that "God requires the righteousness of reason … [and willingly should give it] the praises it deserves for our corrupt nature has no greater good than this."[15] They note that God even honors it with temporal rewards.

A desire to avoid "works righteousness" too often excused Lutherans for passivity and the failure to act in the public arena. We have not always acted to hold governments or each other accountable. An understandable desire for security and order has led many to remain complacent or even to support oppressive regimes and systems. At other times, some Lutherans have exhibited triumphalism or intolerance in taking political action.

This church acknowledges these past failures and is committed to renewed actions that hold civic leaders and those in positions of political authority accountable. Under normal circumstances, acting for accountability means making use of the tools of the U.S. democratic process. The concept of the consent of the governed implies an ongoing relationship between those in positions of authority and their constituents. Those in authority owe an account of how they are using that authority and the resources that have been entrusted to them.

On occasion, holding those in authority to account may call for engaging in nonviolent public protests. In some instances, acts of nonviolent civil disobedience may be justifiable.[16] Even when use of these tools is necessary, such actions must always be guided by an ethic of love and a spirit of upbuilding the common good.

Article 8 God provides multiple tools for striving toward social well-being. Because the Scriptures are the norm for faith and life, all Christian efforts are judged according to its central proclamation. The Lutheran theological tradition also looks to the insights from writings in the Book of Concord as faithful, if historically conditioned, interpretations of the Scriptures.[17]

Our church teaches that God also provides human reason as a gift to be used for seeking justice and social harmony. Lutherans have sometimes used the language of "natural law" to describe the shared values and ends that are given by God to direct all human beings, individually and collectively.

Our church teaches that God also provides human reason as a gift to be used for seeking justice and social harmony.

At its most basic, natural law refers to an inherent principle that God is to be worshiped, the good is to be done, and the bad is to be avoided. The Golden Rule expresses this succinctly as "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you…" (Matthew 7:12a) This explains the sentiment in the Large Catechism that the Ten Commandments as natural law are "written in the hearts of all [people]."[18]

However, the character of natural law has been misunderstood and has too often been weaponized against people deemed different, especially already marginalized and oppressed groups. This has been done by picking particular laws from the Scriptures and imposing them on others. This view misuses the function of Law in the Scriptures. Natural law is not a set of specific rules or unchanging social mores. The rightful attention to shared human principles can be only one part of the ongoing work of communal deliberation and conversation.

The Lutheran tradition appreciates human capacities as God's gifts. These include, for example, reason, emotion, experience, imagination, and scientific fields of study. The Lutheran approach to thinking about civic life, then, employs principles of ethics and political concepts such as mutual self-determination and the common good. The Lutheran tradition recognizes that all human efforts are dimmed and distorted by sin. Nevertheless, these tools provide a common basis for Christians to work with others of goodwill toward the well-being of society.

The social teachings of this church are normed by the Scriptures and seek to employ the many gifts of human capacities to address contemporary social life. While official teachings govern and guide this church's positions on social questions, Lutherans recognize the possibility for continued rethinking and reconsideration through discernment as a community together.[19]

To "walk humbly" with God (Micah 6:8) must include seeking out the sound ideas, values, and contributions of all people, regardless of their religious tradition or worldview.

Article 9 As Lutherans participate in civic life in order to seek the well-being of all, we recognize that this work is neither unique

to nor possessed by Christians alone. To "walk humbly" with God (Micah 6:8) must include seeking out the sound ideas, values, and contributions of all people, regardless of their religious tradition or worldview. The good of all must be discerned in common.[20]

Christians, as individuals or as the body of Christ in the world, have no guaranteed higher or better reasoning than people of other religions or worldviews. This means that Lutherans reject the claim, explicit or assumed by some, that Christians have revealed knowledge or unique insight into civic and political matters.

This does not mean that Christians have no contributions to make or that they should avoid drawing from their tradition, teaching, or faith language in speaking of public matters. God's grace, received in faith, empowers people to hear and act in cooperation with their neighbors for the common good. A sense of God's calling sharpens commitment to human dignity because we understand that all are created in God's image. It awakens a sense of God's biblical call for justice and peace.

The good news of Jesus changes hearts for compassion and care. Liberated from sin and the burden of seeking eternal salvation through our own efforts, we can join God's efforts to create and re-create the institutions and communities of human social life. Sin remains, but Lutherans call upon the Scriptures, find aid in their theological heritage, and use human capacities and practices of discernment to seek the means to participate wisely and critically in the civic life God intends. Our baptismal vocation to serve God and neighbor is lived out with others in society as channels of God's work in civic places of responsibility.

II. GOD CALLS ALL PEOPLE TO ROBUST CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Article 10 The Lord's prayer "Your will be done on earth as in heaven" refers to the entire scope of God's will for creation. Yet it certainly includes that aspect of life in society that describes activities and institutions related to public life, from one's neighborhood to national and international affairs. Participation in civic life comes in many shapes and sizes. A few examples include coaching soccer at a community center, attending parent-teacher association meetings, participating in peaceful

demonstrations, volunteering one's business acumen for a community development initiative, engaging in political activity, and participating in international "sister city" programs.

The social fabric of a society depends upon such prudent, vigorous, and broad participation in civic life. Such participation is a medium through which people deepen relationships, create opportunities, and hold one another accountable for public life. This makes the decline of civic participation in the United States at this time, in community organizations for example, especially troubling.[21]

Our church affirms the Lutheran teaching that anyone who seeks the community's well-being through civic participation is, knowingly or not, using the capacities God provides. There is no single or required way to live this out. The Christian faith celebrates the multitude of ways that God calls people into lives of service and community for the sake of the common good.

Our church affirms the Lutheran teaching that anyone who seeks the community's well-being through civic participation is, knowingly or not, using the capacities God provides.

This statement assumes and draws upon elements of social teaching that relate to civic life found in previous ELCA statements and messages.[22] The particular calling to be an active and informed citizen in relation to political life is most fully articulated in the social message "Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in a Democracy."[23] It affirms, for example, the need to pray for civic and political leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2), the responsibility to vote, the importance of being active in the political sphere, and the need for collective action toward fair and compassionate government.

Article 11 Lutherans historically have encouraged individuals to use their individual gifts for civic and political service faithfully at the local, state, national, or international level. Examples include work in civil service, public safety, health care, or education. Other examples include military personnel, judges, legislators, and appointed officials. These and many others are essential in making possible the effective functioning of civic services. Those

called to such public service are urged to work toward justice and the common good, and never for dominating power or gain for themselves, or for particular groups with which they identify to the exclusion of others.

Civil service is often lifted up on the national stage, but this church encourages all people to explore service at state, county, and municipal levels, including volunteer service on boards, agencies, and committees. It is critical to encourage and guide youth and young adults in this church to consider taking up such places of responsibility.

Christians are encouraged to take an initial stance of respect for neighbors who work in civil service at all levels—local, state, and national—and under the three branches of government. Unfortunately, in this society, there is a common caricature of government workers as lazy, incompetent, or troublesome bureaucrats. This image is grossly misleading. It misrepresents the complexities of civic service, including in government. From a Christian perspective, such a caricature violates the Eighth Commandment, that is, bearing false witness against another.

Civic employees and volunteers, however, are not above reproach, and they may and do fail in their responsibilities. Nevertheless, the default stance toward them should be dignity and respect, not slander or suspicion. Not honoring local trash collectors, postal workers, or county officials for their good work is one way in which we fail to see their labor and service as God does.

Civic servants should do their jobs with integrity and fairness and in ways that serve the common good.

At the same time, members of the public are expected to hold these civic servants and government officials accountable. Civic servants should do their jobs with integrity and fairness and in ways that serve the common good. Government institutions, programs, and policies must be held to high standards as a sign of their importance and impact. Courts must apply the law in accordance with precedent and with fairness, equality, and impartiality to preserve public trust. We should judge individual cases of failure carefully, avoiding generalizations that are unfair

and that fail to help identify areas where improvement is genuinely needed.

The dynamic movement of the liturgy allows Christians to rest in God's mercy and be restored in hope but, at every turn, prepares them to be sent forth into the world to work for the community's good, both locally and beyond.

Article 12 Congregations, synod-authorized ministries, campus ministries, and other recognized worshiping assemblies are centers to support civic participation precisely because they are to be grounded in the living Word of God's Law and Gospel. Rooted in Word and Sacrament, almost everything in worship, from the gathering to the sending, prepares us to join God's activity in civic life. The dynamic movement of the liturgy allows Christians to rest in God's mercy and be restored in hope but, at every turn, prepares them to be sent forth into the world to work for the community's good, both locally and beyond.

There are many examples. Besides preaching, the church's prayers lift up social concerns and ask guidance for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1). The peace of Christ is a sign of our unity in God and a reminder that we are sent to share this experience of peace with the world. The offering is collected to support the assembly and to share with other people in need, locally and around the globe.

There are many types of worshiping communities. They may be based locally or draw from broad regions. In all cases, as expressed in the ELCA constitution and social teaching, this church expects that each worshiping community will be engaged in forms of active civic participation as one element of life in Christ's church. This is one vital way in which God's people serve neighbors in human society.

Article 13 Religious communities and organizations must discern when and how to constructively engage in civic life. Religions can create divisions in civic life or contribute to mending the social fabric and reconciling divided peoples. Being a source of healing requires faithful discernment of contexts and of what specific roles and actions are called for. This church urges people of all religions and worldviews to seek constructive roles to counter growing hyperpartisan polarization, distrust, and ill will.

The Scriptures, echoed by the ELCA constitution and our church's social teaching, lift up a moral vision for civic life that reflects both the depth of sin in human fallenness and the heights of hope in God's redemption. This church's moral vision does not mean we expect to create God's kingdom on earth—only God can do that. However, this moral vision does give witness to the biblical idea of God's intention for *shalom* and thereby encourages us to stand for both justice and reconciliation in this time of divisiveness and acrimony.

This moral vision is held in tension with the realism of human nature's fallenness but reminds us that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. The moral vision also reminds us that, contrary to common assumptions and painful actions in civic life, all stand equally before God. There is no neighbor or stranger, no political ally or opponent for whom Christ did not die. As a community of inclusion, as a people of every race and tongue (Acts 2, Revelation 7:9), we are drawn by our civic engagement into wider inclusion. We are drawn into action so that all people may experience dignity and mutual self-determination.

There is no neighbor or stranger, no political ally or opponent for whom Christ did not die.

The ELCA, as a member of Christ's church, has long committed itself to reconciliation and healing in communities and civic life.[24] This church, at every level, is called to respond with compassion and imagination, drawing from experience and innovating new ways to address civic challenges.

For example, social ministries in the community are a means of civic participation and are widely affirmed by this church. Care facilities, food pantries, housing programs, and refugee resettlement efforts are but a few examples of responses found in individual congregations or in ministries affiliated with Lutheran Services in America. This church has a responsibility, working with all people of goodwill, to mediate conflict and to advocate just and peaceful resolutions while supporting institutions and policies that seek the well-being and power of all.

Article 14 Discerning the best course of action requires considering many different facets of any situation. Because we recognize that every person is one for whom Christ died, this church has a special responsibility to seek to provide safe spaces for challenging conversations. A safe space does not mean a space where all agree. The responsibility for safe space means providing space where all are honored and valued regardless of what they believe. This is true even as worshiping communities disagree or struggle together to discern the common good.

This church has a special responsibility to seek to provide safe spaces for challenging conversations. A safe space does not mean a space where all agree.

In the contemporary polarized social environment, the practice of communal moral discernment is an evangelical witness to God's intention that humans respect others and to the good use of reason. Fulfilling a wide spectrum of callings and coming from a diversity of experiences, Christians will often disagree passionately on social questions. Yet because they share common convictions of faith, they are free, indeed obligated, to deliberate together on the challenges they face in the world. This is especially true when consensus is difficult or not reached. United in baptism with Christ and all believers, Christians are empowered to welcome and celebrate their diversity and to remain in conversation.

Since the 1991 adoption of the social statement *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective*, the idea of our church as a safe space for discernment has been formally part of the ELCA's identity as a community of moral deliberation. It is an identity that our church continues to grow into. As a church, we recognize our many failures to live out this identity. At the same time, we give thanks that we may renew and build upon this heritage.

Article 15 The ELCA serves God and neighbor in civic life through its members and congregations but also through its synods and the churchwide organization. These long-standing commitments are named in the ELCA constitution and were first addressed in social teaching in *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (1991). Some examples from those documents illustrate our church's ongoing civic contributions in social witness:[25]

- Supporting church-related economic, educational, and social ministry organizations in their service to human need.
- Speaking on timely, urgent issues on which the voice of this church should be heard and which have clear and specific grounding in ELCA social teaching.
- Working with and on behalf of the poor and those who suffer, and using moral persuasion to advocate that political and economic decision-making bodies develop policies that advance justice, peace, and care of creation.
- Providing for federal chaplains in military and federal prisons.
- Supporting the Lutheran Office for World Community at the United Nations.

Article 16 This church has long affirmed that one means of discipleship involves civic participation as a prophetic presence. With Mary, the mother of Jesus, the church sings of God's action to bring down the proud and lift up the lowly (Luke 1:51-53). The church hopes to follow Jesus, who boldly declared a calling to proclaim good news to the poor, release for the incarcerated, healing for the sick, and freedom for the oppressed (Luke 4:18, Isaiah 42:7). The prophetic role envisions and points us toward a better future of well-being.

The prophetic role toward justice-seeking, advocacy, and social change in all aspects of civic life require care, patience, and wise distinctions. Civic participation as prophetic presence may be controversial, and worshiping communities need to take time and care to discern and identify common parameters for such action whether in service, in advocacy, or toward social change.

This prophetic role includes "the obligation to name and denounce the idols before which people bow, to identify the power of sin present in social structures, and to advocate in hope with poor and powerless people."[26] As one aspect of the church's ministry, this obligation belongs to all members through our baptismal vocation, irrespective of offices or roles within the church.

Such ministry may include exhorting civic leaders and institutions when they abuse those they are to serve or when they overreach

their authority. This church says, with Martin Luther, that "to rebuke" those in authority "through God's Word spoken publicly, boldly and honestly" is "not seditious" but "a praiseworthy, noble, and … particularly great service to God."[27]

Theologically it is important to recognize that the exertion of social power when addressing or challenging civic life is part of this church's work under the Law.

Theologically it is important to recognize that the exertion of social power when addressing or challenging civic life is part of this church's work under the Law, the left-hand reign of God (Articles 5 and 20). Though the church's message of the Gospel is sure, we cannot know what the outcomes of exerting social power in public actions will be. We must consistently evaluate whether neighbor justice, especially for the marginalized, is being served by the prophetic presence of this church.

Article 17 Faith-based advocacy is one way to work toward a civic life that better reflects God's vision for a more just and reconciled world. Advocacy comes in many forms, from institution-based efforts to more local practices sometimes called "faith-based organizing."[28] At whatever level, it often means pressing civic leaders or public-policy makers to respect the needs and dignity of all people and our common home, with special care for the vulnerable. Advocacy comes from the Latin *vocare* (to call), the root word for both "voice" and "vocation."

Advocacy at whatever level can be a stewardship of the ELCA's voice and is grounded in the ELCA's constitution, which directs the ELCA to:[29]

- Empower members to engage with systems and processes to promote the well-being of the human community and creation in the public square, local and federal government, and the international community.
- Advance justice in response to human suffering, marginalization, and exclusion.
- Promote equality, justice, and respect for the value of every person to reduce the systemic injustices impacting communities and societies.

- Exercise corporate social responsibility through environmental, social, and justice principles to create a just and sustainable society.

The ELCA's corporate witness is governed by ELCA social teaching,[30] and advocacy occurs in both domestic and global accompaniment with people and communities. Likewise, this corporate witness is enriched and strengthened through ecumenical and interreligious collaboration.[31] The united witness of the faith community builds and depends upon relationships of trust and communal discernment.

Faith-based organizing at the local level is born from relationships of service and solidarity. It is an expression of both individual discipleship and our life in community together. It grows most forcefully out of ministries among people and communities that have been denied their human dignity or are seeking greater justice. It supports and amplifies these voices. Though forms of advocacy sometimes are described as providing "a voice for the voiceless," we must be careful to identify and support opportunities for people to speak for themselves.[32]

Faith-based organizing at the local level is born from relationships of service and solidarity.

Organizing people of varying interests to advocate for the common good may require different practices in different contexts. Building relationships and sharing vision can involve letters, calls, and meetings with elected leaders and their staff. It can involve invitations for them to visit communities and ministries. It involves building public awareness in ways that include editorials, rallies, and protests; earned and paid media; public testimony; and community organizing.

Using the trust of one-to-one relationships, faith-based organizers seek to spur action by building coalitions mostly in local contexts. Faith-based community organizing roots itself in shared values and commitments, in congregations and in other institutions, often across denominations and religious boundaries. Faith-informed advocacy can play a transformative role in a polarized political world by bringing people together to work toward the common good in the public square.

Article 18 Ethical discernment and action to love and serve the neighbor through civic life have multiple facets. One vital facet is participation in government and politics, which are essential dimensions of civic life. Civic life and service are not equal to government and political activity, but when rightly understood and practiced, political activity is necessary and good. It is important, then, to distinguish between ethics and politics, and this church teaches that civic or political concerns should be guided by ethical teaching.

Ethics involves careful discernment about what is right, good, or fitting. It asks what we ought to do or not do, what we should value or not value, and who we should be or not be within community. In other words, ethics seeks to reflect on what we will seek to be and do to form a community of well-being. ELCA social statements are ethical documents that provide this church's teaching for addressing such topics, which include civic and political life.

The word "politics" (*polis* is Greek for "the people") often is used today to express disgust with dishonest practices, grabs for exclusive control, lies, and deceptions. It is used to describe authority being used in a sinful way. Such practices are sinful and are real dangers that this society must confront. However, the Lutheran tradition teaches that God creates humans as political beings and is the creator and ultimate source of the political sphere.

"Politics," as used in this statement ... describes negotiating how the benefits, burdens, rights, and responsibilities of living in a society are shared.

"Politics," then, as used in this statement, describes a necessary and positive aspect of human life. It describes negotiating how the benefits, burdens, rights, and responsibilities of living in a society are shared. Politics, in this sense, happens whenever two or more people are gathered to live in community together. This includes life in the family and the church! Politics describes the activity in which each person's interests and the well-being of the community are navigated and negotiated. Politics is a good and, in fact, essential dimension of human well-being.

Politics is always complicated and messy because it involves diplomacy, compromise, ambiguity, persuasion, and decision. The reality is that living in community requires negotiations, sometimes scrappy ones, about the ongoing (re)distribution of resources, rights, responsibilities, opportunity, and access for all members of society as needed to form a healthy community. It includes legislation, enforcement, judicial evaluation, community planning and organization, advocacy, and distribution of goods and services (such as postal delivery, overseas aid, etc.).

Politics and ethics are necessarily related. Ethics discerns; politics implements. For example, ethics presents the principle of self-determination as a primary value of a healthy political community. Government and political activity can be evaluated by how well they foster mutual self-determination for each community in a society and whether power is available to and produced for all members of that society, especially those from vulnerable or minority populations (Articles 22 and 23).

Article 19 The two millennia that separate us from Jesus' social context make it difficult to appreciate the political dimensions of Jesus' ministry. Jesus was not political in the sense of affiliating with a particular political party or leadership circle. He did not negotiate or legislate civic laws or regulations. Still, Jesus' teaching, such as his instructions to care for the poor and marginalized (Luke 4:18-19, Matthew 5:3-10), challenged socioeconomic norms and social systems and had political implications. His critique of political leaders (Luke 13:32) brought him into tension with the authorities of his day.

Further, when the early Christians claimed that "Jesus is Lord" (Romans 10:9), they were making a claim with a political implication: Caesar is *not* Lord. Some Scripture passages, then, may be both theological *and* political statements (Acts 10:36, Philippians 2:11). They make a political claim in the sense that all government is accountable to God and that Christians should not give primary loyalty to any government.

If Jesus is Ruler (Lord), then no nation, constitution, government, or official can have our primary loyalty. God's commandments and the imperative to serve the neighbor have singular priority for

Christians. God's rulership is not to be associated with a particular person or worldly structure such as a government, nation, or political movement. As with Jesus, the call to love the neighbor and do justice pushes us into engagement with society rather than out of it.

Only with appropriate attention to the political can we exercise neighbor love and serve neighbor justice to hold government accountable, oppose social oppression, seek various kinds of liberation, and work toward the common good. Political engagement in this sense is a means of channeling God's love through civic participation.

This church seeks careful discernment and clear criteria for participating in God's work in the political sphere, criteria that transcend partisanship.

In this sense, then, addressing issues in the political arena is an element of Christian calling. This is true both for the individual and for our church in its corporate witness. But whereas individual Christians will engage politically, often *through* political parties, the institutional church itself is not to be a partisan community. When the church addresses social issues, some people may interpret, criticize, or even rebuke it as being partisan. However, this church seeks careful discernment and clear criteria for participating in God's work in the political sphere, criteria that transcend partisanship (see "Government and Civic Engagement," Articles 21-23, 25, and 37).[33]

Article 20 All the baptized must wrestle with the relationship between their faith, the church, and civic life as they live out their responsibilities to "care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace."[34] This church's involvement in civic life is primarily borne out in the lives of its members as they embody discipleship in their communities and relationships. Consistent with the testimony of the Scriptures and the Lutheran tradition, the ELCA is clear in its teaching that all Christians share in the calling to civic and political participation. This church strongly affirms this shared calling of all the baptized.

However, rostered ministers (such as bishops, pastors, deacons) face particular opportunities and challenges in light of their

offices and their public roles. Suggesting guideposts for the responsible relationship between the rostered minister's office and public role in society is easier on paper than providing precise "how-to" through the treacherous terrain created by hyperpolarized political battles. Nevertheless this church's theological commitments offer principles to guide rostered ministers as they serve both the church and society.

This church's theological commitments offer principles to guide rostered ministers as they serve both the church and society.

Rostered ministers are entrusted with proclamation of Christ's gracious and redemptive work, with the public ministry of the Word. In this, they are called to proclaim both Law and Gospel. They provide biblical, theological, and spiritual care and moral guidance through preaching, prayer, teaching, advocacy, accompaniment, and service. This living Word, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can transform lives as Christ begins to take shape in people of faith.

In terms of God's Law, Lutheran theology teaches (Article 5) that its theological use (second use) convicts us of our sins, and that includes naming participation in social and structural evils. Preaching and teaching the civil use (first use) focuses on questions about whether a society—individually and corporately—is failing to achieve the well-being of all. In terms of Gospel, God's love frees us from the fear of death and condemnation so that we might serve the neighbor, including through civic participation.

In rostered ministry, deacons, pastors, and bishops are expected to connect the Christian faith with contemporary issues, and theology with life. The ELCA's model constitution for congregations states that they are "to speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people."[35]

They, therefore, have the responsibility to represent a church community's life experiences and perspectives, woven together with their leadership experiences and training. This makes their work political, as was true of Jesus (Article 19). It does not license

partisanship, for example, in telling members which candidates or political parties to vote for or belong to (Article 36).

Even as the opportunities and responsibilities of rostered ministry are a blessing, the office of preaching presents genuine earthly challenges because of its dual character. Therefore, ministers in the church wrestle with several dangers that are made all the more complicated because of increasing political polarization (Article 40).

On the one hand, in their proper work, ministers can be tempted to forget that theirs is an office of the Word, instituted by God for the specific purpose of cultivating faith.[36] This work occurs through the proclamation of the forgiveness of sin and the promise of eternal life in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They, likewise, can be tempted to neglect their role to admonish and exhort toward Christ's way of life. If this proper role is forgotten or neglected, ministers fail to discharge the ministry that is unique to the church.

On the other hand, in their significant work (alien work) of ministry to address public issues, there are dangers of both pride and despair. On the one side, ministers can be tempted by presumption, a certainty that would claim too much knowledge, religious righteousness, or authority in speaking to civic and political issues.[37] On the other side is the temptation toward resignation or quietism, such that complacency replaces courage and commitment.

Rostered ministers are charged to speak on public issues faithfully, bound by Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and governed by ELCA official social teaching.

Despite these challenges, this church holds that rostered ministers are charged to speak on public issues faithfully, bound by Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and governed by ELCA official social teaching. They are representatives of this church and of their church communities. This charge is especially critical when the political climate has made it increasingly difficult for the church to live out its "prophetic presence." That is, this church holds that

it has an "obligation to name and denounce the idols before which people bow, to identify the power of sin present in social structures, and to advocate in hope with poor and powerless people."[38]

Rostered ministers should take seriously the broader context and community setting in offering guidance and discernment as they work together with their church communities to determine how to participate in civic life. Rostered ministers need to have a deep understanding of their community and give priority to relationships of mutual understanding even while asking probing and challenging questions. They are accountable to the wider church and the church communities they serve in a way that prioritizes serving in love over being served.

At the same time, rostered ministers need the love and care of the communities they serve. Participants in our church communities have a responsibility to faithfully hear, respect, and support their rostered leaders as they appropriately discern how to address public issues. Such responsibility in the mutuality of Christian love calls for Spirit-led counsel, challenge, encouragement, and care of rostered ministers as they seek to fulfill their public role in both church and society. Participants must keep in mind that rostered leaders face particular risks if they belong to historically marginalized communities or serve in uncomfortable contexts. The community should be intentional in providing care for their safety and well-being.

The Christian Church's faith and baptismal calling remind both lay and rostered ministers of our fundamental unity in the life, resurrection, and eternal promises of Christ. Living out this unity in word and deed is a shared responsibility between rostered and lay people.

III. ASSESSING THE U.S. CONSTITUTIONAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Article 21 The Lutheran Confessions affirm political authority and political activity[39] in principle as one way the Triune God protects and coordinates the complex web of social and economic relationships for human well-being. Over time, Lutherans have come to understand, though, that we are called to live with a cautious watchfulness about all forms of government because

some provide better measures of well-being than others. Further, we have come to recognize more fully how sin permeates not simply individual action but every human system and structure.

The key question asked about government is how well it serves God's purposes of justice and good order, especially in caring for the most vulnerable.

In the Lutheran theological tradition, the key question asked about government is how well it serves God's purposes of justice and good order, especially in caring for the most vulnerable members of the community.

Such discernment about political authority reaches as far back as the Reformation, as evident in Luther's catechisms and many writings of the reformers.[40] The Large Catechism says, "It would therefore be fitting if the coat of arms of every upright prince were emblazoned with a loaf of bread instead of a lion or a wreathe of rue [a medicinal herb], or if a loaf of bread were stamped on coins." Rather than conquering more land or gaining more wealth, the role of government should be focused on ensuring that each person receives all the necessities for daily well-being.

Because government is an indispensable structure of society, Lutherans historically have granted respect and obedience to good civil authorities and institutions, in line with Romans 13. At the same time, the Lutheran tradition also maintains that there is a responsibility to assess and call individuals and institutions to account. The Lutheran heritage contains examples of leaders denouncing the misuse of those institutions and also cooperating with them toward the common good. How power is understood and used is key to this assessment.

Article 22 Human social life is an arena of multiple forms of power. This church teaches that an essential assessment of any use of power, whether in law, policy, or action, is whether it extends God's power for people and groups. This assessment is especially important with respect to those who have been denied power historically or marginalized by social systems.

As the Creator of all that is, God *is* sovereign. But God's sovereignty brings forth creatures who are not God, giving them power and sustenance. God's power creates creatures' power rather than depriving them of it (Article 2). Divine, self-giving power is always and everywhere plural. That is, divine power produces not one center of power but multiple transmissions of power.

To the extent that human power is directed solely or primarily toward the control or domination of others, it is a sinful distortion of God's power.

That view of power is central to the Lutheran notion of justification by grace alone (Article 5). God's declaration of justification is God's sovereign act, but that sovereign act is communicated to us through faith. On earth, the point and power of justification is to fulfill and heal sinners through faith, i.e. to give sinners power to become what they were created to be. God's sovereign act is the beginning "moment" of power but is not fulfilled power.[42] Similarly, the power of the Lord's Supper for Luther is the healing and strengthening of the recipient.

God's dominion satisfies the needs of every living creature (Psalm 145). Divine power is not the usual political model of power. The common political understanding equates power with the ability to control and dominate. It is nonplural; that is, it seeks more for itself and less for others. This is the type of power referred to by the famous maxim "power corrupts." This distorted power of domination and control stands in contrast with divine sovereignty, which is fulfilled in creating and increasing the equitable power of God's creatures.

As such, all power can be assessed by its adherence to the divine creative and self-giving purpose. It can be assessed by the extent to which power is distorted and misused for the sake of domination and exploitation. This is true whether in government, civic interaction, organized religion, business, law enforcement, or the family.

To the extent that human power is directed solely or primarily toward the control or domination of others, it is a sinful distortion of God's power. It is sin when power, which is meant to fulfill other creatures, is used instead to destroy the independent power

of others, intentionally or unintentionally. Power exercised as domination hollows out those who are subject to it, whereas those in control lose the vitality that allows them to adapt.

Like all power, governmental power is good in principle but subject to systemic distortions and sinful impulses. This statement discusses systemic distortions in several places (Articles 4, 38, 44). Those in government, like all people, are sinners and are subject to limitations of knowledge, however well-meaning, and the temptation to not acknowledge limits.

As a result, government may often seek its own advantage or that of its most influential constituencies at the expense of many of its people. This is especially likely if one thinks of politics and civic engagement as primarily a collection of warring interest groups engaged in a zero-sum game of wins and losses. This view distorts power into a contest of domination and control.

There are circumstances that do require the use of dominating power to defend against those who are doing significant harm, such as another government. In certain circumstances, even war might be legitimate—for example, to defend one's country against existential threats or to oppose totalitarian regimes. Under such circumstances, dominating power can be justified in good conscience to counter immense harm.[43]

Even in those cases, however, Christians and others believe constraints must be observed. For example, noncombatants and former combatants, including those from the enemy's side, should be treated with care, as God's creatures, not as mere objects of control or domination.

Article 23 The lodestar of divine power implies additional criteria for assessing government action. God's self-giving creative and sustaining power gifts human creatures with agency, the ability to set their own course. The gifts of power therefore include a presumption for self-determination. (However, this presumption for self-determination has little to do with the ideology of "individualism," that is, that the interests of the individual ought to have priority.)

Thus, an important criterion for assessing government action is whether it extends the self-determination of the people—and thus

their power. Practically, this means that the necessary starting point for considering what is good for others should be what those others believe is good for them.

This has implications, for example, in deciding which *level* of government, if any, properly acts in a given situation. In many instances a national government is needed. In other instances, a national government may be far removed from certain local realities. Likewise, local or state governments may be more removed from the effects of their actions on those outside their authority. Distance may increase the possibility for error in determining what will lead to another's well-being and what will damage others' self-determination and power. This is not a value judgement but simply a description of the limits of government, even in a representative democracy.

These possibilities, in turn, mean that both those in government and those they govern must ask what level of government is most appropriate and how best to design policies that foster self-determination. That is also why it is important to create opportunities to participate and be heard for those who will be most directly affected by those decisions.

A presumption is, however, not a rule, and self-determination is not an absolute value. That is one difference from an ideology of individualism in which the individual's desires and beliefs are given priority and sheer autonomy. Self-determination is a *presumption*, a guardrail. Sometimes laws and regulations must oppose what people believe to be their own good. Individuals and groups can mistake what is good for them.

The presumption for self-determination is especially necessary when what seems good for "my group" significantly harms others and their self-determination. This is because self-determination already includes a norm of reciprocity. As a *universal* presumption deriving from God's creative and sustaining power, it gives priority to others' self-determination as well. Self-determination's mutuality, and its grounding in divine power, distinguishes this view from individualism.

Accordingly, this church stresses that self-determination *always* includes mutual, plural self-determination, which is also the

sharing of power. It does not mean doing whatever one wants at the expense of others. Self-determination is necessarily mutual self-determination. This can be understood as a form of the Golden Rule: Extend to others their self-determination as you wish to have it extended to you.[44]

> This church stresses that self-determination *always* includes mutual, plural self-determination, which is also the sharing of power.

Both the model of divine power and the consequent political presumption of self-determination include a criterion of fostering multiple transmissions of power, i.e. plurality. Both are indispensable elements for thinking through the nature and purpose of governments, including those of the United States.

Article 24 In the United States, the Constitution, ratified in 1788, provides the federal framework for what political authority may and may not do with respect to its citizens and other governmental and nongovernmental institutions.[45] It provides for a national government consisting of three authorities with distinct roles and power sharing—executive, legislative, and judicial. It reserves certain matters to the states and others to citizens of the country regardless of the state in which they live. It also acknowledges Indigenous sovereign governments.

The U.S. Constitution was not utterly unique. There are precedents in human history for what we recognize as "democracy" or "a republic." The Constitution was not even the first governing framework of the fledgling United States. That distinction belonged to the Articles of Confederation, adopted by the Continental Congress in 1777 and ratified by the 13 states in 1781.[46]

Within a few years, it became clear that the young country likely would not survive under the Articles of Confederation. There was no effective executive power to enforce the national Congress' decisions, and the nation was in danger of defaulting on its debts. The states had separate, often conflicting, policies, which sometimes were aimed at other states, as well as separate currencies. These and other deficiencies produced a failure that gave rise to the Constitution.

The Constitution *was* unique in crucial ways. The 1788 Constitution makes no mention of God or religion except to prohibit requiring religious tests for holding federal office. And for the first time in recorded history, the governing document of a people had to be ratified by the people it would govern rather than be imposed by a monarch, a sovereign state, or religious authority.

The Constitution is both grounding and aspirational. It serves as an example and points this society to values and practices.

The Constitution also strives against the monopolization of sovereignty and pure self-interest by instituting checks and balances across institutions and with the states. The structure of the new government was explicitly designed to combat extreme self-interest, which the drafters had experienced both under a parliamentary monarchy and among the states included in the Articles of Confederation.

It was controversial to provide for a strong executive, as the Constitution did. Because of that, the framers limited the executive branch, reserving certain matters for the legislature or the judiciary. Similarly, the Constitution provides for an executive not elected by Congress, to limit Congress' power and influence. In addition to reserving some areas of authority for states, the Constitution provided all states with equal representation in the U.S. Senate to combat the fear that the larger states would ignore or destroy the vitality of smaller states. The courts were established to settle disputes and interpret laws. The authority of the courts was also checked by certain legislative and executive means.

The Constitution is both grounding and aspirational. It serves as an example *and* points this society to values and practices that the nation has not yet fulfilled. Its preamble clearly expresses this government's purpose and provides a reference for assessing national faithfulness to that purpose:

> We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and

our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.[47]

These aspirations provide secular standards for evaluating government and also give specificity to the Christian question "Is the neighbor's well-being served by government?"

Article 25 The most radical feature of the Constitution is its first three words: "we the people." Never before had those who would be governed been required to vote their government into effect, to "ordain and establish" it. "The people" determine how they will be governed, and this sets up a preference for self-determination that is inherent in the constitutional process, as much as or more so than in the Constitution itself.

The most radical feature of the Constitution is its first three words: "we the people."

The subsequent history of amendments to the Constitution makes this preference for mutual self-determination more explicit. At the time of ratification, "the people" was largely limited to free white men. Many states also imposed a property-owning qualification on the right to vote. Slavery was recognized and accepted by the Constitution. Indeed, slaveholding states received additional congressional representation through the constitutional clause counting enslaved people as three-fifths of a person, even though those states denied them legal personhood and the vote.

Most members of Indigenous nations, who were not granted U.S. citizenship until 1924, had no say in representation. Though American Indian sovereignty is recognized in the Constitution, that commitment was blatantly ignored as states and the federal government violated treaty after treaty, and it remains a source of struggle today.

The preference for self-determination was thus partly realized in the Constitution and partly unrealized. Amendments to the Constitution have tended to make that aspiration more effective by reducing the number of groups who were "governed" without their "consent," by expanding the right to vote.

Regarding people of African descent, the Reconstruction amendments essentially said that the 1787 Constitution's "grand bargain" to preserve slavery got wrong who "we the people" should be. Later amendments granted the right of additional citizens to vote: women (1920) and young adults ages 18-20 (1971). Levying any tax as a condition to vote was prohibited (1964). Every amendment related to who is included in "we the people" has expanded who may participate in mutual self-determination. However, there remain patterns of obstruction to restrict exercise of these rights.

> As the government acts to prevent harmful behavior, the priority should be seeking to produce and share power in ways that promote the common good.

Like the theological presumption for mutual self-determination (Article 21), the Constitution's "we, the people" has little in common with an ideology of individualism. The sovereignty of the people is a collective sovereignty and includes mutual self-determination. A core purpose of the protections of individual rights in the Bill of Rights and elsewhere is to strengthen "we the people." The protection of individual and minority rights, in the constitutional conception, is necessary for a healthy collective.

Article 26 The framers of the Constitution recognized that self-dealing by states under the Articles of Confederation was already destroying the country and the states themselves. Humans continue to demonstrate, in greater or lesser measure, the tendency to want to dominate and control, to seek our advantage over our neighbor, not for their interests but, in the end, for our own. Theologically, this tendency is part of the meaning we Lutherans recognize when we teach that even the justified are also sinners.

Article 22 explains how government is subject to the same impulses. Accordingly, governmental action should be subject to the presumption that those governed have a right to identify what they see as their needs. Here, too, that presumption can be overcome, and government can act coercively upon those who are subject to it, particularly when those subjects are needlessly damaging others' capacity for self-determination. That assessment is the source of much criminal law, for example.

As the government acts to prevent harmful behavior, the priority should be seeking to produce and share power in ways that promote the common good. Examples of this communication of power and well-being include compulsory school attendance, Social Security, and regulations to incentivize accomplishing social goals.

A few of the questions to assess a government at federal, state, and local levels include: Has this act opened room for the self-determination of those in its jurisdiction? Has this coercive authority adequately protected valuable mutual self-determination to a reasonable extent? Has this regulatory authority made the operation of the economy smoother so that those affected can live their lives more fully? Has this action assisted or encouraged those who want to participate in civic life to do so? Will the act do these things in the future? Does it effectively rectify failures of the past, especially failures to include the marginalized?

All of these illustrate the criteria for whether, on balance, an action has increased or will increase the power, mutual self-determination, and well-being of those affected by a government. The answers to these questions provide the means for people of faith, and others, to join important civic conversations about what is taking place in U.S. civic and political life.

Article 27 The 1788 Constitution made a firm decision for religious neutrality, thus allowing each person and group to practice the religion of their choice, or none. Article VI reads: "No religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States." That was a radical choice because 11 of the 13 states at that time had religious qualifications for public officials. The same neutrality regarding religion was expressed in the very first words of the First Amendment to the Constitution (Section IV), ratified as part of the Bill of Rights in 1791.

The Constitution's choice to forbid religious tests was historically novel and has had momentous consequences. For example, neither Thomas Jefferson nor Abraham Lincoln had any institutional religious affiliation. A religious test would have left the country without their service and that of others from non-Christian faith traditions or no faith tradition. The United States opened public

offices to people of all religions, as well to the nonreligious, and limited the ability of government to interfere with self-determined religious choice.

> "The government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion." Article 11, U.S.–Barbary Treaties, 1796

Article 28 The religious diversity and neutrality of both the original Constitution and its First Amendment (see Section IV) contradict past or present claims that the U.S. was founded as a Christian nation. In 1796, George Washington's administration made an official statement on the subject as part of an international treaty: "The government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion."[48]

Many people involved in the movement for U.S. independence and the ratification of the Constitution had devout Christian faith, though others did not. The dominant religious practice of the times was certainly Protestant, as evidenced by the Christian ethos still present in our social fabric. However, it must be recognized that many who lived in and contributed to the establishment of the United States were not Christian and were instead people of various religions and worldviews.

The ELCA gives thanks for many of the ways in which God worked through Christian individuals and in that ethos. In this sense, it is possible to speak of Christianity as contributing to the founding of this country and to claim that the original U.S. ethos was influenced by Christianity. However, this church rejects the baseless claims that the U.S. was founded on specifically Christian beliefs or that the U.S. Constitution is a result of special revelation, thus establishing a Christian nation. The Constitution established that the nation's sovereign is "we the people," not "we the faithful" or "we the Christians."

IV. RELIGION AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Article 29 The First Amendment to the Constitution begins: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." It indicates that

the vitality of religious life arises from the self-determination of the people in the broad plurality of civil society, not from the government.

The first clause ("no law respecting an establishment of religion") is known as the Establishment Clause. The second clause ("no law ... prohibiting the free exercise thereof") is known as the Free Exercise Clause. The two clauses work together to protect religious liberty for all people in our pluralistic society, though federal, state, and local governments have, at times, fallen short in that protection.

The Establishment Clause is cut from the same cloth as the Constitution's prohibition against religious tests for public office. Government is not the church, and the church is not the government. The intent of the Establishment Clause clearly is that government must not promote a particular faith or religion in general. Some recent decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court at the time of this writing, however, cast doubt on the continuing strength of that limitation on government.[49]

This church reaffirms the need for strong boundaries that limit government involvement in the core activities of religion—worship, instruction in faith, and proselytizing.

As discussed in Article 30, this church reaffirms the need for strong boundaries that limit government involvement in the core activities of religion—worship, instruction in faith, and proselytizing. Such boundaries are needed to prohibit excessive government entanglement in religious institutions, provided that religious exercise does not harm the legitimate interests of the broader community. For example, the government has no authority to decide who is fit to be a minister or teacher of a faith. Nor does the government have the competence to declare which of the rival factions in a religious body represents the correct expression of that faith.

Government by the people means there is no favored religion. However, as discussed in Article 32, our church holds that the free exercise of religion is not an absolute right and does not give faithful individuals or religious organizations license to harm

others. Individuals and organizations have the right to determine the meaning of their religious commitments, but their exercise of such commitments does not create a right to impose significant harm on the neighbor.

Article 30 Religious worship, teaching, and proselytizing belong solely to religious institutions. Those activities, and the institutions that support them, are distinct from the exercise of civil authority. The government's authority extends only to secular matters, not to the relationship between people and the sacred.

By imposing a limit on the government's involvement with religion and religious institutions, the Establishment Clause protects both government and religion. Without this limit, political actors could use their offices and the government's powers to advance their faith—either to enhance that faith or to expand the government's claim over the people.

For example, the government threatens the principle of nonestablishment whenever it displays religious symbols. A government-sponsored display of such symbols may be permissible if it sends a message about the history of a particular community. It would violate the principle of nonestablishment, however, if it intended to convey a message of religious truth. Courts in individual cases must closely scrutinize government-sponsored displays of religious symbols to discern the intended message and protect nonestablishment.[50]

Similarly, government violates the principle of nonestablishment when it attempts to use public schools for evangelism or religious instruction. The Supreme Court has long held that required prayer or Bible reading in public schools is unconstitutional religious activity.[51] Though now being challenged in some state legislatures and courts, the principles of nonestablishment and pluralism preclude the government from promoting or coercing such activity.

Government funding of religious activity also impacts Establishment Clause concerns. Articles 34-37 of this statement describe this church's position for cooperative work between faith-based social welfare programs and the government. In those contexts, the government pays religious organizations for services of a secular character. If the government were to pay those

organizations to provide worship or religious instruction, such funding would violate the principle of nonestablishment.[52] For this reason, this church opposes requiring states to provide equal funding for religious education.

Finally, the nonestablishment principle forbids courts and government officials from deciding certain "essentially religious" questions. These include which faction of a divided congregation holds the correct interpretation of its faith, or whether a religious leader deserves employment at a congregation even if the congregation has fired them.[53] Each of these contexts calls for "ecclesiastical abstention," or deference to the religious institution's governing structure. While ecclesiastical abstention does not insulate religious bodies from all judicial scrutiny, it bars the government from challenging a religious organization's internal governance or religious decisions.[54]

This church embraces the principle of nonestablishment of religion by civil government and recognizes that its application requires judicial and political prudence.

Through all these examples, this church embraces the principle of nonestablishment of religion by civil government and recognizes that its application requires judicial and political prudence. The Supreme Court's interpretation of this principle now emphasizes the importance of "history and tradition" in that application.[55] This church believes that an assessment of our nation's "history and tradition" must encompass the principle of nonestablishment even though we may not always agree about specific applications.

Article 31 The Free Exercise Clause works together with the Establishment Clause to protect and promote religious diversity in the United States. Prohibiting the establishment of a religion clears the ground for a plurality of religious faiths, as well as the absence of religious faith. The Free Exercise Clause opens space for self-determination, protecting the right of all people to decide what they believe and how as well as whether they express those beliefs within a religious community. It also guarantees the right of religious communities to gather as they choose for worship and religious instruction, and to select their own leaders and organizational form.

Bolstered by the First Amendment's protection of the right to free speech, the Free Exercise Clause also protects the right of individuals to bring their beliefs into political discussion and decision-making, and of religious communities to engage in public debate according to their religious convictions. A prohibition on expressing religious beliefs in political debate would have deprived the U.S. public of much of the basis for the abolition of slavery and for the civil rights movement, to name just two examples.

The Free Exercise Clause also protects the right of individuals to bring their beliefs into political discussion and decision-making, and of religious communities.

In addition, the Free Exercise Clause bars the government from discriminating against believers and religious communities because of their faith. History includes examples of the government directly targeting some faiths for hostile treatment.[56] Some recent claims of religious discrimination, however, involve subtle forms of allegedly different treatment for believers or religious entities.

Under the Free Exercise Clause, as under the Establishment Clause, religion is constitutionally special. Sometimes there are such significant differences between religious and secular organizations that they are not truly comparable. In that case, different treatment is appropriate. Other times, a religious activity is truly being singled out or treated differently from the activities of comparable secular organizations, which is not permissible.

This issue often arises in cases involving distribution of government funds. For example, this church holds that, insofar as religious education involves faith formation, there is a fundamental difference between secular public education and religious education such that it should be permissible for the government to fund secular public education without funding religious education.[57]

In contrast, it should not be permissible for governments to deny organizations funding merely because they are religious. For example, a state program violated the Free Exercise Clause by

denying a grant to a religious school for playground resurfacing while providing grants to similarly situated nonreligious schools.[58]

The constitutionally protected right of free exercise is different from Christian freedom. For Lutherans, Christian freedom is given through Christ and arises solely from God's promise of salvation. This is an eternal freedom from condemnation by the demands of God that no human fulfills. It is a gift of God received by faith and does not depend on any specific political arrangement.

Christian freedom is a matter of the Gospel whereas the right of free exercise of religion is a matter of human law.

Christian freedom is a matter of the Gospel whereas the right of free exercise of religion is a matter of human law. Christian freedom has only indirect legal significance for organizations and individuals in the civil realm. However, it gives us the positive freedom to love God and neighbor.

This church affirms that Christian freedom includes the presumptive duty to obey civil law. There are exceptions, such as circumstances when the law has become tyrannical and abusive, especially to the most vulnerable. Then love may require something other than obedience to civil law. But in normal situations, Christians obey for the sake of good civil order—or, in other words, for the sake of the neighbor.

Article 32 Though the Free Exercise Clause offers stout protections for the right of people and religious communities to worship, practice, teach, and share their faith as they see fit, that right is not absolute. Religiously motivated conduct may violate the laws and regulations that structure our complex society.

When a conflict between religiously motivated practices and civil law occurs, the government should try to accommodate those practices. However, religious accommodations should not damage important public interests, including the civil rights of others.

The ELCA's predecessor churches[59] adopted the then-prevalent legal standard of "strict scrutiny"[60] to define the balance between a religious accommodation and countervailing public interests. Under that standard, the government must accommodate

a believer's religiously motivated practice if that practice is "substantially burdened" by government rules, unless the government can show that denial of the requested accommodation is the "least restrictive means" of protecting a "compelling state interest."[61] At the time our predecessor bodies adopted that language, courts in such cases tended to be quite deferential to the government despite using the language of strict scrutiny.

In the 1990 decision *Employment Division v. Smith*, the U.S. Supreme Court moved away from strict scrutiny entirely and held that the Free Exercise Clause did not require accommodations from neutral, generally applicable laws.[62] In response, the ELCA, together with its ecumenical partners and a broad coalition of groups from across the religious and political spectrum, advocated for adoption of the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). This statute restored the "strict scrutiny" test as to federal government action.[63] Many states followed suit with similar laws. The "strict scrutiny" standard continues to apply in important federal statutes and case law and in the constitutions or statutes of some states.[64]

More recently, the Supreme Court has moved away from its earlier deference to governmental authority and interpreted in literal terms the federal statutes that use the "strict scrutiny" standard to provide religious accommodations. These decisions focus almost exclusively on the burden imposed on religious exercise and pay scant attention to "important governmental interests"[65] or the interests of others harmed by the requested accommodation.[66]

The ELCA affirms the need for a standard that balances religiously motivated conduct with public interests, including the protection of other individuals' civil rights. This church urges legislators and the courts to fashion legal standards that respect the importance of religiously motivated conduct. In contrast with the "strict scrutiny" standard adopted by the ELCA's predecessor churches, this church affirms an intermediate standard. Such a standard would require accommodation only if the proposed accommodation would not harm important (rather than compelling) public interests, impose significant burdens on others, or significantly impair the government's efforts to serve the interests of those burdened.

This standard leaves room for judicial interpretation. However, it offers a starting point that better reflects the necessary balance among respect for the wide diversity of religious practices in our pluralistic society, respect for the government's interests in protecting and promoting the public welfare, and respect for the interests of others in the community.

Article 33 Citing the First Amendment, some people, including religious individuals, mistakenly believe that religious commitments and claims stemming from religious values are out of bounds in public life. This can include claims that there should be no interaction with or funding of religious organizations by the government, or that discussion of government policies or political matters should never happen within assemblies of believers.

Some invoke a "wall of separation" between church and state to deny the place of religious voices in the public square. This phrase, however, is not in the Constitution[67] and should not be substituted for what the Constitution actually says. The First Amendment does not prohibit or discourage the application of religious convictions to public life. The Establishment Clause applies only to the government and those acting as officers of the government. It does not require religious individuals or communities to withhold their beliefs from public life.

As Christians, we know from experience that religion plays a central role in our identity; the same is true for people who are part of other religious or spiritual traditions. If nonestablishment or "separation of church and state" meant that religious commitments should not enter public life, religious people would be uniquely harmed. Not only would this conflict with the Free Exercise Clause, but it would also uniquely disadvantage religious people in that they—and they alone—would be unable to bring their most deeply held convictions to bear on public issues.

If people of all faiths could not bring their highest convictions to consideration of civic questions, public life would be impoverished. History points to the specifically religious invocations of many slavery abolitionists and participants in the civil rights movement, for example. Moreover, many public officials turn to their religiously formed moral sources in considering critical decisions

for local, state, and federal governments.

The proper relationship of personal religious commitment to political and civic life cannot, then, be reduced to a wall of separation between "church" and "state."

The proper relationship of personal religious commitment to political and civic life cannot, then, be reduced to a wall of separation between "church" and "state." Rather religious commitment must be guided in civic life by the constructive relationships that religious organizations hold with political bodies. The next section addresses the character and boundaries of such constructive relationships.

V. CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY

Article 34 As God's people pray for God's will to be done on earth, it is necessary to set forth ELCA teaching about the constructive relationship of religious organizations to political authority. The U.S. Constitution, including the First Amendment, neither prohibits religious institutions from actively engaging in civic and political life nor requires them to do so. The Constitution leaves those decisions largely to religious institutions themselves.

The basis for the ELCA's understanding of this church's relationship with government is twofold. First, this church teaches a scriptural responsibility before God to join divine activity toward the well-being of society. It is God who gives the church a responsibility to address society's issues under the aspect of God's Law while also conveying the good news of mercy and life to individuals. Yet in this approach, there is always a creative tension because God's church is "in" the world while not "from" the world.[68] Second, as a corporate body in society, this church corporately takes to heart God's gift of an earthly sovereignty that resides in "we the people."

There is always a creative tension because God's church is "in" the world while not "from" the world.

The theological conviction of responsibility before God and the reasoned conviction about the consent of the governed intersect to undergird a

productive relationship. The ELCA constitution expresses this understanding as a calling to "work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor, maintaining institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction."[69]

> The Triune God,... is at work in society and calls the church,... to join in public action relying upon their best understanding of God's intention for creation and society.

Article 35 The phrase "work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor" makes clear that the church should engage political authority actively and flexibly. Theologically speaking, "work with" depends upon a dynamic Lutheran understanding of God's two reigns, especially the left-handed reign by which God's work in society is carried out primarily through a just use of the law. This church holds that the Triune God, our all-encompassing source and commitment, is at work in society and calls the church, and all religious organizations, to join in public action relying upon their best understanding of God's intention for creation and society.

This church also understands "work with" as grounded in the foundational commitment that sovereignty in the United States rests in "we the people." Both individuals and corporate bodies in the U.S. find their purpose summed up in the preamble to the Constitution: "to promote the general welfare."[70] These constitutional underpinnings encourage those who live in this country and all organizations and institutions to work with governing authorities toward that end.

Living in the U.S. implies a promise and opportunity to seek the welfare of all residents through every aspect of civic life. This does not imply that this church's relationship with political authority is cozy. Often, to be sure, "working with" affirms the mutual endeavor of addressing human needs. Sometimes, however, "working with" entails critical challenges to government, such as advocating for change in policies and programs that harm people and creation.

Article 36 The phrase "maintaining institutional separation of church and state" does not point to a "wall of separation"

between public (government) and private (religious) arenas. Rather the integrity of the institutional relationship depends on understanding proper and distinct jurisdictions.

On the one hand, theologically, such a distinction is congruent with the Lutheran understanding of how God works differently in the church and in the state (see Articles 5 and 35 as well as the ELCA social message "Government and Civic Engagement."). Beyond common human faculties, religious faith does not provide revelatory or heavenly knowledge regarding the practical policies or means for government's work (Articles 5, 28, and 38). On the other hand, "institutional separation" also follows the logic of the U.S. Constitution. It points to preserving the integrity and distinction of both political authority and religious institutions, based on their distinctive purposes, organizational principles, and competencies (Article 27).

While institutionally distinct, religious organizations and institutions share spaces of mutual concern and action with government. The ELCA therefore holds that this relationship should be one of "functional interaction." That is, it is a critical engagement governed by institutional boundaries, created, on the one side, by the faith-based purpose and competence of religious faith and institutions and, on the other side, by the secular purpose and competence of government.

Religious organizations, then, cross the boundaries of their role when they campaign for parties or candidates or assert specific legislation or policies as "God's plan." Religious communities are mistaken when they identify a particular political movement as God's or claim divine revelation for the Constitution or identify the U.S. national experience with salvation history.

For these reasons, this church, unlike some Christian churches, teaches that it is not the church's role to endorse candidates or parties. The ELCA also recognizes the legal soundness of the Johnson Amendment[71] in prohibiting religious bodies or their representatives from

This church, unlike some Christian churches, teaches that it is not the church's role to endorse candidates or parties.

verbally or financially supporting candidates or parties. Individual parishioners may, of course, advocate specific candidates and parties based on religious values and reasoned criteria but should not claim to do so as spokespeople for a church.

At the same time, this dynamic, critical engagement approach *encourages* religious organizations to champion values in the public sphere for the sake of society's good. The ELCA teaches that religious communities may speak publicly about their values to express support for policies and legislation that seem the best among competing legislation or policy. This church, for example, actively assesses and advocates for policies that affect those who are hungry (Matthew 25:35).

Article 37 In the work of functional interaction, churches and other nonprofits in the U.S. have become increasingly dependent on aid from public entities. The ELCA continues to support the prime criterion that government support for faith-based social service organizations is appropriate only when they, as religious-based organizations, serve people without expectation about or regard to their faith. ELCA ministries, such as chaplaincy in the armed services, correctional institutions, hospitals, and other care facilities, meet this criterion, as do ELCA social ministry organizations.

Government support for faith-based social service organizations is appropriate only when they... serve people without expectation about or regard to their faith.

The ELCA view asserts a complicated protection that enables support of good government while insisting on the important distinction between religion and civil authority. To maintain the distinction, the ELCA holds that:

- Government must not fund programs that discriminate between religions in providing their services and benefits.
- Government must not fund programs that require recipients to participate in religious activities as a condition of receiving a public service.
- Government must treat program service providers equally—on religious and other grounds—and selection of funded

service providers must be based solely on outcomes identified in publicly available criteria.

This dynamic, function-driven interactionist relationship[72] has guided constructive, beneficial interactions between the ELCA and political authority. Our church will continue to be so guided. As a church, we also commend this approach as salutary, both theologically and practically, for consideration by other religious bodies in their interaction with political authority in the U.S.

The ELCA understanding of civic life and faith affirms healthy forms of patriotism.

Article 38 The ELCA understanding of civic life and faith affirms healthy forms of patriotism. Patriotism is to love one's country, to pray for its well-being, to be committed to its success, to have a sense of pride in it, to criticize it, and to work for its reform when necessary. All of these can be elements of how Christians and their communities live out discipleship as individuals and in corporate bodies.

There are also unhealthy expressions of patriotism. They actually are distortions of true patriotism and can be dangerous for the country and for vulnerable populations within it. Such forms of unhealthy patriotism attribute to the country, to a political party, to certain individuals, or even to a racial or ethnic group a veneration, worship, loyalty, or trust owed to God alone (Mark 12:17). Christ's church cannot condone elevating a country or anything else to the place that belongs only to God, because this is succumbing to idolatry. This statement rejects unhealthy forms of patriotism, including those related to any form of religious nationalism.[73]

At the time of this writing, there is a peculiar form of unhealthy patriotism gaining traction in the United States—Christian nationalism. Christian nationalist belief seeks to fuse selected Christian ideas about what should be the national way of life with a comprehensive cultural framework.[74] That framework incorporates highly selective narratives, practices, symbols, and value systems. For example: "In a Christian nation, social power is placed in the service of the Christian religion."[75] Christian nationalism explicitly seeks to implement such a legislative framework. Yet this "turns God into a mascot for the state."[76]

In hardline strains of Christian nationalism, only white, U.S.-born, Christian believers are considered genuine U.S. citizens. This privileging of white, U.S.-born Christians is connected to our country's violent practices of white supremacy, such as Jim Crow laws or the hundreds of years of Black African slavery.

Such belief in an intrinsic moral and intellectual superiority of white European Christian civilization has been used to justify as natural and right that white Christians, especially males, should be in power. Such views about race, ethnicity, sex, social/economic class, and religion deny that one's birth in the nation or one's great contributions and service to the country are enough for a resident to be considered a "true American." It distorts who is considered to be a true citizen of the nation.

A comparison of any strain of religious nationalism, including Christian nationalism, with the actual teachings of Jesus and of the Holy Scriptures reveals that these values are not Christlike. Christian nationalism, in particular, perverts the Christian message by cherry-picking texts that interpret the Scriptures in ways that connect religion to domination.

Christian nationalism fuses an imagined conception of a Christian nation with a false vision of God's ultimate will. It confuses the kingdom of God with a particular government. Jesus rejects identification of earthly structures with God's kingdom or will: "My kingdom does not belong to this world" (John 18:36). Lutherans teach that the kingdom of God is not a nation, not a particular culture, not a racial grouping, not a form of government, and not even a denomination or a religion (Article 5).

For theological reasons, the ELCA repudiates Christian nationalism as a distortion of the Christian faith that crosses the line into idolatry.

For theological reasons, the ELCA repudiates Christian nationalism as a distortion of the Christian faith that crosses the line into idolatry. This church also realizes that Christian nationalism contradicts the U.S. motto, *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one). It effectively substitutes "we the (self-declared) true American-Christians" for "we the people." It is an unhealthy form of

patriotism that harms this country, divides it, and especially endangers the well-being of vulnerable members of our society.

VI. SELECTED CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS IN CIVIC LIFE

Article 39 As we pray to discern God's will for today, our church addresses particular issues in contemporary civic life through its social teaching. Since 1988, social statements have addressed nearly every facet of contemporary life: economics, criminal justice, science and human power, war and the military-industrial complex, sexuality and family, health care, and others (visit ELCA.org/socialstatements).

These articles supplement the existing teaching of this church on selected contemporary questions.

ELCA social messages have spoken to civic and political concerns such as human rights, terrorism, and community violence (ELCA.org/socialmessages). ELCA social policy resolutions, adopted by ELCA assemblies, have addressed narrow policy questions. Some, for instance, speak to voter apathy, racially motivated restrictions to voting, and gerrymandering. (https://resources.elca.org/?_categories=faith-and-society&_subcategory=social-messages) The issues addressed in this section do not revisit questions the ELCA already has addressed, and therefore are not intended to be comprehensive. Rather these articles supplement the existing teaching of this church on selected contemporary questions.

Article 40 Among the most troubling contemporary hindrances to healthy civic life in the United States at this time is hyperpartisan polarization because it undercuts the search for collaborative solutions and significantly damages individuals and the social fabric. The U.S. political system depends on the presence and work of partisan activity. Different interests and perspectives are normal, and the party system itself provides an avenue for organizing, educating, and advocating for issues of political concern.

Except for a few instances, such as the Civil War, however, this partisanship did not bar cross-party work, collegiality, or friendships. Parties commonly formed coalitions, made

compromises, and could work together toward their varied yet overlapping views of the common good. Working together often forged more effective ideas than working alone.

At the time of writing, a quite different hyperpartisanship is increasingly evident. Political identity now is often closely linked with other identifications such as ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, race, urban or rural residence, cable news preference, and even what restaurants and stores are frequented. These constellations of identification, or "mega-identities,"[77] are becoming supreme. The many commonalities that once connected people despite their political affiliation are increasingly overwhelmed by these rigid, us-versus-them identities. Often they harm relationships between colleagues, friends, and family.

These mega-identities take partisanship to new levels—to hyperpartisan polarization. They are reinforced by cable news preference, social media echo-chambers, the assertions of elected officials, and other factors. They are reinforced by a "nationalization" of issues and an oversize focus on those issues. Local political campaigns are overwhelmed by outside money, and though there may still be vibrant, democratic discussion of, for example, zoning policy at the local level, that discussion gets little play in the media.

The result is a polarization in which loyalty to hyperpartisan identities becomes absolute. This loyalty is supposedly because of one's family safety, protection from "them," and the survival of "our way of life." This hyperpartisan polarization is practiced as "zero-sum power," as a winner-take-all struggle for domination. Those with alternative perspectives are designated as enemies rather than fellow members of the public with a different view.

Many people today cynically assume that such polarization is unavoidable. It is certainly a reality, and many accept such outsize loyalty and harsh practices as necessary, or even right and good. However, such hyperpartisan animosity destroys the fabric of a nation and the lives of those in it, especially people already marginalized.

This statement contends that a different approach is both possible and necessary. A productive commonality of purpose is possible, one in which all can participate. There is a path forward that is

not motivated primarily by fear of others or belief in the greater purity of one's own group. It is a path different from rancorous attack and hyperpartisan animosity. These are vices to be confronted, both within the church and within the wider society.

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This alternative approach is primarily not about tolerance but about respectful engagement. Article 14 describes how practicing discernment together is a gift for civic life and a witness to God's love because it models how people with opposing views can give priority to the practice of careful listening and respect.

For Christians, our identity in Christ as forgiven sinners undercuts polarization and urges love for every person as a creature of God who is not to be dominated and whose well-being we should try to improve. Our Christian identity encourages us to take seriously both our well-considered perspectives and the limitations of our knowledge, thoughtfulness, empathy, and goodwill. Our identity in Christ encourages a posture of prayer for those who disagree and careful listening to others whose well-considered perspectives may be quite different from our own.

The presumption of democracy and the criterion of mutual self-determination likewise require a starting point of respect and listening (Article 23). These are comparable to the values articulated in the U.S. Constitution—truly democratic values, commitment to diversity, and the public good of all. The objective should be a common search for constructive ways to enhance the well-being of human society and all creation.

On that basis, the ELCA calls for an end to practices that contribute to hyperpartisan polarization. Both as a society and as a church, we must end any winner-take-all mindsets, which approach our common life together as if it were a highly competitive sporting event. Political opponents are not enemies simply because they have different opinions of what constitutes the best course forward on a specific issue or because they travel in different social circles.

It is possible to face difference without aggression and with an eye to the common good. It is even possible to close huge gaps through an exchange of values and ideas that changes *all* participants for the better. The solutions found in collaboration are often better, as most of us know from personal and social experience. Civic, including political, experience should not be an exception.

Article 41 In this current polarized context, civic thought and opinion leaders as well as information sources bear a particular responsibility to foster constructive debate and solutions. Though this is the responsibility of each of us, individuals and groups look to thought and opinion leaders and to various information sources to negotiate life in a fast-paced, information-saturated society. Most of us look to both certified and unconventional experts, and both are influential in shaping the values and behaviors of the public.

Civic thought leaders do not always see themselves as such, but leadership comes in many forms and exists in many forums. Elected and publicly appointed officials are obvious leaders. However, civic thought leaders include community league coaches, social media influencers, news reporters, religious ministers, activists, think tank staff, and the heads of nonprofit and volunteer organizations.

A healthy society requires such leaders to be models of vigorous and constructive participation. To bring people together, these leaders must renounce misleading and inflammatory discourse that hinders conscientious listening among neighbors. Civil disagreement about issues and the interpretation and relative importance of facts is understandable, but inflammatory rhetoric and personal attacks have no place in the public arena. Our society needs to be a place of informed public dialogue that enables people to hear one another and find solutions.

The ELCA commends leaders who model constructive practices, which are essential to honest analysis and creative solutions to social problems. Likewise we denounce "hateful, deceptive, violent speech that has too readily found a place in our national discourse."[78] Our church also encourages associations, think tanks, and other sources of analysis and information to seek to understand cultural and political differences rather than deride

them. All of these are necessary steps toward building political accommodation and encouraging fact-based negotiation.

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Article 42 The saying is hundreds of years old that "falsehood flies, and truth comes limping after it,"[79] but it is widely acknowledged that the spread of lies, rumors, and ignorance in civic life has reached new levels today in media of all types. It is especially acknowledged as acute in social media activity.[80]

Healthy civic engagement depends on clear distinctions between fact and all forms of falsehood, ranging from partial misstatements to intentional disinformation to outright lies. The reach of media and the lack of clarity about the origins of its information, especially posts in social media, all necessitate stronger self-regulation in all media. This urgency increases significantly given the ability of artificial intelligence (AI) to convincingly conjure utterly false information, images, and video.

The Eighth Commandment directs people of faith to exert efforts against bearing false witness. The Small Catechism teaches that "we are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead, we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light." Our church, then, encourages us all to ask, in every personal interaction and on social media, whether our words or those we repeat represent the best possible understanding of our neighbor.

We should be "innocent as doves" when interpreting the intentions of our neighbor but "wise as serpents" (Matthew 10:16) when discerning what information we encounter in any media. We should not share:

- Sensationalist headlines.
- Insulting memes.
- Information whose source we cannot verify.
- Information from sources whose purpose or chief likely

effect is to stir up anger or hatred and to undermine, rather than foster, our civic unity.

For the sake of U.S. civic life, the ELCA calls upon media and social media platforms to:

- Align their policies and procedures worldwide with the most comprehensive and rigorous online safety regulations provided by U.S. law.
- Regularly assess and publicly disclose the extent to which platforms may foster violations of civil and human rights.
- Protect users by labeling AI-generated content.
- Allow oversight of operations in human rights hotspots.
- Allow transparency in algorithms and advertisements.
- Regularly assess, report on, and address hate speech, misinformation, and disinformation, removing these as quickly as possible through fact-checking.

Article 43 In the political arena, money plays a commanding role. Individuals, corporations, lobbyists, PACs, super PACs, nonprofits, industry trade groups, and interest groups spend money to influence political campaigns. Contributions are spent in a variety of ways, including political advertising to influence public opinion on candidates and ballot measures. Public officials are generally required by law to report on their personal finances to ensure that ethical guidelines are followed. However, so-called "dark money" is increasingly present. It is widely suspected to have an outsize influence on elections, public policy, and political discourse.

The U.S. Supreme Court has held that financial contributions by individuals and groups to political campaigns are a form of free speech protected by the First Amendment.[81] The ELCA acknowledges that publicly accountable financial contributions are both legal and basic to campaigning. They demonstrate a level of commitment consistent with a donor's views. Historically, laws often have included reporting requirements for disclosure of a contributor's name, address, and occupation. Individuals who choose to engage in contributing are expected to adhere to the appropriate laws and consider the implications such disclosures could have with their employer(s) or other entities.

Though some federal, state, and local laws continue to regulate the sources and contribution limits for elections, it is widely recognized that recent Supreme Court opinions have altered the system of campaign finance.[82] As a result, the expansive influence of money in elections and politics has become an ever more dominant feature of public life.

Democracy is threatened if those with the most disposable income have the dominant voice with politicians while those with less are effectively silenced.

The ELCA affirms that every citizen should have the opportunity to play a free and active part in the functioning of our communities. However, the ability to be heard should not be effectively limited to those individuals, organizations, or corporations that have above-average financial wealth and resources at their disposal.

Democracy is threatened if those with the most disposable income have the dominant voice with politicians while those with less are effectively silenced. Free speech does not include the right to drown out the speech of one's neighbors. To do so is to obstruct equitable roles for all participants in a society.

This church urges state and federal lawmakers to adopt legislation that sets limits on campaign and other political contributions. Likewise, legislation is needed to increase transparency in our elections and political processes through financial reporting by public officials, including the judiciary, about all contributions and gifts. It is up to legislators to take steps that lead to the transparency of overpowering corporate and super PAC money that distorts the political debate and influences our representatives. Our church urges policies and reforms that help to:[83]

- Increase transparency for and public awareness of both political candidates' campaign contributors and financial reporting.
- Hold corporations publicly accountable for lobbying of trade associations that contradicts their publicly proclaimed standards.

- Expand the ability of citizens across the economic spectrum to run for political office.
- Reduce the power of wealth to shape political debate and media influence, including through political advertising.

Article 44 ELCA teaching has long held that it is the proper concern of government to regulate aspects of social life to provide for the safety and well-being of its people. This church also recognizes that sometimes government policies, statutes, regulations, and judicial opinions harm well-being more than they promote it. Harm results from poorly conceived and implemented policies and from intentional actions that discriminate against some in favor of others.

Civic participation cannot be fully realized without confronting the structural barriers that limit access for many.

There is a critical distinction between fallible structure and structured oppression. Government is fallible because it is made up of humans. It has not served its purpose when its goals, policies, and programs are poorly designed or implemented, or cause undue waste or hardship. In contrast, government becomes oppressive when its goals, policies, and programs are designed or transformed into vehicles for oppressing the neighbor—such as voter suppression laws or gerrymandering. Civic participation cannot be fully realized without confronting the structural barriers that limit access for many.[84] These barriers, which function to silence voices and restrict public engagement, disproportionately affect already marginalized communities and contradict both democratic ideals and the biblical call to seek justice.

All public servants have a duty to ensure that government remains true to its purpose of protecting and fostering the common good. Public partnerships between nonprofits (which include all faith-based organizations) and the private sector can be means to enhance the work of both partners when dedicated to the common good. Finally, when government goes astray, members of the public have an obligation to seek reform through the procedures of democratic self-rule.

It is not possible for this church, or any civic actor, to identify a complete set of ethical norms that apply in all cases for discerning failures in civic and political life. Some criteria for discernment are elaborated on in the articles of this statement and in previous ELCA social messages and social statements.[85]

However, at a minimum, discernment regarding these everyday but weighty questions should strive to include the perspectives of those affected as well as fair representation of those served. That is the starting point for mutual self-determination and deciding whether the neighbor is being well served.

Article 45 The ELCA has worshiping communities in Washington, D.C., and several of the U.S. territories, e.g., Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The ELCA's Caribbean Synod, in fact, consists largely of several of these territories. This fact and the lives of millions of people in these areas urge our church to discern the responsibility of the United States for these areas under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Congress as possessions or unincorporated territories. The ELCA recognizes that issues pertaining to the relationship between these territories and the wider U.S. society are manifold and complex, but they must not be ignored.

This church recognizes the political relationship between the U.S. government and its unincorporated territories as problematic because of the inherent inequality between the territories and the states. There is also the specter of continued colonialist relationships in which territories lack any real power for self-determination. Territories get a representative in Congress with voice but no vote, despite residents being required to sign up for military selective service or having a long and distinguished record of service to the U.S. Territorial residents may be required to pay taxes but do not have equitable representation. Many believe that the U.S. Congress has actually undermined the democratic processes in the territories.[86]

There is also the specter of continued colonialist relationships in which territories lack any real power for self-determination.

This church recognizes complicating factors. One of those is the legacy of racism, since the vast majority of local residents in all the territories belong to racially minoritized groups—historically Black, Indigenous, Latiné, and Pacific Islander people.

The relationship between U.S.-based churches and the territories is also complicated because the churches were complicit in colonizing territories, exploiting them economically, and stripping their ancestral inhabitants of their religious and spiritual traditions.[87] The goal of converting people to Christianity was deeply entangled with expansionist ideology. As Lutherans, we believe that the Holy Spirit brings faith to people—it should not be forced or coerced by human action.

Churches bear a responsibility to help repair the harm done. Intentional, humble listening is the starting point for the principle of mutual self-determination and the first step on the path toward justice and healing. This process of careful listening can be difficult and challenging. However, when rooted in a people's sincere willingness to understand one another, it can lead to new possibilities for reparation, healing, and wholeness.[88]

This church urges its members, its ecumenical partners, and others of goodwill to foster and facilitate processes of listening and accountability between the territories and those in positions of power over them in the U.S. government. Consistent with the principle of mutual self-determination (Article 22), the ELCA also is committed to advocating for equality in government representation for the District of Columbia[89] and U.S. territories, and for their economic and social equity.

Article 46 American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians are U.S. citizens with unique, historical relationships to the U.S. Federally recognized tribes have sovereignty as Tribal Nations, and the U.S. federal government has a federal trust responsibility with those nations.[90] This sovereignty and the federal trust responsibility are based variously on treaties, the U.S. Constitution, and Supreme Court decisions.

In these histories, treaties and other legal guarantees repeatedly were *not* honored by European settlers and those who followed as they swept across the North American continent. Native people

have endured horrid racial, social, and economic oppression that constitutes some of the most shameful chapters in American history. The ELCA, with others in this country, recognizes that this dreadful history must be acknowledged, the status of Native Americans in the United States protected, and efforts at reconciliation and justice increased.[91]

There are many layers to the history, but all must recognize that it is grounded in the Doctrine of Discovery, which originated in 15th-century papal bulls.[92] The doctrine was introduced into United States law by U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Marshall in *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823). This decision stipulated that the discovery of territory previously unknown to Europeans gave the discovering nation title to territory against all other European nations, and that this title could be perfected by possession.

Though global in origin, this principle undergirded the actions of people who made claims on Native lands in North America.[93] Justified by this doctrine, the settlers who moved across North America, including predecessors of this church, claimed Indian lands as their own property.

The legal doctrine was plainly rooted in Christian discourse. The ELCA has acknowledged that the doctrine "created a theological framework that supported racism, colonialism, and the annihilation of Indigenous people. Today it continues to support those evils and injustices found in our church, U.S. law, and legal interpretation."[94]

This church has acknowledged and called for repentance of its complicity in the colonialism that continues to harm tribal governments and tribal members.

The ELCA has joined other religious bodies in explicitly repudiating this European-derived doctrine, calling it an "improper mixing of the power of the church and the power of the sword."[95] This church has acknowledged and called for repentance of its complicity in the colonialism that continues to harm tribal governments and tribal members.[96]

Early in its life, the ELCA named and acknowledged the sovereignty of federally recognized Tribal Nations and committed

to speaking out for their just treatment.[97] This social statement reaffirms this church's stance on the importance of that sovereignty. It calls for and commits this church to support just policy in treaty rights, tribal sovereignty, religious freedom, and other matters that affect the civic well-being of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

In particular, this statement calls upon the U.S. federal government, its agencies, and its residents, along with all other governments, to:

- Honor the legal trust relationship the U.S. federal government has with Tribal Nations or federally recognized tribes, acknowledging their sovereignty, self-determination, and self- governance.
- Be guided by concern for truth, justice, reconciliation, visibility, equity, and healing as central to these sovereign relationships.
- Prioritize consultation with Tribal Nations that ensures equity and honors parity with them.
- Give particular attention to policies and legislation that uphold sovereignty and increase Native American self-determination.
- Support efforts to increase voter registration and access to polling places and early voting while opposing state efforts to raise barriers to the ballot box.
- Engage in careful listening and consultation with Native Americans on matters with environmental impact that affect their original and sovereign land.

Article 47 Comprehensive, honest civics education is an essential element for revitalized civic life. It provides the building blocks of a society. The ELCA has addressed the social institution of education in the United States and is on record that schools "ought to teach the principles and virtues of living together in responsible freedom in a democratic society, which includes respect for the diverse cultures and beliefs of their students."[98]

To have a strong democracy, members of the public must know how civic institutions are supposed to function and how they

are called to participate. A comprehensive, honest civics curriculum therefore must teach the whole story of U.S. history in all its aspirations, successes, and failures. It should emphasize the values inherent in the U.S. Constitution. It should draw upon what the community holds in common and explore in a fair and impartial way those issues on which the community is divided.

To have a strong democracy, members of the public must know how civic institutions are supposed to function and how they are called to participate.

Essential to that is both factual accuracy and including works of the many groups that have been part of the American story. The ELCA encourages curricula that promote understanding of the full history of U.S. government operations and cultures; it opposes legislation that prevents students from a full engagement with those stories.

Article 48 No single solution will reduce the increasingly fevered polarization of the U.S. or repair the damage that endangers our social fabric and democratic republic. One fundamental element is a renewed, constructively grounded, and thoughtful commitment to civic life across this nation. Hyperpartisan polarization is, in part, the result of individuals withdrawing from widespread participation in civic life. This church holds that the return to a robust civic engagement as a public good is both our calling as Christians and our responsibility as residents of this country.

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The social message "Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in a Democracy" addresses at greater length the nature and purpose of a healthy civic engagement, especially in relation to citizenship.[99] Among other elements, that message teaches that civic engagement takes numerous forms—informed voting, attendance at public meetings, holding public office, political party involvement, policy advocacy, community organizing, and nonviolent protest.

The message points out that civic engagement arises both from concern about disorder and injustice and from hope for the well-being of all. It affirms elements of a healthy civic engagement such as democratic self-governance, support for public servants, and well-crafted policies that foster justice, racial and social equity, and reconciliation. The ELCA urges its members and all residents of this society to contribute to and urge robust civic participation.

CONCLUSION

Article 49 "Your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread." As Jesus taught the disciples, so we pray in this church.

We do so in concert with Christians down through the ages and into the future who, in the Spirit, are witnesses to God's will for just peace and well-being. We do so in faith, understanding that God's creative power is shared throughout all creation and is given to human beings to use in civic life for the good of all.

May we walk humbly with you, O loving God, as we strive for justice, kindness, and peace in human society. May we as your church live wisely by the civic use of the Law in joining your purpose toward *shalom*. May we, as your people, join all others of goodwill in the work of government as gift, aspiration, and responsibility to serve the common good of "we the people." May we, as your forgiven ones, be empowered by your gracious Word and Sacraments to courageously seek the well-being of all through our participation in civic life.

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ENDNOTES

[1] The Small Catechism, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 357, hereafter referred to as "BC 2000."

[2] ELCA social teaching documents can be found at www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements. In particular, see the 2020 social message "Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in a Democracy," hereafter "Government and Civic Engagement."

[3] Christians should take seriously the comprehensive vision embedded in this fundamental biblical term and what it means for our calling. The term itself also has a long, rich history as a central concept within Judaism, where its usage and emphasis sometimes differ but from which Christians can learn. The two religious communities can explore together how best to understand the biblical concept and, on this basis, to find ways to work together to advance the divine intention for humans and for the entire created world.

[4] The Augsburg Confession, XVI, BC 2000, 48.

[5] See further explanation in the ELCA social statement *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2011), 10, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[6] *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1991), 4, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements, hereafter *The Church in Society*.

[7] "Affirmation of Baptism" in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pew Edition* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 236, hereafter referred to as "*ELW*."

[8] The traditional Lutheran term for this was "masks of God," but today that term suggests duplicity and passivity.

9 Luther refers to sin in many ways but often as an excessive concern with the self at the expense of the neighbor. He describes the human condition as *homo in curvatus in se* (being turned in on oneself). See, for example, Martin Luther, "Lectures on Romans" in *Luther's Works*, vol. 25., ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, et al. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 345.

[10] This reference to sin addresses cases where individual and systemic patterns have perpetuated great harm through internalized inferiority of different kinds, especially among those who have been marginalized in our society because of their race, class, gender, or sexual identity, to name but a few categories. As a result of our broken trust in God, human relationships also become broken and distorted. This reference is not directed at cases of diminished self-worth that are all too familiar to anyone who has experienced depression or anxiety disorders, or has cared for someone with a mental illness. For more guidance in these complex cases, see the social message "The Body of Christ and Mental Illness" (2012) and the social statement *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* (2019).

[11] The Formula of Concord asserts a "third function [use] of the Law," (FC Ep. VI and FC SD VI, BC 2000), but debate continues in Lutheran circles on whether a third use is redundant. Some hold that the third use is important because it

makes clear that the externals of the Law are to be performed by the godly not in hostile fearfulness but in loving faithfulness. Others think this unnecessary. Since the externals of the Law remain the same regardless of the disposition of an individual's faith and love, this statement notes the presence of the debate and will not otherwise engage in it.

[12] Other analogies and phrases also are used in the Lutheran tradition, and one common term has been "two kingdoms." However, in the New Testament, "kingdom" is reserved for the reign of God alone. The reformers' insight that God works through two different strategies is vital, and the reformers grounded this insight not in actual kingdoms but in Paul's eschatology of the two ages, in Adam and in Christ (Romans 5:12).

[13] "Government and Civic Engagement in the United States" (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2020), 8, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-messages.

[14] This description of the tension appears in more detail in the ELCA social statement *The Church in Society*, 2, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[15] BC 2000, Apology, Article IV, 22-24, BC 2000, 124.

[16] See *For Peace in God's World* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1995), 20, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[17] The "Continuing Resolutions" section in the ELCA constitution calls Unaltered Augsburg Confession a "true witness" to the Scriptures (CBCR 2.05).

[18] Large Catechism, third article of the Creed, Article 3, para. 67, BC 2000, 492.

[19] "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns," 12, 19, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/addressing-social-concerns.

[20] See "A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment" (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2019), www.elca.org/ecumenical.

[21] See, for instance, Peter Levine and William A. Galston, "America's Civic Condition: A Glance at the Evidence," Brookings Institution, September 1, 1997, www.brookings.edu/articles/americas-civic-condition-a-glance-at-the-evidence/, accessed October 13, 2023, and Union of International Associations, "Decline in Civic Participation," *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*, encyclopedia.uia.org/en/problem/decline-civic-participation, accessed October 24, 2023.

[22] See, for example, *The Church in Society*, which sets the foundation; www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[23] "Government and Civic Engagement," www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[24] *The Church in Society*, 4, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[25] The bullet points are suggestive and summary examples drawn from the ELCA Constitution, Chapter 4; or from *The Church in Society*, 9; www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[26] *The Church in Society*, 4, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[27] Ibid., 4. The source is Martin Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 82" (1530) in "Selected Psalms II," *Works*, vol. 13, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan et al. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956).

[28] For more on ELCA faith-based organizing, see www.elca.org/our-work/publicly-engaged-church/organizing-for-mission/upcoming-events.

[29] ELCA Constitution 16.12.D21, 118.

[30] The ELCA's corporate witness is expressed, for instance, in the work of the Witness in Society team. See www.elca.org/our-work/publicly-engaged-church.

[31] Such collaborations are specifically encouraged in the ELCA's ecumenical and interreligious policy documents. See "A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment" (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1991) and "A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment" (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2019), (especially commitments 7, 8, and 9), www.elca.org/ecumenical.

[32] One fuller treatment on this topic is Alexia Salvatierra and Peter Heltzel's *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013).

[33] "Government and Civic Engagement," 9-13, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[34] *ELW*, 228. These are two of the responsibilities entrusted to the baptized.

[35] Model Congregation Constitution C9.23; this wording is found in the purpose statements of all three expressions of the ELCA.

[36] The Augsburg Confession, V, teaches that the office is instituted by God "so that we may obtain faith." BC 2000, 41.

[37] Article 28 of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession challenged claims by those with ecclesial offices to possess holy knowledge and privilege for political affairs of their time. BC 2000, 289.

[38] *The Church in Society*, 4.

[39] Apology, XVI, BC 2000, 231.

[40] For example, Johannes Bugenhagen, Luther's pastor, was deployed to several European government bodies to advocate for and help draft laws creating community chests, a welfare net to assist the poor; see *The Forgotten Luther: Reclaiming the Social-Economic Dimension of the Reformation*, eds. Carter Lindberg and Paul A. Wee (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2016). For other examples, see Walter Altmann, *Luther and Liberation: A Latin American Perspective*, 2nd ed., trans. Thia Cooper (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016), 70-132.

[41] Large Catechism, Lord's Prayer, IV, para. 75, BC 2000, 450.

[42] There were some during the Reformation period who took the idea of justification by grace alone through faith to mean that they had no obligations to society or their neighbors. In other words, they understood God's sovereign act to be the end of God's power for them, not its beginning. Luther, among others, vehemently opposed this distortion and consistently held that the point of one's

Christian freedom was for love of *neighbor*; the purpose of the gift of faith was to free one to improve the world. Like God's creative power, faith's power is fulfilled not by hoarding it (which Luther says marks unbelief, not faith) but by increasing the power of others.

[43] *For Peace in God's World*, 13, elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements. Theologian Paul Tillich calls this idea "the strange work of love to destroy what is against love"; see *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 49.

[44] Christians look to Matthew 7:12 as the Golden Rule; other traditions have a comparable standard in their writings.

[45] For one comprehensive discussion of the Constitution's history, including its uniqueness and history of amendments, see Akhil Reed Amar, *America's Constitution: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 2005).

[46] For an excellent discussion of the Articles of Confederation and their context, see George William Van Cleve, *We Have Not a Government: The Articles of Confederation and the Road to the Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

[47] Preamble to the U.S. Constitution, constitution.congress.gov/constitution/preamble.

[48] Article 11 of the Barbary Treaties, signed at Tripoli on November 4, 1796. Treaties are binding acts of state and help articulate a country's self-understanding on the international stage. Text accessed September 1, 2023, avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796t.asp.

[49] For example, see *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 597 U.S. 507 (2022), allowing a coach to lead public prayer after a high school football game, and *Carson v. Makin*, 596 U.S. 767, 806-810 (2022), in which a dissenting opinion analyzes Supreme Court decisions since 2017 that have diverged from the court's historical position that the Establishment Clause prohibits governments from funding religious activities.

[50] For example, see *American Legion v. American Humanist Association*, 588 U.S. 19 (2019), in which a cross-shaped World War I monument on public land was found not to violate the Establishment Clause.

[51] See *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962) and *Abington School District v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963).

[52] For this reason, many state constitutions expressly prohibit public funding of houses of worship or places of religious instruction. Though direct public funding may be prohibited, churches and religious organizations qualify for exemption from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). In addition, property tax exemptions for houses of worship do not violate the Establishment Clause. *Walz v. Tax Commission of the City of New York*, 397 U.S. 664 (1970).

[53] See *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*, 565 U.S. 171 (2012), which found that federal discrimination laws do not apply to religious organizations' selection of religious leaders.

[54] See *Watson v. Jones*, 80 U.S. 679, 733 (1871) and *Serbian Orthodox Diocese v. Milivojevich*, 426 U.S. 696, 714 (1976).

[55] See *American Legion v. American Humanist Association*, 588 U.S. 19 (2019).

[56] See *Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye, Inc. v. City of Hialeah*, 508 U.S. 520 (1993).

[57] Nevertheless the Supreme Court determined that states prohibiting use of school vouchers for religion-based private schools violate the Free Exercise Clause. See *Carson v. Makin*, 596 U.S. 767 (2022). In addition, at the time of this writing, the Supreme Court agreed to decide whether a state may fund a proposed religious charter school. See *Oklahoma Statewide Charter School Board, et al. v. Drummond*, Docket Nos. 24-394/396 (2025).

[58] See *Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia*, Inc. v. Comer, 582 U.S. 449 (2017).

[59] See resources.elca.org/?_categories=faith-and-society&_subcategory=social-teachings-predecessor-churches.

[60] Courts review laws and government actions using the "strict scrutiny" standard—the highest and most stringent standard of judicial review—when they appear to infringe upon fundamental constitutional rights, including free exercise of religion. See *U.S. v. Carolene Products Co.*, 304 U.S. 144, 152 n. 4 (1938); *Sherbert v. Verner*, 374 U.S. 398 (1963); and *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972).

[61] A state interest (also known as a government interest or a public interest) is "compelling" if it is essential or necessary rather than a matter of choice, preference, or discretion. See *Palmore v. Sidoti*, 466 U.S. 429, 432 (1984). Examples of compelling state interests include protection of public health and safety, regulation of violent crime, national security, and military necessity.

[62] In this case, a state was allowed to deny unemployment benefits to a Native American person fired for violating a state law that criminalized peyote use even as part of a traditional religious ceremony. See *Employment Division v. Smith*, 494 U.S. 872 (1990).

[63] See Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb et seq.; *City of Boerne v. Flores*, 521 U.S. 507 (1997); and *Gonzales v. O Centro Espírita Beneficente União do Vegetal*, 546 U.S. 418 (2006).

[64] For example, see Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), 42 U.S.C. § 2000cc et seq. Also, at the time of the drafting of this social statement, a majority of U.S. states have adopted some version of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993.

[65] A government interest is "important" when the interest is more than a legitimate goal or objective but is less than a compelling interest. See *Craig v. Boren*, 429 U.S. 190 (1976). For example, when a government action limits certain types of free speech or makes gender-based classifications that could violate constitutional equal protection rights, the government must show that its action furthers an important government interest (such as regulating the time, place, and manner of speech in a public forum or remediating past societal discrimination) by means that are substantially related to that interest.

[66] For example, see *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc*., 573 U.S. 682 (2014), which exempts privately held for-profit corporations from federal laws affecting employees, based on the religious objections of their owners.

[67] This famous metaphor seems to have originated with Roger Williams but was most famously used by Thomas Jefferson in his personal writings.

[68] *The Church in Society*, 3, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements. As the church (the ecclesiastical estate) interacts with the state (the political estate), it is not the Gospel (narrow sense) but the Law that it is called to speak. This is the civil or first use of the Law.

[69] "Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2022), 4.03.n., www.elca.org/constitution.

[70] See constitution.congress.gov/constitution/preamble.

[71] The Johnson Amendment is a provision in the U.S. tax code, since 1954, that prohibits all 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates.

[72] The designation "function-driven interactionist approach" is found in Roger A. Willer, "Religious Organizations and Government: An Ecclesial Lutheran 'Take,'" *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 62:1, Spring 2023.

[73] A variety of religious nationalisms exist in the U.S. and globally. Many are addressed in "The Problem of Religious Nationalism, in the US and Globally: A Policy Statement of the National Council of Churches," nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness/the-problem-of-religious-nationalism-in-the-us-and-globally-a-policy-statement-of-the-national-council-of-churches. The presence in the United States of Christian Zionism is one example. See "Hope for the Future: A Study Document for Renewing Jewish-Christian Relations," lutheranworld.org/resources/document-hope-future, and the "Christian Zionism" issue of *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*, May 2007, learn.elca.org/jle/issue/may-2007-christian-zionism, as helpful starting points.

[74] *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States* (London: Oxford University Press, 2020) is one well-supported social science source on Christian nationalism.

[75] Cited from Stephen Wolfe, *The Case for Christian Nationalism* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2022), 208. The sentence after the quotation summarizes a longer section of the book.

[76] Amanda Tyler, *How to End Christian Nationalism* (Broadleaf Books, 2024), 69.

[77] The term "mega-identities" has been used by several writers, but for more see Ezra Klein, *Why We're Polarized* (New York: Avid Reader Press, 2020).

[78] In 2024, the ELCA Conference of Bishops issued a common statement on the need to speak the truth; see www.elca.org/news-and-events/8247.

[79] This saying is attributed to satirist Jonathan Swift, Anglican cleric (1667-1745).

[80] In one study, researchers found that falsehoods were 70% more likely to be reshared on a social media platform (X, formerly Twitter) than true statements.

Moreover, humans were more likely to repeat or amplify a false statement than automated bots were. See "Study: False News Spreads Faster Than the Truth," MIT Sloan School of Management, March 8, 2018, mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/study-false-news-spreads-faster-truth. Another study (www.newsguardtech.com/misinformation-monitor/september-2022/), of the TikTok app, found "for a sampling of searches on prominent news topics, almost 20 percent of the videos presented as search results contained misinformation."

[81] See, e.g., *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1 (1976).

[82] For example, in *Citizens United v. FEC*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010), the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed that corporations are protected by the First Amendment's right to free speech and that statutes restricting corporations' independent expenditures are unconstitutional.

[83] For more, see the ELCA document at resources.elca.org/advocacy/money-in-politics/.

[84] Many recognize that poverty, systemic racism, immigration status, language barriers, and lack of affordable transportation and childcare all frustrate equitable access to civic life. This church supports the work of advocacy, accompaniment, and the reimagining of public systems so that all people, especially those historically excluded, may share in shaping the life we hold in common.

[85] "Government and Civic Engagement," 13, or see various social statements as they address economic life, health care, and other issues, at www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[86] A case in point is the Promesa law (see oversightboard.pr.gov/debt/), imposed on Puerto Rico as a condition to adjust the commonwealth's debt. Its Board of Fiscal Control, appointed by the U.S. Congress, has power to veto laws passed by the duly elected members of Puerto Rico's local legislature as well as the power to block initiatives from the duly elected governor.

[87] See José David Rodríguez, *Caribbean Lutherans: The History of the Church in Puerto Rico* (Fortress Press, 2024).

[88] This is illustrated by the Truth and Healing Movement, launched by the ELCA with the American Indian and Alaska Native people. For more information, visit www.elca.org/truthandhealing.

[89] The ELCA holds "that equitable voting representation in Congress be granted to the citizens of the District of Columbia." Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Social Policy Resolution CA01.07.62, "Congressional Voting Representation for the District of Columbia" (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2001), resources.elca.org/faith-and-society/dc-congressional-voting-spr01/.

[90] The federal Indian trust responsibility is a legal obligation under which the United States "has charged itself with moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust" toward Indian tribes (*Seminole Nation v. United States*, 316 U.S. 286 [1942]). This obligation was first discussed by Chief Justice John Marshall in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S. 1 (1831), www.bia.gov, accessed February 10, 2025.

[91] "Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to American Indian and Alaska Native People" (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2016), 2, tinyurl.com/ywt42njz.

[92] Several papal bulls in the 15th century established the doctrine, which legally codified land acquisition, colonialism, and religious intolerance. One easily accessible discussion of the complex meaning and history may be found in en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discovery_doctrine (accessed November 19, 2023).

[93] "Declaration," 2.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., citing Augsburg Confession, XXVIII, Latin text, BC 2000.

[96] ELCA Social Policy Resolution CA16.02.04., "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery," www.elca.org/our-work/congregations-and-synods/ministries-of-diverse-cultures-and-communities/indigenous-ministries-and-tribal-relations/repudiation.

[97] ELCA Social Policy Resolution CA91.5.28., "1992: Year of Remembrance, Repentance, and Renewal."

[98] *Our Calling in Education* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2007), 26-27, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

[99] "Government and Civic Engagement," 14, www.elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/social-statements.

GLOSSARY

These terms are **underlined** when used for the first time in a statement article.

Alien work: See "Proper versus alien work" below.

Book of Concord: A collection of writings from 1580 that were subscribed to by some 80 royal and municipal governments. It was published on the 50th anniversary of the 1530 Augsburg Confession and is generally understood as an authoritative, confessional set of documents for the Evangelical/Lutheran movement across the globe. The most widely affirmed writings include the Augsburg Confession, its Apology, and Luther's two catechisms. The ELCA accepts the entire book as authoritative.

Christian nationalism: A cultural framework that idealizes and advocates fusion of highly selected Christian beliefs with U.S. civic life. This nationalistic ideology holds, among other things, that the U.S. Constitution was divinely inspired, that Christianity should be a privileged religion in the United States, and that this nation holds a uniquely privileged status in God's eyes. Proponents range from those who believe the U.S. legally should be declared a Christian nation to those involved in more virulent strains that are openly racist, patriarchal, and antidemocratic.

Church: Has multiple meanings that are largely dependent on context. Fundamentally "church" is the event of God's saving presence wherever two or three are gathered (Matthew 18:30). In the Lutheran tradition, this event is specifically identified with God's commands and promises in the proclamation of the Word and distribution of the Sacraments. In its widest sense, the word applies to the universal (catholic) body of Christ, describing all believers. "Church" is used to designate denominations (the ELCA, for example) but also local congregations, as in "going to my church." In this statement regarding civic life, "this church" or "our church" refers to the ELCA as a body that is part of the Church catholic.

Civic life: Activities and institutions in society that are not primarily individual or that occur within a family/household or private space. An activity is civic when it is in a public space, whether in one's neighborhood, state or nation, or beyond.

Common good: Has various definitions but is used here to denote what benefits a society in terms of justice and peace for all people and creation. It conveys the belief that the purpose of government is to seek these outcomes for the well-being of all members of the public.

Community of moral deliberation/discernment: A concept established in the first ELCA social statement, *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective*, as an element of the ELCA's identity to which our church is called to grow. The concept envisions the whole community praying for one another, studying Scripture, and wrestling together toward moral understanding and action. This approach to doing ethics is bottom-up rather than top-down. Romans 12:2 speaks of discernment, and Reformation writings such as the Smalcald Articles (III.4) present the idea as a mark of the church, that of "the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers and sisters" (Kolb and Wengert 2000, 319).

Confessions: Has wider meanings in Scripture and historical theology but, in this study, designates the ELCA's authorized teaching standard of the Book of Concord.

Corporate social responsibility: The means by which a corporation, nonprofit, or other organization intentionally specifies its contributions or responsibilities toward the well-being of society, especially in economic decisions. The Corporate Social Responsibility program of the ELCA, for instance, decides ELCA investment policy in socially responsible ways, as guided by ELCA social teaching. This program also enables dialogue between this church and representatives of the businesses with which it deals regarding the social implications of company practices.

Dark money: Campaign contributions in which the source of the money is not disclosed to the public but silently influences political discourse, election outcomes, and public policy.

Discernment: The practice of evaluating multiple factors in an issue to find an appropriate response that seems God-pleasing. It generally implies active theological or ethical reflection involving study, prayer, and dialogue. It seeks wisdom through God's Spirit as understood through a community process (Romans 12:1-2). (See also "Community of moral deliberation/discernment.")

Doctrine of Discovery: Several papal bulls in the 15th century established this doctrine, which legally codified—for European countries and settlers—land acquisition, colonialism, and religious intolerance in relation to Indigenous people.

Establishment Clause: The first clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It states that government "shall make no law regarding the establishment of religion." This means that government cannot establish a state/national religion or impose any form of worship or devotion upon members of the public. It does not mean that a person's religious commitments cannot or should not enter into or influence their public life in the form of political activity or broader civic engagement. (See also "Separation of church and state" and "Free exercise of religion.")

Ethics: The science and art of asking "How then shall we live?" or "What is the good?" Ethics implies extended reflection and dialogue toward critically considering, defining, negotiating, and determining what ought to be or what ought to be done. It is a practice done both by individuals and in community. Ethics involves analyzing a current, accepted moral idea to determine its rationale or ways it should be altered. The terms "ethics" and "morals" technically have different meaning, but are often used interchangeably. (See "Morality.")

Faith: Has many meanings and uses, even in a religious context, but the fundamental Lutheran understanding teaches that faith is a trusting response to and relationship with God. This relationship of trust is expressed through means such as active participation in religious communities and attention to key teachings of the Church universal.

Free Exercise Clause: The second phrase in the First Amendment ("Congress shall make no law … prohibiting the free exercise [of religion]") focuses on the relationship between faith and public/civic life. The first clause, prohibiting establishment of a state religion, clears the ground for the faithful to determine their own best way of exercising faith in their own public life. (See "Establishment Clause" and "Separation of church and state.")

God's sovereignty: Has had multiple meanings in Christian thinking but fundamentally describes God's supreme power or

God's rule and reign over and in the universe. This statement speaks theologically of God's sovereignty as the source of all power and thus of political sovereignty. Both power and sovereignty are fundamental to civic life. (See "Power.")

Justice: Generally refers to an underlying sense of fairness, right treatment, and reciprocity. This statement emphasizes the aspects of justice related to civic life and government. These include fair and equal treatment under the law, ending oppression based on power differences, and, as emphasized in the Scriptures, a right and wholesome relationship with God and within community.

Law and Gospel: Expresses a key Lutheran emphasis that God's Word and work in human society occur under different means. "Law" is understood to have two forms: (1) as a directive and corrective for society (first, or civil, use) and (2) as judgment on sin (second, or theological, use). "The Law" is a summary term for God's directives for human living, such as the Ten Commandments. "The Gospel" is the good news of God's mercy, received in faith on account of Jesus Christ.

Luther, Martin (1483-1546): German priest, theologian, author, and professor. Luther was a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation and is the namesake of Lutheranism.

Mega-identity: An interlocking set of social identifications: ethnic, religious, urban/rural, conservative/liberal. When these identifications cohere in a set that is semifixed and loaded with huge emotional stakes, they become a mega-identity that walls off people from others, especially those who don't share the same characteristics or beliefs.

Morality/morals: Originates from the Latin word *mores*, which designated the binding customs of a culture or society related to what is good or right. It designates an existing or already negotiated moral structure. In every society, certain actions, goals, and character traits are considered moral, immoral, or some combination thereof, according to established norms. "Ethics" and "morals" have different meaning but often are used interchangeably. (See "Ethics.")

Neighbor: Has multiple references but suggests a member of one's community. However, because humans live in multiple communities, the term can refer to a person in one's neighborhood or town, region, international community, or even ecological community.

Neighbor justice: Seeking to meet neighbors' needs for equality and equity in public life. Though rooted in the biblical directive to "love your neighbor as yourself," the term expresses how faith is active in love, seeking justice in relationships and in the structures of society.

Partisanship: Strong loyalty or blind adherence to a specific party, group, set of beliefs, or person.

Polarization: As used in this study, a partisanship so strong that partisans are rigidly set apart from other groups, whose beliefs and views are considered utterly opposite and most often inferior, dangerous to society, and unworthy of consideration. There is no value of or respect for "those people." In everyday speech, such polarization is often expressed in the saying "my way or the highway."

Politics: Comes from the Greek word *polis*, meaning the city or place of the people. As used here, designates the activities of deciding how to govern and order life in community. Politics in this sense is the activity through which people exercise decisions about "who gets what, when, where, and how" to fulfill the purpose that all may flourish. It is the necessary art of guiding or influencing government to seek the common good. (See "Common good.")

Political: That which relates to political activity. (See "Politics.")

Power: All power is grounded in God, who is all-powerful and whose sovereignty creates, sustains, and redeems creatures who are not God. Divine power is not a possession but a gift that aims to create power for others. Power is not merely sovereignty or the capacity to control. To the extent that acts of power, whether political or otherwise, are reduced to such control, they distort and pervert power because sovereignty is not an end in itself. Rather power reaches its end in the gift of power to and for the fulfillment of others. In Luther's theology, this understanding of

divine power is central to his theology of creation, justification by grace, and the Lord's Supper.

Proper versus alien work: "Proper" and "alien" are best known among Lutherans in connection to the distinction between the "proper work" of God in justifying sinners and the "alien work" of God in condemning sinners. However, these terms are theologically useful in related, if more general, meanings because the word "alien" comes from the Latin *alius*, meaning "other." In this statement, the distinction is made in terms of the calling of rostered ministers. The unique "proper work" of the ministry of the Word is defined in the historic Lutheran tradition and in our Confessions in terms of the proclamation of Christ's mediatorial and redemptive work, including justification, sanctification, and eternal life. At the same time, rostered ministers of the Word also necessarily engage in other kinds of work; these works can helpfully be described as "alien work."

Religious diversity: The state of affairs in which more than one religion is accepted within a society. In the United States, the term generally indicates a situation in which the society sees the value of each person having their own religious beliefs and practicing them openly and safely. This includes the freedom to practice no religion.

Rostered ministers: In the ELCA, includes all the ordained such as bishops, pastors, chaplains, and deacons.

Self-determination: Most basically, the ability of people or communities to determine their own objectives and actions in the mutuality of common life, with minimal external compulsion. In terms of political authority, it means that people have the right to freely choose their government within the collective life of a society.

Self-governance: The ability of people to play a fundamental role in self-rule, in government.

Separation of church and state: Often used as shorthand for the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution, which forbids state-sponsored religion. However, this applied meaning of the phrase is contested. For example, many people believe it means that religious convictions or religious institutions should have no legitimate role in social or political life. The ELCA constitution, on

the other hand, endorses institutional separation with functional interaction and argues that the church as a civic body must avoid partisanship but engage in civic life because God calls people of faith to join God's activity there.

Shalom: Hebrew word used in the Scriptures to denote God's intent for whole, healthy, peaceful, joyous, just relations among all elements in God's creation. It is often translated as "peace," but it means far more than mere peace of mind or absence of violence. In the Scriptures, *shalom* indicates universal well-being and wholeness—a state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed. Though the term appears in what Christians call the Old Testament, it also has a long, rich history as a central and complex concept within Judaism that Christians should acknowledge and respect.

Sin: Expresses the human proclivity for being in opposition to God. Sin is variously described as disobedience, lack of trust, self-centeredness, pride, or complacency, among other things. Sin occurs in an individual's thoughts and actions but also is expressed in organizations, institutions, and systems. In the last three cases, it is often termed "structural" or "systemic" sin.

Solidarity: A kinship within all of nature that issues from God's creative activity. The term expresses the contention that the interests of the entire community of life should be legitimate concerns when decisions are made and actions evaluated.

Sovereignty: Can be used in various ways but, in this statement, refers to ultimate authority in a particular arena.

Systemic sin: A theological theme recognizing that social and political systems are developed by humans and that, because of this, the sin embedded in them is greater than the sin of any individual action. For instance, consider a society in which a racial minority has dramatically less access to political power because of laws or widespread discrimination and, therefore, has less chance of living and thriving.

Theology: Can indicate academic or abstract reflection but, in this statement, generally refers to faithful reflection about anything related to God. Every person of faith, therefore, engages in

theology when expressing thoughts about God, the church, God in relation to civic life, etc.

Theology of the cross: Refers to a theology that sees "the cross" (that is, divine self-revelation) as the only source of ultimate knowledge concerning who God is and how God saves. Identified with the writings of Martin Luther, it contrasts with the "theology of glory," which places great emphasis on human capacity and human reason to know who God is and what God wills.

Three estates: Used to designate the fundamental structures in human society (originally in Christian Europe). During the Reformation period, the three overarching social functions (estates) were identified as (1) the church, (2) the government, and (3) the family (which included all of society's economic functions). The concept remains useful as a teaching about God's active involvement in society and human roles therein, but it must be understood in contemporary terms.

Two kingdoms: A traditional theological term described more accurately by other terms from the Reformation. (See "Two reigns, hands, or regimens of God.")

Two reigns, hands, or regimens of God: Refers to Lutheran teaching that distinguishes between God's activity in the world through secular means and God's gracious activity through explicitly gracious means in the church. God's "right-hand reign" conveys the tangible power of God's love and forgiveness to people of faith, which stirs us to forgive others, to express mutual love and care, and to strive for justice. God's "left-hand reign" works through secular roles, structures, and institutions to protect and foster the social well-being of the people and creation. The ELCA teaches that both of God's two reigns (hands, ways, regimens) are necessary for governing creation and that they are interrelated.

Vocation: In this statement, a calling from God that comes as both gift and responsibility. The ELCA understands baptismal vocation as fundamental; it is God's saving call, lived out in joyful response through service to the neighbor in daily life. This overarching vocation is expressed in multiple callings (or specific vocations) such as being a responsible citizen, parent, student, worker, etc.

Word: Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom God's message to us, as both Law and Gospel, reveals God's judgment and mercy. The ELCA constitution holds that the Word is expressed in creation and in the history of Israel but is centered in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament are the written Word of God in the sense that they are inspired by God's Spirit as the writers tell the story and announce God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Through them, God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

Works righteousness: As conceived during the Reformation period, describes the practice or belief that some level of right activity, belief, or character is required to achieve righteousness in God's eyes. The Lutheran tradition encourages people to seek righteousness (right action, character, and relationship) in civic life but emphasizes the biblical teaching that no works righteousness can achieve God's salvation (Romans 3:21). Righteousness is given by God's mercy as a gift on account of Christ and is received by faith.

IMPLEMENTING RESOLUTIONS

Resolved:

1. To urge members of this church to pray, participate in, and advocate for civic life in the United States that reflects God's activity and call, which seek both the well-being of all people and a creation marked by justice and peace;

2. To encourage members to draw inspiration from the ELCA social message "Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in a Democracy," which highlights the call to embrace daily our baptismal vocation through active participation in self-governance;

3. To reaffirm and encourage use across our church of other existing social teaching and policy documents that promote robust and wise civic participation, such as those that address matters of voting, campaign finance, public service, nonviolent protest, and the like;

4. To recognize with deep appreciation the commitments and efforts by those in this church—including but not limited to churchwide organization teams such as Witness in Society and Building Resilient Communities, as well as the many church-related social ministry organizations and educational institutions—that contribute to healthy civic life through service, advocacy, or education;

5. To urge members of this church to pray, participate in, and advocate for civic life in the United States by supporting efforts to increase voter registration and access to polling places, and to help dismantle structural barriers to the ballot box and to civic participation more broadly, all as part of this church's faithful civic witness.

6. To call upon all members of this church to intentionally evaluate the dangers of polarization and the threats posed by disregard for democratic practices and self-government;

7. To encourage ELCA worshiping assemblies and ministries to build bridges, foster reconciliation, practice communal discernment, provide opportunities for difficult conversations, and address polarization constructively in their communities;

8. To encourage synod leaders, in collaboration with other appropriate bodies, to explore creating or expanding state public policy advocacy in their domains as part of the ELCA Witness in Society network, similar to those already existing in several states;

9. To direct the churchwide office, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, theologians, and ethicists, rostered leaders, and elected lay leaders, to develop guidelines and protections consistent with this social statement regarding the roles in civic life of representatives of this church who have official responsibility to preach, teach, and lead on behalf of our church;

10. To call upon the publishing and educational ministries of this church, including but not limited to Augsburg Fortress Publishers, to consider the need for civics education curricula, civic participation guidance, and related theological reflection, and to create these in multiple formats, including multimedia and online;

11. To call upon the publishing and educational ministries of this church, including but not limited to Augsburg Fortress Publishers, to explore the need for resources dedicated to nonviolent resistance and peaceful engagement in civic life, with special concern for materials dedicated to religious and political histories, liturgical guidance, and training for rostered and lay leaders;

12. To direct the churchwide office, including but not limited to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and churchwide organization teams such as Witness in Society and Building Resilient Communities, to serve this church's commitments to racial justice and civic engagement in accordance with the best practices of the church. This includes centering the voices of people most impacted by injustice, working for equitable

representation in leadership, and assessing the impact of its public witness on historically marginalized communities.

13. To direct the Witness in Society team of the churchwide organization and to call upon all expressions of this church in their advocacy efforts to support and advocate for policies and laws consistent with this social statement, and to give sustained attention to the fresh convictions and commitments found here in the creation of programs and projects;

14. To direct the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop to share this statement as a resource for dialogue, discernment, and collaboration with ecumenical and interreligious partners toward the well-being of all people and creation from within the U.S. context;

15. To urge faculty, staff, and administrators of ELCA-related colleges, universities, and seminaries to renew and emphasize education toward callings in public service, and to model and encourage dynamic civic participation among their students;

16. To direct appropriate units in the churchwide organization, coordinated by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to establish or oversee processes for implementation of these resolutions, with an initial report to the fall meeting of the ELCA Church Council in 2027.

A social statement on ...

Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

ELCAOB1037



CONSTITUTIONS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America®

as adopted by the Constituting Convention
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
(April 30, 1987)
and
as amended by subsequent
Churchwide Assemblies and Church Councils
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Edition current as of August 2025

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INTRODUCTION

The *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* reflect the theology and polity of this church as it organizes itself to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, share the sacraments, reach out to the neighbor with good news, and share the love of God in the world. Each expression of this church—churchwide, synod, and congregation—is held together in a relationship of interdependence that encourages each to respond to its context. These documents also demonstrate our commitment to seeing ourselves with others as part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

These documents are the result of a process that saw the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1988. They are rooted in Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the experiences of predecessor church bodies. Intentionally connected to this past, they also have been amended over the years to address the current context in which we have been called to serve. They incorporate important provisions that unite us as this church, yet provide organizational flexibility to congregations and synods. As such, they should facilitate ministry, not inhibit it.

We, as members of this church, find ourselves consulting these documents frequently to guide, direct, and assist us in mission and ministry together. They remind us that this is not our church, but God's church, and help us to live into our vision of a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

Secretary Sue E. Rothmeyer
August 2, 2025

RESTATED
ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
OF
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®

ARTICLE I

The name of this corporation shall be:

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

ARTICLE II

This corporation (sometimes referred to herein as the "Church") is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious purposes and, specifically, this corporation shall constitute a Lutheran church the purpose and functions of which shall be as specified from time to time in the Constitution of this corporation.

Within the framework and limitations of these purposes, the Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious purposes and shall have such powers as are consistent with the foregoing purposes, including the power to acquire and receive funds and property of every kind and nature whatsoever, whether by purchase, conveyance, lease, gift, grant, bequest, legacy, devise, or otherwise, and to own, hold, expend, make gifts, grants, and contributions of, and to convey, transfer, and dispose of any funds and property and the income therefrom for the furtherance of the purposes of the Church herein above set forth, or any of them, and to lease, mortgage, encumber, and use the same, and such other powers which are consistent with the foregoing purposes and which are afforded to the Church by the Minnesota Nonprofit Corporation Act, and by any future laws amendatory thereof and supplementary thereto.

ARTICLE III

This corporation shall not afford pecuniary gain, incidentally or otherwise, to its members, and no part of the net income or net earnings of this corporation shall inure to the benefit of any member, private shareholder, or individual, and no substantial part of its activities shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. This corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

This corporation shall not lend any of its assets to any officer, director, or member of this corporation or guarantee to any other person the payment of a loan made to an officer, director, or member of this corporation.

All references in these Articles of Incorporation to sections of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 include any provisions thereof adopted by future amendments thereto and any cognate provisions in future Internal Revenue codes to the extent such provisions are applicable to this corporation.

ARTICLE IV

The period of duration of corporate existence of this corporation shall be perpetual.

ARTICLE V

The registered office of this corporation shall be located at 405 Second Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401.

ARTICLE VI

The management and direction of the business of the Church shall be vested in a board of directors which shall be known and designated as the Church Council. The terms of office, method of election, powers, authorities, and duties of the members of the Church Council, the time and place of their meetings, and such other regulations with respect to them as are not inconsistent with the express provisions of these Articles of Incorporation shall be as specified from time to time in the bylaws of the Church, which shall be known to the Church as its Constitution.

ARTICLE VII

The voting members of the Church Council shall consist of the four churchwide officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and at least 32 and not more than 45 other persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly.

ARTICLE VIII

Except as otherwise provided in the Church's Constitution, the Church shall have no members with voting rights.

Whenever, and to the extent that, the Church's Constitution provides that voting rights shall be exercised by individuals elected, appointed, or otherwise designated to serve as voting members of an assembly of the Church, then the voting members of this Church for purposes of the laws of the State of Minnesota shall be the persons who were most recently seated as the voting members of an assembly of the Church.

Members of congregations of the Church shall not, as such, have any voting rights with respect to this corporation.

ARTICLE IX

For purposes of the laws of the State of Minnesota, only the Church's Constitution shall be treated as the bylaws of this corporation, and none of this corporation's governing documents other than these Articles of Incorporation and the Church's Constitution need be subject to the procedures specified by law or otherwise for the amendment of articles of incorporation or bylaws. The power to adopt, amend, or repeal the bylaws is vested in the Churchwide Assembly as set forth in the Church's Constitution.

ARTICLE X

Members of this corporation shall not be personally liable for the payment of any debts or obligations of this corporation of any nature whatsoever, nor shall any of the property of the members be subject to the payments of the debts or obligations of this corporation to any extent whatsoever.

ARTICLE XI

This corporation shall have no capital stock.

ARTICLE XII

These Articles of Incorporation may be amended from time to time in the manner prescribed by law.

ARTICLE XIII

In the event of the dissolution of this corporation any surplus property remaining after the payment of its debts shall be disposed of by transfer to one or more corporations, associations, institutions, trusts, community chests, or foundations organized and operated exclusively for one or more of the purposes of this corporation, and described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, in such proportions as the Church Council of this corporation shall determine. Notwithstanding any provision herein to the contrary, nothing herein shall be construed to affect the disposition of property and assets held by this corporation upon trust or other condition, or subject to any executory or special limitation, and such property, upon dissolution of this corporation, shall be transferred in accordance with the trust, condition, or limitation imposed with respect to it.

CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®

CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®

CODIFICATION EXPLANATION

Constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions that pertain to the same matter have been placed together.

a. Constitutional provisions are printed in **boldface** type. They are codified with two sets of numbers, the chapter number and a two-digit sequence number, each followed by a period. For example, 12.41. is a constitutional provision from chapter 12, the chapter related to the Churchwide Assembly.

b. Bylaws are printed in lightface type. They are codified with three sets of numbers: the chapter number; the related constitutional provision number; and a two-digit bylaw number. For example, 12.41.11. is a bylaw related to the Churchwide Assembly.

c. All continuing resolutions are printed in *italic* type. They also are codified with three sets of numbers, except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter indicating sequence and a two-digit number indicating the year of its adoption. For example, 12.41.A89. is the first continuing resolution related to the topic and was adopted in 1989.

Provisions in the *Constitution for Synods* are prefaced with "S;" required provisions are preceded by [†]. Provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* are prefaced with "C;" required provisions are preceded by [*].

In these governing documents, with the exception of the "Restated Articles of Incorporation," "Church" with a capital letter is used in references to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. In references to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the words "church" and "this church" in lower case letters are employed.

(8-2025)

PREAMBLE

Convinced that the Holy Spirit is leading us toward unity in the household of God, we of The American Lutheran Church, The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the Lutheran Church in America give thanks to God for the faith we share together in Christ and, by adopting this constitution, form a new church, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1.
NAME, INCORPORATION, SEAL, AND LOCATION

1.01. The name of this church shall be Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

1.01.01. The name, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as used herein, refers, in general references, to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references are made herein.

1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is hereafter designated as "this church."

1.11. The churchwide organization shall be incorporated.

1.11.01. The seal of the churchwide organization is a black globe comprising four stylized quadrants with a cross in the center. The words "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" encircle the globe.

1.11.02. The principal office of the churchwide organization shall be located in Chicago, Illinois.

1.11.03. The churchwide organization may maintain offices in such other locations as the Churchwide Assembly or the Church Council shall determine.

Chapter 2.
CONFESSION OF FAITH

2.01. **This church confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

2.02. **This church confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.**

- **a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.**
- **b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.**
- **c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.**

2.03. **This church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.**

2.04. **This church accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this church.**

2.05. **This church accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.**

2.06. **This church accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.**

2.07. **This church confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.**

Chapter 3.
NATURE OF THE CHURCH

3.01. **All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this church are to be carried out under his rule and authority.**

3.02. **This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.**

3.03. **The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.**

3.04. **This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.**

Chapter 4.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

4.01. **The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.**

4.02. **To participate in God's mission, this church shall:**

a. **Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.**

b. **Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.**

c. **Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.**

d. **Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.**

e. **Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.**

f. **Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.**

4.03. **To fulfill these purposes, this church shall:**

a. **Receive, establish, and support those congregations, ministries, organizations, institutions, and agencies necessary to carry out God's mission through this church.**

b. **Encourage and equip all members to worship, learn, serve, and witness; to fulfill their calling to serve God in the world; and to be stewards of the earth, their lives, and the Gospel.**

c. **Call forth, equip, certify, set apart, and oversee a ministry of Word and Sacrament, a ministry of Word and Service, and such other forms of ministry that will enable this church to fulfill its mission.**

d. **Seek unity in faith and life with all Lutherans within its boundaries and be ready to enter union negotiations whenever such unity is manifest.**

e. **Foster Christian unity by participating in ecumenical activities, contributing its witness and work and cooperating with other churches which confess God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

f. Develop relationships with communities of other faiths for dialogue and common action.

g. Lift its voice in concord and work in concert with forces for good, to serve humanity, cooperating with church and other groups participating in activities that promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged.

h. Produce and publish worship materials for corporate, family, and personal use and resources for education, witness, service, and stewardship.

i. Establish and maintain theological seminaries, schools, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions to equip people for leadership and service in church and society.

j. Assure faithfulness to this church's confessional position and purpose and provide for resolution of disputes.

k. Publish a periodical and make use of the arts and public communication media to proclaim the Gospel and to inform, interpret, and edify.

l. Study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

m. Establish, support, and recognize institutions and agencies that minister to people in spiritual and temporal needs.

n. Work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor, maintaining institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction.

o. Provide structures and decision-making processes for this church that foster mutuality and interdependence and that involve people in making decisions that affect them.

p. Support the mission of this church by arranging for and encouraging financial contributions for its work, management of its resources, and processes of planning and evaluation.

q. Provide fair personnel practices and adequate compensation, benefits, and pensions for those employed by this church.

Chapter 5.
PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

5.01. **The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church. This church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this church by congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization shall be carried out under his rule and authority in accordance with the following principles:**

a. The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization shall act in accordance with the Confession of Faith set forth in Chapter 2 of this constitution and with the Statement of Purpose set forth in Chapter 4.

b. This church, in faithfulness to the Gospel, is committed to be an inclusive church in the midst of division in society. Therefore, in their organization and outreach, the congregations, synods, and churchwide units of this church shall seek to exhibit the inclusive unity that is God's will for the Church.

c. The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization of this church are interdependent expressions sharing responsibly in God's mission. In an interdependent relationship, primary responsibility for particular functions will vary among the expressions. Whenever possible, the entity most directly affected by a decision shall be the principal party responsible for decision and implementation, with the other entities facilitating and assisting. Each congregation, synod, and separately incorporated ministry, as well as the churchwide organization itself, is a separate legal entity and is responsible for exercising its powers and authorities.

d. Each congregation and synod in its governing documents shall include the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose and such components as are required in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Beyond these common elements, congregations and synods shall be free to organize in such manner as each deems appropriate for its jurisdiction.

e. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the appropriate office or unit of the churchwide organization, through the Church Council, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff there will be a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and persons on the rosters of

this church. This balance is to be evident in the selection of staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.

f. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, synods, through synod councils, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of their assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of their assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both women and men. Each synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of the membership of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

g. A layperson is a person who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church.

h. Leaders in this church should demonstrate that they are servants by their words, lifestyle, and manner of leadership. Leaders in this church will recognize their accountability to the Triune God, to the whole Church, to each other, and to the organization of this church in which they have been asked to serve.

i. As a steward of the resources that God has provided, this church shall organize itself to make the most effective use of its resources to accomplish its mission.

j. Each assembly, council, committee, board, task force, or other body of the churchwide organization or any churchwide units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, task force, or other body.

5.01.A24. *This church commits itself to ethnic and racial diversity. Each expression of this church shall annually assess its ethnic and racial diversity when compared to the demographic data of its community or territory. The churchwide organization will work with synods as they assist congregations to reach out to persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.*

5.01.B19. *Each synod shall submit its goals and strategies to the appropriate churchwide unit or office and shall annually submit a report on progress toward its goals to such unit or office.*

5.01.C16. *The Churchwide Assembly shall receive reports from the presiding bishop and the secretary that monitor this church's progress toward meeting the commitment expressed in 5.01.A24.*

5.01.D25. *The Church Council shall establish triennial percentage goals for this church to meet the commitment expressed in 5.01.A24. The goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.*

5.01.E25. *It is the goal of this church that at least 20 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the* Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.*

5.01.F19. *To implement* **5.01.g.***, those deacons elected as laypersons prior to the adoption of this provision may complete the term to which they were elected as a layperson. They would not be eligible for reelection as a layperson if such reelection were otherwise possible.*

5.01.G24. *For purposes of the representational principles set forth in 5.01.e. and f., the percentage of laypersons that is not allocated to women or men may be allocated to persons who identify as gender non-binary, gender fluid, genderqueer, transgender, women, men, or other gender identities.*

5.01.H24. *This church is dedicated to fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment that honors the diversity of God's creation so that as many people as possible have the opportunity to participate fully in the life and work of this church. None of the definitions in Chapter 5 shall be construed as limiting this church's commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work. For all purposes in this church's governing documents, the terms diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility shall have the following meanings:*

a. ***Diversity*** *is a reality rooted in the variety found in the body of Christ: the wide range of communities and identities related to race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexuality, age, background, ability, socio-economic status, culture, and perspective.*

b. ***Equity*** *means fair treatment of people according to their needs. The principle of equity takes into account that due to poverty, sexism, racism, and other factors individuals or groups may require different resources and support to ensure that they have the same rights and abilities to make choices as others do.*

c. ***Inclusion*** *means the proactive and meaningful engagement of diverse individuals in all aspects of church life, especially in decision-making processes and leadership roles, creating a church culture of welcome, respect, and value for unique perspectives and abilities.*

d. ***Accessibility*** *means aspiring to develop and maintain this church's physical infrastructure, information, communication technology, programs, and services to maximize participation in the life of this church.*

5.01.I24. *This church commits to working to intentionally lift up voices from historically underrepresented groups in its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and*

other organizational units. While specific identities are listed below, this church recognizes that humans have multiple aspects of their identities that are tied to systemic privilege and oppression that shape the lives of individuals and communities in distinct ways. For all purposes in this church's governing documents, historically underrepresented groups shall be understood to include the following:

a. Persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English;

b. Persons of diverse gender identities and persons of diverse sexual orientations;

c. Persons experiencing poverty or persons of lower income;

d. Persons living with disabilities;

e. Persons who are not natural-born United States citizens.

5.01.J24. *For all purposes in this church's governing documents, the terms above shall have the following meanings:*

a. ***Persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English*** *means African American, African Caribbean, African Descent, African National, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Latin(-o, -a, -é, -x), Hispanic, American Indian, Indigenous, and Alaska Native people, as well as multi- and bi-racial people.*

b. ***Persons of diverse gender identities and persons of diverse sexual orientations*** *means individuals who identify beyond the sex and gender binary, individuals whose gender identity may be fluid, and individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or other sex, gender, and sexual identities that are more complex than sex, gender, and sexuality binaries.*

c. ***Persons experiencing poverty or persons of lower income*** *means individuals whose economic circumstances inhibit their ability to meet basic living needs according to their societal context and standards.*

d. ***Persons living with disabilities*** *means individuals who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that may hinder their full participation in church life.*

e. ***Persons who are not natural-born United States citizens*** *needs no additional clarifying definition.*

5.01.K24. *It is the goal of this church that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be members of historically underrepresented groups in addition to the required 10 percent representation of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English in 5.01.e. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.*

Chapter 6.
MEMBERSHIP

6.01. **The members of this church shall be the baptized members of its congregations.**

6.02. **Membership status and the obligations and rights of congregation members are determined by reference to Chapter 8 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.***

6.03. **The synods of this church and the churchwide organization have no individual members except for those congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community members who serve as voting members of the synod corporations and churchwide corporation.**

6.04. **The voting members of the synods and churchwide organization shall be those congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community members serving as members of the synod assemblies and the Churchwide Assembly respectively. Membership in a congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community does not, in and of itself, confer voting rights in these corporations.**

Chapter 7.
MINISTRY

7.10. MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIZED PEOPLE OF GOD

7.11. This church affirms the universal priesthood of all its baptized members. In its function and its structure this church commits itself to the equipping and supporting of all its members for their ministries in the world and in this church. It is within this context of ministry that this church calls some of its baptized members for specific ministries in this church.

7.20. MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.21. Within the people of God and for the sake of the Gospel ministry entrusted to all believers, God has instituted the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament. To carry out this ministry, this church calls and ordains qualified persons.

7.22. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be a person whose commitment to Christ, soundness in the faith, aptness to preach, teach, and witness, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the documents of this church; who has been properly called and ordained; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of the ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall comply with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

7.23. The standards for acceptance and continuance of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be set forth in the bylaws.

7.24. The secretary of this church shall maintain a roster containing the names of ministers of Word and Sacrament who qualify on the basis of constitutional provisions 7.22., 7.23., and 7.31., and related bylaws.

7.25. Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be subject to discipline as set forth in Chapter 20 of this constitution.

7.30. STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.31. In accordance with the description stated in 7.22., ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures.

7.31.01. Basic Standards. Persons admitted to and continued in the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:

a. commitment to Christ;
b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;

f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
g. membership in a congregation of this church.

7.31.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
   1) preach the Word;
   2) administer the sacraments;
   3) conduct public worship;
   4) provide pastoral care;
   5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
   6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
   7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
   8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.
b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
   1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
   2) relate to all schools and organizations of the congregation;
   3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
   4) with the council, administer discipline;
   5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and the synod; and
   6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationships with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

7.31.03. Preparation and Approval. Except as provided in 7.31.04., a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament shall have:

a. either
   1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its congregation council and the pastoral leadership of the congregation, of the candidate with the candidacy committee; or
   2) active participation in a Word and Sacrament ministry of this church and registration, by its governing body and the pastoral leadership of the ministry, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee before being approved for call;
c. completed the academic and practical preparation according to the criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;

d. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
e. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
f. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

7.31.04. **Approval when Ordained in Another Church Body.** Candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament who (a) have been ordained in another Lutheran church body or (b) have been ordained in another Christian church body, whether in North America or abroad, shall be approved by the candidacy committee for ordination or reception according to criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In preparing such criteria, policies, and procedures, the appropriate churchwide unit shall consult with the seminaries of this church and, as appropriate, with other churchwide units.

7.31.05. Roster status in more than one church body is precluded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As required by constitutional provision 7.22. and bylaw 7.31.01., ministers on the Word and Sacrament roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America must accept and adhere to this church's Confession of Faith, as well as abide by this church's standards and policies for ministers of Word and Sacrament.

7.31.06. **Reinstatement.** A person seeking reinstatement as a minister of Word and Sacrament, whether having served previously in this church or in one of its predecessor bodies, shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a minister of Word and Sacrament in this church.

7.31.07. **On Leave.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call and who requests a temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church by action of the Synod Council of the synod on whose roster the minister is listed, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

Such leave shall be reviewed annually and may be terminated by the Synod Council if it no longer meets the criteria under which it was granted.

a. Regular Leave: A minister of Word and Sacrament who is without a current letter of call and who has requested temporary leave from active ministry may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
b. Study Leave: A minister of Word and Sacrament engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
c. Family Leave: A minister of Word and Sacrament who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the minister of Word and Sacrament or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
d. Extensions of these time limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.
e. Ministers who have been granted on-leave status are expected to maintain membership in a congregation of this church. If a minister of Word and Sacrament who has been granted on-leave status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Sacrament to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.31.08. **Ordination in Unusual Circumstances.** For pastoral reasons in unusual circumstances, a synod bishop may provide for the ordination by another minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of an approved candidate who has received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament. Prior to authorization of such an ordination, the bishop of the synod of the candidate's first call shall consult with the presiding bishop as this church's chief ecumenical officer and shall seek the advice of the Synod Council. The pastoral decision of the synod bishop shall be in accordance with policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

7.31.09. **Invitation to Service.** In accord with bylaw 8.63.01. and following, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may serve contractually in a ministry setting of this church under a "Letter of Invitation to Service" upon the authorization of the bishop of the synod in which such service occurs.

7.31.10. **Synod-authorized Ministry.** While it is preferable in most circumstances that Word and Sacrament ministry be provided by a minister of Word and Sacrament, when need exists, the synod bishop—acting with the consent of the congregation or ministry, in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with standards and qualifications developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—may authorize a person who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer Word and Sacrament ministry as a synod-authorized minister. Such an individual shall be supervised by a minister of Word and Sacrament appointed by the synod bishop; such service shall be rendered during its duration under the authority of the bishop. Such an individual will be trained to fulfill this ministry for a specified period of time and in a given location only. Authorization, direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the appropriate synod leadership according to churchwide standards and qualifications for this type of ministry. Authorization for such service shall be reviewed annually and renewed only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation.

7.31.11. No person who belongs to any organization such as a lodge or fraternal order which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church shall be called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins or is discovered to be a member of such an organization.

7.31.12. No person who belongs to or takes actions in concert with a hate group shall be called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins, is discovered to be a member of, or takes actions in concert with a hate group.

7.40. **CALLS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT**

7.41. **Letters of Call. Letters of call to ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.**

7.41.01. **Service under Call.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a Synod Council, a Synod Assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria developed by the appropriate

churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.44.A24.

b. A pastor serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, a pastor shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.

7.41.02. Initial Call to Congregational Service. Because the responsibilities of the office of the ministry of Word and Sacrament are most clearly focused in the congregational pastorate, experience in which is deemed by this church to be invaluable for all other ministry of Word and Sacrament, initial service of at least three years shall be in a congregation of this church or, with the approval of the synod bishop, a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists. Exceptions to the three-year requirement may be granted under criteria and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

7.41.03. Calls to Interim Ministry. Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in interim ministry shall normally serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop. Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have retired status may be appointed by the synod bishop without a letter of call.

7.41.04. Calls to Supply Ministry. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, and upon recommendation of the synod bishop, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Sacrament for supply ministry. The minister of Word and Sacrament shall include a description of this ministry in the annual report to the synod bishop. A call to supply ministry is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it no longer fulfills the criteria under which it was issued.

7.41.05. Calls to Non-Congregational Service. Calls to serve in institutions, agencies, and other entities inside and outside this church may be extended where there is an identifiable relationship of the work to the purpose of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such calls involve, for example, the care of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, pastoral care, and activities closely associated with those tasks including oversight in the church and in inter-Lutheran and inter-church agencies and institutions. Care is to be exercised so that positions in the church and in the world that can be filled adequately and appropriately by the laity not be filled by ministers of Word and Sacrament for their convenience or status. Synod councils and the Church Council may seek the advice of the Conference of Bishops in specific situations.

7.41.06. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Sacrament for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. Care is to be exercised so that positions in the church and in the world that can be filled adequately and appropriately by the laity not be filled by ministers of Word and Sacrament for their convenience, status, or personal preference. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

7.41.07. Calls to Serve in Unusual Circumstances. When it is deemed to be in the interests of this church in the care of the Gospel, ministers of Word and Sacrament may be called for a stated period of time, not to exceed three years, to minister on behalf of this church while employed in an occupation outside the traditional range of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such calls may be extended by a Synod Council or the Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops according to criteria and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. A call to serve in unusual circumstances is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council or Church Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

7.41.08. Calls in Predecessor Church Bodies. Calls extended in predecessor church bodies that have not terminated are to be treated as current calls issued by and responsible to the appropriate expression of this church. Accountability for specific calls to service extended in predecessor church bodies shall be exercised in compliance with the governing documents, policies, and procedures of this church.

7.41.09. Retirement. Ministers of Word and Sacrament may retire upon attaining the earlier of age 60 or 30 years on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster.

a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
b. If a minister of Word and Sacrament who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Sacrament to hold

membership in a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.41.10. Disability. Ministers of Word and Sacrament may be granted disability status and continue to be listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster.

a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

b. If a minister of Word and Sacrament who has been granted disability status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Sacrament to hold membership in a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.41.11. Retention of Roster Records. When a minister of Word and Sacrament resigns or is removed from the roster of this church, the roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church, and the synod bishop shall invite the person at the time of resignation or removal to provide, annually, appropriate current information for the roster record.

7.42. Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be related to that synod:

a. to which the congregation issuing the call to the minister of Word and Sacrament is related;

b. which issues a letter of call to the minister of Word and Sacrament;

c. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament was listed at the time of the issuance of a letter of call from the Church Council;

d. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary leader in consultation with the board, subject to approval by the synod bishop in consultation with the Synod Council of each affected synod. This roster assignment should promote proportionate representation of faculty and administration in the synods of its region;

e. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament was listed at the time of the issuance of a call to federal chaplaincy or on the roster of the synod of current address, if approved by the synod bishop and received by the Synod Council;

f. in which the minister of Word and Sacrament, upon receiving a call from this church, serves as a deployed staff person or on the roster of one of the synods to which the minister of Word and Sacrament is deployed;

g. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if granted on-leave-from-call status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Sacrament for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church;

h. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if granted disability status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Sacrament for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church; or

i. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if granted retired status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Sacrament for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.42.01. If the service of a minister of Word and Sacrament who receives and accepts a letter of call from this church, under 7.42.c., would be enhanced through transfer of roster status from the previous synod of roster to the synod of current address, such a transfer may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.42.02. In certain circumstances for the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, the transfer of roster status of a minister of Word and Sacrament serving under call in the churchwide organization may be authorized, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved in such a transfer after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.43. A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be either coterminous with, or not longer than, the duration of the service or employment for which the call was issued. With the exception of persons designated as employees of a synod or the churchwide organization, such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation in regard to employment on the part of the Synod Council or Church Council issuing the call. The recipient of such a call remains subject to this church's standards and discipline for ministry of Word and Sacrament, as contained in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.

7.43.01. When the Synod Council or the Church Council, as the calling source, determines that the service or employment no longer fulfills the criteria under which a call was issued, the Synod Council or the Church Council shall vacate the call and direct that the individual be placed on leave from call or, if such leave status is not granted, the individual shall be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

7.43.02. Ministers of Word and Sacrament previously under call to the churchwide organization or to a synod shall respect the integrity of the ministry in which they no longer serve and shall not interfere with or exercise the functions of the

office or position in which they no longer serve unless invited to do so by the presiding bishop or Church Council in the churchwide organization or, in the synods, by the bishop or the Synod Council.

7.44. Each synod shall maintain a roster containing the names of those ministers of Word and Sacrament who are related to it on the basis of 7.42. of this constitution. All additions, deletions, changes, and corrections to this roster shall be reported promptly to the Office of the Secretary.

7.44.A24. ***Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament***

a. Principles for Sources of Calls

1) A "call" is an action by expressions of this church, as specified in the "Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament," through which a person is asked to serve in a specified ministry. Such an action is attested in a "letter of call."

2) Interdependence within the body of this church suggests that any action of one of its entities affects other entities. Therefore, interdependence is expressed in all calls extended within this church.

3) A call expresses a relationship between this church and the person called involving mutual service, support, accountability, supervision, and discipline.

4) A letter of call is issued by that expression of this church authorized to do so which is most directly involved in accountability for the specified ministry.

5) Decisions on calls for ministries in unusual circumstances not otherwise provided for but deemed to be in the interests of this church's care of the Gospel are referred to the Conference of Bishops for recommendation to the appropriate calling body.

b. Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Setting	Calling Body
1.0 Congregational ministry	
1.1 Single congregation	*Congregation meeting*
1.11 Pastor	
1.12 Senior pastor	
1.13 Associate/assistant pastor	
1.14 Co-pastor	
1.15 Shared-time pastor	
1.2 Multiple-congregation parish	*Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal*
1.21 Pastor	*One of the participating congregations*
1.22 Other pastoral arrangements	*One of the participating congregations*
1.3 Coalition and cluster ministry	*Synod Council*
1.4 Congregations beyond this church	
1.41 Independent Lutheran congregation	*Synod Council*

	1.42 Overseas independent Lutheran congregation	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
	1.43 Full communion congregation	*Synod Council*
	1.44 Other	*Synod Council or Church Council*
1.5	*Interim pastor*	*Synod Council*
1.6	*Pastor in a synod-authorized ministry*	*Synod Council*
1.7	*Supply ministry*	*Synod Council*
2.0	*Synod ministry*	
2.1	*Bishop*	*Synod Assembly*
2.2	*Assistant to bishop*	*Synod Council*
2.3	*Shared staff by two or more synods*	*Synod Council of one of the participating synods*
2.4	*Synod staff partially supported by grants from churchwide units*	*Synod Council*
3.0	*Regional ministry*	
3.1	*Staff*	*Church Council*
3.2	*Shared synod-churchwide staff*	*Church Council*
4.0	*Churchwide ministry*	
4.1	*Presiding bishop and secretary*	*Churchwide Assembly*
4.2	*Treasurer*	*Church Council*
4.3	*Staff of the churchwide organization*	*Church Council*
5.0	*Chaplaincy and institutional ministry*	
5.1	*Institution/agency related or unrelated to a synod*	*Synod Council*
5.2	*Institution/agency related to more than one synod*	*Synod Council of one of the synods*
5.3	*ELCA-related institution/agency*	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
5.4	*Federal agency/institution*	*Church Council*
5.5	*Military*	*Church Council*
6.0	*Campus ministry*	
6.1	*Staff*	*Synod Council*
7.0	*Outdoor ministry*	
7.1	*Staff*	*Synod Council*
8.0	*Ecumenical/Inter-Religious ministry*	
8.1	*Related to a synod*	*Synod Council*
8.2	*Related to more than one synod*	*Synod Council of one of the synods*
8.3	*National/international organization*	*Church Council*
9.0	*Inter-Lutheran ministry*	
9.1	*Related to a synod*	*Synod Council*
9.2	*Related to more than one synod*	*Synod Council of one of the synods*
9.3	*National/International*	*Church Council*
10.0	*Educational ministry*	
10.1	*ELCA-related seminary (incorporated or unincorporated) chaplain/faculty/ administrator*	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
10.2	*Chaplain/faculty/ administrator of seminary unrelated to ELCA*	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*

10.3	*ELCA-related college chaplain/non-seminary faculty/non-seminary administrator*	*Synod Council of the synod in which college is located*
10.4	*Chaplain/faculty/ administrator of a college unrelated to ELCA*	*Synod Council of the synod in which college is located*
10.5	*ELCA-related school chaplain/faculty/ administrator*	*Congregation of which the school is a part or, if related to several congregations, Synod Council of the synod in which the school is located*
10.6	*Chaplain/faculty of a school unrelated to ELCA*	*Synod Council of the synod in which school is located*
10.7	*Director/staff of a continuing education center related to a churchwide unit*	*Synod Council in which the main office of center is located upon the request of appropriate churchwide unit*
11.0	*Missionary ministry*	
11.1	*Outside United States*	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
11.2	*Within United States*	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
12.0	*Independent Lutheran Organization*	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
13.0	*Separately Incorporated Ministry*	*Church Council*
14.0	*Other*	
14.1	*Non-stipendiary service under call*	*Synod Council upon approval by the Conference of Bishops*
14.2	*Unusual ministries (as in conjunction with occupations and in approved situations not otherwise specified)*	*Synod Council or Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops*

7.45. In keeping with the historic discipline and practice of the Lutheran church and to be true to a sacred trust inherent in the nature of the pastoral office, no minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall divulge any confidential disclosure received in the course of the care of souls or otherwise in a professional capacity, nor testify concerning conduct observed by the minister of Word and Sacrament while working in a pastoral capacity, except with the express permission of the person who has given confidential information to the minister of Word and Sacrament or who was observed by the minister of Word and Sacrament, or if the person intends great harm to self or others.

7.46. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregation shall be as follows:

a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:

1) **mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;**
2) **resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;**
3) **inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;**
4) **inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;**
5) **suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;**
6) **resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;**
7) **termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;**
8) **dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or**
9) **suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.**

b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
1) **the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or**
2) **when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.**

c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the

bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

7.50. **MINISTRY OF WORD AND SERVICE**

7.51. **This church calls and receives onto the roster qualified persons to provide a ministry of Word and Service, exemplifying the life of Christ-like service to all persons and creation: nurturing, healing, leading, advocating dignity and justice, and equipping the whole people of God for their life of witness and service within and beyond the congregation for the sake of God's mission in the world.**

7.52. **A minister of Word and Service of this church shall be a person whose commitment to Christ, soundness in the faith, aptness to serve, teach, and witness, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the documents of this church; who has been properly called and ordained; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. A minister of Word and Service shall comply with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.**

7.53. **The standards for acceptance and continuance of ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be set forth in the bylaws.**

7.54. **The secretary of this church shall maintain a roster containing the names of ministers of Word and Service who qualify on the basis of constitutional provisions 7.52., 7.53., and 7.61., and related bylaws.**

7.54.01. Ministers of Word and Service shall be known as deacons.

7.54.A16. *Those persons previously rostered as associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be retained as deacons of this church (except for removals in accord with the governing documents, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church).*

Accountability for specific calls shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church.

7.55. Ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be subject to discipline as set forth in Chapter 20 of this constitution.

7.60. STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

7.61. In accordance with the description stated in 7.52, ministers of Word and Service shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures.

7.61.01. Basic Standards. Persons admitted to and continued in the ministry of Word and Service of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:

a. commitment to Christ;
b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
g. membership in a congregation of this church.

7.61.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

a. be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
b. advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
c. speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;
d. equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
e. encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
f. practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
g. be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
h. share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
i. identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

7.61.03. Preparation and Approval. A candidate who is to be called and received onto the roster as a minister of Word and Service shall have:

a. either
   1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its congregation council and the pastoral leadership of the congregation, of the candidate with the candidacy committee; or
   2) active participation in a Word and Sacrament ministry of this church and registration, by its governing body and the pastoral leadership of the ministry, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee before being approved for call;
c. completed the academic and practical preparation according to criteria and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
d. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
e. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod in which the candidate is being considered for first call in accordance with the procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
f. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

7.61.04. No person who belongs to any organization such as a lodge or fraternal order which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church shall be called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins or is discovered to be a member of such an organization.

7.61.05. Roster status in more than one church body is precluded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As required by constitutional provision 7.52. and bylaw 7.61.01., ministers on the Word and Service roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America must accept and adhere to this church's Confession of Faith, as well as abide by this church's standards and policies for ministers of Word and Service.

7.61.06. **Reinstatement.** A person seeking reinstatement as a minister of Word and Service shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person

is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a minister of Word and Service in this church.

7.61.07. On Leave. A minister of Word and Service of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call and who requests a temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church by action of the Synod Council of the synod on whose roster the minister is listed, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such leave shall be reviewed annually and may be terminated by the Synod Council if it no longer meets the criteria under which it was granted.

a. Regular Leave: A minister of Word and Service who is without a current letter of call and who has requested temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
b. Study Leave: A minister of Word and Service engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Service in this church, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
c. Family Leave: A minister of Word and Service who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the minister of Word and Service or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
d. Extensions of these time limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.
e. If a minister of Word and Service who has been granted on-leave status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Service to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.61.08. Invitation to Service. In accord with bylaw 8.63.01. and following, a minister of Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and with which this church has agreed regarding the exchangeability of ministers of Word and Service, may serve contractually in a ministry setting of this church under a "Letter of

Invitation to Extended Service" upon the authorization of the bishop of the synod in which such service occurs.

7.61.09. No person who belongs to or takes actions in concert with a hate group shall be called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins, is discovered to be a member of, or takes actions in concert with a hate group.

7.61.A16. *Any person removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service that existed on December 31, 1987, as cited herein, who seeks to return to active roster status must apply for acceptance to a roster of this church under the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures that apply to the official roster of Ministers of Word and Service. This same requirement shall apply to those certified during the period of January 1, 1988, through September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry of this church.*

7.61.B16. *A person on the roster of a previous church body or a person on the roster of associates in ministry of this church, who was so certified during the period between January 1, 1988, and September 1, 1993, shall relinquish such a roster category upon being received and accepted on another roster of this church.*

7.70. CALLS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

7.71. Letters of Call. Letters of call to ministers of Word and Service of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Service shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

7.71.01. Service under Call. A minister of Word and Service of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a synod council, a synod assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.74.A24.

b. A minister of Word and Service serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, a minister of Word and Service shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.

7.71.02. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Service for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of

Bishops. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

7.71.03. Calls in Predecessor Church Bodies. Calls extended in predecessor church bodies that have not terminated are to be treated as current calls issued by and responsible to the appropriate expression of this church. Accountability for specific calls to service extended in predecessor church bodies shall be exercised in compliance with the governing documents, policies, and procedures of this church.

7.71.04. Retirement. Ministers of Word and Service may retire upon attaining the earlier of age 60 or 30 years on a roster of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster.

a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
b. If a minister of Word and Service who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Service to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.71.05. Disability. Ministers of Word and Service may be granted disability status, and continue to be listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster.

a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the official roster of Ministers of Word and Service shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
b. If a minister of Word and Service who has been granted disability status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minster of Word and Service to hold membership in a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.71.06. Retention of Roster Records. When a minister of Word and Service resigns or is removed from the roster of this church, the roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church, and the synod bishop shall invite the person at

the time of resignation or removal to provide, annually, appropriate current information for the roster record.

7.72. Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be related to that synod:

a. to which the congregation issuing the call to the minister of Word and Service is related;

b. which issues a letter of call to the minister of Word and Service;

c. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service was listed at the time of the issuance of a letter of call from the Church Council;

d. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synod bishop and Synod Council of each affected synod, to promote proportionate representation of faculty and administration in each synod of its region;

e. in which the minister of Word and Service, upon receiving a call from this church, serves as a deployed staff person or on the roster of one of the synods to which the minister of Word and Service is deployed;

f. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if granted on-leave-from-call status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Sacrament for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church;

g. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if granted disability status, was listed when last called, or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Service for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church; or

h. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if granted retired status, was listed when last called, or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Service for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.72.01. If the service of a minister of Word and Service who receives and accepts a letter of call from this church, under 7.72.c., would be enhanced through transfer of roster status from the previous synod of roster to the synod of current address, such a transfer may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.72.02. In certain circumstances for the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, the transfer of roster status of a minister of Word and Service serving under call in the churchwide organization may be authorized, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved in such a transfer after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.73. A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to a minister of Word and Service of this church shall be either coterminous with, or not longer than, the duration of the service or employment for which the call was

issued. With the exception of persons designated as employees of a synod or the churchwide organization, such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation in regard to employment on the part of the Synod Council or Church Council issuing the call. The recipient of such a call remains subject to this church's standards and discipline for ministry of Word and Service, as contained in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.

7.73.01. When the Synod Council or the Church Council, as the calling source, determines that the service or employment no longer fulfills the criteria under which a call was issued, the Synod Council or the Church Council shall vacate the call and direct that the individual be placed on leave from call or, if such leave status is not granted, the individual shall be removed from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service.

7.73.02. Ministers of Word and Service previously under call to the churchwide organization or to a synod shall respect the integrity of the ministry in which they no longer serve and shall not interfere with or exercise the functions of the office or position in which they no longer serve unless invited to do so by the presiding bishop or Church Council in the churchwide organization or, in the synods, by the bishop or the Synod Council.

7.74. Each synod shall maintain a roster containing the names of those ministers of Word and Service who are related to it on the basis of 7.72. of this constitution. All additions, deletions, changes, and corrections to this roster shall be reported promptly to the Office of the Secretary.

7.74.A24. ***Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service***

a. Principles for Sources of Calls

1) A "call" is an action by expressions of this church, as specified in the "Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service," through which a person is asked to serve in a specified ministry. Such an action is attested in a "letter of call."

2) Interdependence within the body of this church suggests that any action of one of its entities affects other entities. Therefore, interdependence is expressed in all calls extended within this church.

3) A call expresses a relationship between this church and the person called involving mutual service, support, accountability, supervision, and discipline.

4) A letter of call is issued by that expression of this church authorized to do so which is most directly involved in accountability for the specified ministry.

5) Decisions on calls for ministries in unusual circumstances not otherwise provided for but deemed to be in the interests of this church's care of the Gospel are referred to the Conference of Bishops for recommendation to the appropriate calling body.

b. Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service

Setting	Calling Body
1.0 Congregational ministry	
1.1 Single congregation	*Congregation meeting*
1.2 Multiple-congregation parish	*Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal, with one of the participating congregations issuing the call*
1.3 Coalition and cluster ministry	*Synod Council*
1.4 Congregations beyond this church	
1.41 Independent Lutheran congregations	*Synod Council*
1.42 Full communion congregation	*Synod Council*
1.43 Deacon in a synod-authorized ministry	*Synod Council*
1.44 Other	*Synod Council*
1.5 Interim congregation deacon	*Synod Council*
2.0 Synod ministry	
2.1 Assistant to the Bishop	*Synod Council*
2.2 Shared staff of two or more synods	*Synod Council*
2.3 Staff partially supported by grants from churchwide units	*Synod Council*
3.0 Regional ministry	
3.1 Staff	*Church Council*
3.2 Shared synod- churchwide staff	*Church Council*
4.0 Churchwide ministry	
4.1 Secretary	*Churchwide Assembly*
4.2 Treasurer	*Church Council*
4.3 Staff of the churchwide organization	*Church Council*
5.0 Institutional ministry	
5.1 Institution/agency related or unrelated to a synod	*Synod Council*
5.2 Institution/agency related to more than one synod	*Synod Council of one of the synods*
5.3 ELCA-related institution/agency	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
5.4 Other	*Church Council*
6.0 Campus ministry	
6.1 Staff	*Synod Council*
7.0 Outdoor ministry	
7.1 Staff	*Synod Council*
8.0 Ecumenical/Inter-Religious ministry	
8.1 Related to a synod	*Synod Council*
8.2 Related to more than one synod	*Synod Council of one of the synods*
8.3 National/international organization	*Church Council*
9.0 Inter-Lutheran ministry	
9.1 Related to a synod	*Synod Council*

9.2 Related to more than one synod	*Synod Council of one of the synods*
9.3 National/International	*Church Council*
10.0 Educational ministry	
10.1 ELCA-related seminary	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
10.2 Seminary unrelated to ELCA	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
10.3 ELCA-related college	*Synod Council of the synod in which college is located*
10.4 College unrelated to ELCA	*Synod Council of the synod in which college is located*
10.5 ELCA-related school	*Congregation of which the school is a part or, if related to several congregations, Synod Council of the synod in which the school is located*
10.6 School unrelated to ELCA	*Synod Council of the synod in which school is located*
10.7 Director/staff of a continuing education center related to a churchwide unit	*Synod Council in which the center's main office is located upon the request of appropriate churchwide unit*
11.0 Missionary ministry	
11.1 Outside United States	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
11.2 Within United States	*Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
12.0 Independent Lutheran Organization	*Church Council upon request of the appropriate churchwide unit*
13.0 Separately Incorporated Ministry	*Church Council*
14.0 Other	
14.1 Non-stipendiary service under call	*Synod Council upon approval by the Conference of Bishops*
14.2 Unusual ministries (as in conjunction with occupations and in approved situations not otherwise specified)	*Synod Council or Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops*

7.75. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:

a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:

1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;

2) resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;

3) **inability to conduct the office to which they have been called effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;**
4) **inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;**
5) **suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months;**
6) **resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;**
7) **termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;**
8) **dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or**
9) **suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.**

b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
1) **the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one non-rostered person, or**
2) **when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one non-rostered person.**

c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and

by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

Chapter 8.
RELATIONSHIPS

8.10. RELATIONSHIP OF CONGREGATIONS, SYNODS, THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION, AND THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

8.11. This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in an interdependent relationship with the others.

8.12. The congregation shall include in its mission a life of worship and nurture for its members, and outreach in witness and service to its community.

8.13. The synod shall provide for pastoral care of the congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service within its boundaries. It shall plan for, facilitate, and nurture the life and mission of its people and shall enlarge the ministries and extend the outreach into society on behalf of and in connection with the congregations and the churchwide organization. Conferences, clusters, coalitions, other area subdivisions, or networks shall serve to assist the congregations and synods in exercising their mutual responsibilities.

8.14. The churchwide organization shall implement the extended mission of the Church, developing churchwide policies in consultation with the synods and congregations, entering into relationship with institutions of higher education and with governmental, ecumenical, and societal agencies in accordance with accepted resolutions and/or in response to specific agreed-upon areas of responsibility.

8.15. The three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support program of this church.

8.16. In faithful participation in the mission of God in and through this church, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as interdependent expressions of this church—shall be guided by the biblical and confessional commitments of this church. Each shall recognize that mission efforts must be shaped by both local needs and global awareness, by both individual witness and corporate endeavor, and by both distinctly Lutheran emphases and growing ecumenical cooperation.

8.17. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission, and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in Chapter 4, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

8.18. This church shall not, in any manner, be responsible for the debts or liabilities of other religious or charitable organizations, institutions, or

agencies, whether independent of or affiliated with this church, or whether denominated as Lutheran or related to any Lutheran church body.

8.19. This church affirms the relationship established through The Lutheran World Federation as a communion of churches that confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God, and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship.

8.19.01. The bylaws on ecumenical availability of ministers of Word and Sacrament under relationships of full communion shall apply to such service within this church of such ministers of other member churches of The Lutheran World Federation.

8.19.02. The bylaws on ecumenical availability of ministers of Word and Sacrament under relationships of full communion shall apply to such ministers of churches who have established a full communion relationship with a member church of The Lutheran World Federation provided that church is a member of a Christian World Communion that has a member church that is in full communion with this church.

8.20. RELATIONSHIP WITH INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND MINISTRIES

8.21. Seminaries. This church shall sponsor, support, and provide for oversight of seminaries for the preparation of persons for rostered leadership and other ministries and for continuing study on the part of rostered ministers and laypersons.

8.21.01. Each seminary of this church shall be separately incorporated or, if unincorporated, shall be a school, department, or unit of a college or university of this church. Whether separately incorporated or not, seminaries of this church shall be governed consistent with policies established by the Church Council upon recommendation of the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization. Seminaries may be organized into groupings, known as clusters, for the purposes of cooperation, interaction, and support.

8.21.02. Amendments to the governing documents of each separately incorporated seminary and each seminary cluster shall be submitted, upon recommendation of the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization, to the Church Council for approval. Amendments to the governing documents of a college or university of this church that affect the authority or integrity of an unincorporated seminary of this church associated with that college or university shall be submitted, upon recommendation of the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization, to the Church Council for approval.

8.21.03. The board of directors of each separately incorporated seminary shall be nominated and elected to terms as specified in the governing documents of the respective seminaries, and shall consist of 12 to 30 members, as follows:

a. at least one-fifth nominated, in consultation with the seminaries, by the appropriate churchwide unit and elected by the Church Council;
b. two members elected by the bishops of the supporting synods from among their number; and
c. the remaining members elected by the supporting synods, in consultation with the seminaries, with the number to be elected by each synod set forth in the governing documents of the seminary.

Elections shall be so arranged that the terms of all directors of any given seminary elected in any year shall commence simultaneously.

8.21.04. Each unincorporated seminary shall have an advisory council or board distinct from the board of directors of the college or university of which the seminary is a school, department, or unit. The seminary advisory council or board shall relate to the Church Council through the appropriate churchwide unit. The members of the unincorporated seminary's advisory council or board shall be elected as specified in the governing documents of the related college or university, and shall consist of 12 to 30 members, as follows:

a. at least one-fifth nominated by the Church Council upon recommendation of the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the seminary's advisory council or board;
b. two members nominated by the bishops of the supporting synods from among their number;
c. one member, who shall serve as chair of the advisory council or board and as a voting member of the board of directors of the college or university, nominated by the Church Council, upon recommendation of the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the seminary's advisory council or board; and
d. the remaining members to be from the supporting synods, nominated by the seminary's advisory council or board in consultation with the supporting synods.

8.21.05. In accordance with the governing documents of each separately incorporated seminary, the board of directors shall elect the president of the seminary in consultation with the presiding bishop of this church and the appropriate churchwide unit. The board shall exercise all other normal governance functions, including the appointment of tenured faculty, and shall have authority to recruit students throughout this church.

8.21.06. Each unincorporated seminary shall have a chief administrative officer, such as an academic dean, seminary provost, or vice president, who is on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church. In the appointment or election of the chief administrative officer of the seminary, the college or university shall consult with the seminary advisory council or board, the presiding bishop of this church, and the appropriate churchwide unit. The college or university board shall exercise all other normal governance functions, including the appointment of tenured faculty, in consultation with the seminary's advisory council or board, and shall have authority to recruit students throughout this church.

8.21.07. The seminaries shall receive churchwide and synod financial support. The amount of such support shall be determined through a consultation process involving seminaries, synods, and the appropriate churchwide unit. To implement financial support by this church, synods shall be assigned to specific seminaries in such manner as to attain equitable distribution of synods. Normally, all synods in a given region will be assigned to one seminary. Churchwide funds shall be distributed according to a formula developed by the appropriate churchwide unit and adopted by the Church Council. Seminaries shall provide for their remaining financial requirements through tuition, fees, endowment income, and fundraising programs.

Fundraising in the congregations of supporting synods, however, shall be conducted only upon approval of the synods.

8.21.08. Aid to students preparing for the ministries of this church shall be administered by the seminaries under guidelines developed by the appropriate churchwide units in consultation with the presidents of the seminaries.

8.22. Colleges and Universities. This church shall relate to its colleges and universities in their mission to educate students for vocations in the Church and the world. The churchwide organization, through the appropriate churchwide unit, shall support an association of this church's colleges and universities.

8.22.01. The relationship of this church to its colleges and universities shall be guided by policies fostering educational institutions dedicated to the Lutheran tradition wherein such institutions are an essential part of God's mission in the world; faithful to the will of God as institutions providing quality instruction in religion and a lively ministry of worship, outreach, and service; diligent in their preparation of leaders committed to truth, excellence, and ethical values; and pledged to the well-being of students in the development of mind, body, and spirit.

8.22.02. Each college and university of this church shall establish a relationship with:

a. a synod or synods;

b. a corporation whose voting members are elected or appointed by a synod or synods, other organizational units (conferences, clusters, etc.), or congregations; or,

c. a corporation

1) that has voting members, at least a majority of whom shall consist of members of the Churchwide Assembly or the Church Council, and

2) that shall hold the meeting of such a corporation in conjunction with the Churchwide Assembly or the Church Council for the purpose of approving amendments to the articles of incorporation, and approving amendments to other governing documents which affect the relationship between the college or university and this church. A majority of the members of the board of a corporation that meets in conjunction with the Churchwide Assembly or Church Council shall be members of this church or of a church body with which this church is in a relationship of full communion, but under no circumstances shall fewer than forty (40) percent of the members of such board be members of this church.

8.22.03. Responsibility for the size and composition of a college or university's board of directors, including recruiting and electing board members, belongs to each college or university of this church. This responsibility shall be exercised congruent with the form of relationship, as provided in 8.22.02., established by the college or university with this church.

8.22.04. Responsibility for governance and governance documents rests with each college or university of this church. This responsibility shall be exercised congruent with the form of relationship as provided in 8.22.02., established by the college or university with this church.

8.22.05. In addition to and consistent with the above provision 8.22. and bylaws 8.22.01. through 8.22.04., colleges and universities of this church where a school,

department, or unit of that institution is a seminary of this church must comply with all requirements, policies, procedures, and standards specified in provision 8.21. and bylaws 8.21.01. through 8.21.08.

8.23. Institutions, Organizations, and Ministries. This church shall seek to meet human needs through encouragement of its people to individual and corporate action, and through establishing, developing, recognizing, and supporting institutions, organizations, and ministries that minister to people in their spiritual and temporal needs.

8.23.01. Related institutions, organizations, and ministries may affiliate with this church through criteria and policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit.

8.30. SPECIAL INTEREST CONFERENCES

8.31. This church cherishes the diversity of cultural and linguistic groups as they are brought together in the geographic synods, recognizing, however, that certain groups, for historical reasons, may be able to meet needs and share resources through special interest conferences, which for the present cannot occur in the regular life within the geographic synods.

8.31.01. Because of both official and informal international contacts with other churches, the Danish Special Interest Conference, Finnish (Suomi) Special Interest Conference, German Lutheran Conference in North America, and Hungarian Special Interest Conference shall relate to this church under the authority of the presiding bishop of this church through an executive or designated unit as determined by the presiding bishop. Official contacts and relationships of the special interest conferences with leaders and representatives of other churches shall be coordinated through the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

8.40. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER LUTHERAN ORGANIZATIONS

8.41. This church may establish relationships with independent Lutheran organizations, institutions, or agencies whose purposes are compatible with its mission and ministry. Policies and procedures to create and implement these relationships shall be adopted by the Church Council.

8.50. RELATIONSHIP WITH INTERCHURCH AGENCIES, INSTITUTIONS, AND COUNCILS

8.51. The congregations, synods, social ministry institutions and agencies, and churchwide organization may establish or affiliate with interchurch agencies and councils in relationships that will reflect this church's objectives of sharing with other faith communities in study, dialogue, and common action, in accordance with adopted policies governing such associations.

8.51.01. Policies governing ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and interfaith activities shall be recommended by the presiding bishop of this church to the Churchwide Assembly for its adoption.

8.51.02. Formal membership in interchurch agencies and/or councils shall be by action of the Churchwide Assembly in all relationships involving national or international involvement, by the Synod Assembly in its geographic area, and by congregations in community settings, with each affiliation by any congregation, synod, or churchwide organization to be in accordance with the policies of this church.

8.60. OFFICIAL CHURCH-TO-CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS

8.61. This church may establish official church-to-church relationships and agreements. Establishment of such official relationships and agreements shall require a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting in a Churchwide Assembly.

8.62. Policies and procedures to implement church-to-church relationships of full communion established by action of a Churchwide Assembly may be developed by the appropriate officer or churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

8.63. The provisions governing ecumenical availability and service of ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service shall be set forth in the bylaws.

8.63.01. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church or a minister of Word and Service, serving temporarily in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be retained on the roster—upon endorsement by the synod bishop and by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister is listed on the roster—under policies developed at the direction of the presiding bishop and secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

a. A letter of call may be issued to a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving temporarily in such a church body, by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a Synod Council, in accord with the Table of Sources of Calls (7.44.A24.b.).

b. A letter of call may be issued to a minister of Word and Service of this church, serving temporarily in such a church body, by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a Synod Council, in accord with the Table of Sources of Calls (7.74.A24.b.).

c. A letter of call issued by the Church Council or a Synod Council for service in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly shall be governed by provisions 7.43. and 7.73. and bylaws 7.43.01. and 7.73.01.

8.63.02. A minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be authorized by the synod bishop to serve in a congregation or employing entity of this church. For ministers of Word and Service, such service is only permissible if their church body has reached agreement with this church on the exchangeability of ministers of Word and Service. Such service shall be rendered under a contract between the congregation or employing entity and the minister in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by the congregation or employing entity. Any such service shall be in accord with churchwide policies developed at the direction of the presiding bishop and secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

8.63.03. Whenever a rostered minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to serve or is serving in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly, or whenever a minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been so declared and established is to serve or is serving in this church, a full sharing of relevant information concerning such rostered minister's experience and fitness for ministry is expected between the synod bishop (or other appropriate office or entity) of this church and the appropriate person, office, or entity in the other church. Relevant information related to fitness for ministry shall include, but is not limited to, any information concerning disciplinary proceedings or allegations that could result, or could have resulted, in disciplinary proceedings.

8.63.04. A minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be granted the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation or ministry setting of this church, in accord with bylaw 8.63.02.

8.63.05. The availability of a minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to serve in this church pursuant to bylaw 8.63.02. shall be understood normally in three categories: availability to serve in an occasional situation; availability to meet an extended need, including service in "yoked parish" settings; and availability for a transfer of roster status.

a. *Occasional service for ministers of Word and Sacrament:* An occasional situation is defined as one in which a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in a congregation of this church on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synod bishop.

b. *Extended service for ministers of Word and Sacrament:* A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be invited to serve as the pastor of a congregation of this church for an extended period of time, yet remain a minister of Word and Sacrament of the minister's present church body. Such a person would be expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in a congregation of this church in a manner that is consistent with the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to live in a manner consistent with the ministerial policy of this church. Such service shall be rendered only as authorized by the synod bishop in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of this church in a given situation.

c. *Transfer for ministers of Word and Sacrament:* A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists who seeks to serve indefinitely within the ministry of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may apply for admission to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church

in America and be approved through the candidacy process for admission to the roster. Such a minister would then become a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church upon receipt and acceptance of a regular call and installation in a congregation or other setting in this church, at which point the minister would no longer be serving under the exchangeability provisions of full communion.

d. *Occasional service for ministers of Word and Service:* An occasional situation is defined as one in which a minister of Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists and with which agreement has been reached on the exchangeability of ministers of Word and Service may be asked to serve in a congregation or ministry setting of this church on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synod bishop.

e. *Extended service for ministers of Word and Service:* A minister of Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists and with which agreement has been reached on the exchangeability of ministers of Word and Service may be invited to serve as a deacon of a congregation or ministry setting of this church for an extended period of time, yet remain a minister of Word and Service of the minister's present church body. Such a person would be expected to serve in a congregation or ministry setting of this church in a manner that is consistent with the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to live in a manner consistent with the ministerial policy of this church. Such service shall be rendered only as authorized by the synod bishop in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of this church in a given situation.

f. *Transfer for ministers of Word and Service*: A minister of Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists who seeks to serve indefinitely within the ministry of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may apply for admission to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and be approved through the candidacy process for admission to the roster. Such a minister would then become a minister of Word and Service of this church upon receipt and acceptance of a regular call and installation in a congregation or other setting in this church, at which point the minister would no longer be serving under the exchangeability provisions of full communion.

8.63.06. Rostered ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, while serving in an ecumenical setting, remain subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists is understood by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the church body in which the minister is rostered or holds ministerial membership. Such a minister, while serving in a congregation or other ministry of this church, is expected to abide by the standards and policies of this church related to ministers.

8.63.07. When a minister of Word and Sacrament or Word and Service from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America completes a contract for extended service, the synod file on that minister shall be sent to and retained by the Office of the Secretary.

8.64. **This church, in accord with constitutional provision 2.05., acknowledges as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that accept the teaching of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and understands that altar and pulpit fellowship with congregations and other entities of such churches may be locally practiced. Local practice of altar and pulpit fellowship, in accord with churchwide constitutional provision 2.05., is subject to the approval of the Synod Council, upon endorsement by the synod bishop. Notice of such approval is to be given to the presiding bishop as the chief ecumenical officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

8.64.01. The approval is granted initially for one year only and must be reviewed and approved annually by the Synod Council. Any time that the local practice of altar and pulpit fellowship no longer serves the mission and ministry needs of this church, the synod bishop may withdraw endorsement and the Synod Council may withdraw the approval.

8.64.02. A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body not in full communion with this church, while serving in a ministry involving the local practice of altar and pulpit fellowship with a congregation of this church is understood to be subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the church body in which the minister is rostered or holds ministerial membership. Such a minister, while serving a congregation or other ministry of this church, is expected to abide by the standards and policies of this church related to ministers of Word and Sacrament. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, while serving in a ministry involving the local practice of altar and pulpit fellowship with a non-ELCA congregation, remains subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

8.65. **Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and units of the churchwide organization are encouraged to engage in cooperative work, wherever possible, with churches that accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. Units engaging in this work shall advise the presiding bishop of such developments.**

Chapter 9.
CONGREGATIONS

9.10. DEFINITION

9.11. A congregation is a community of baptized persons whose existence depends on the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments and whose purpose is to worship God, to nurture its members, and to reach out in witness and service to the world. To this end it assembles regularly for worship and nurture, organizes and carries out ministry to its people and neighborhood, and cooperates with and supports the wider church to strive for the fulfillment of God's mission in the world.

9.20. CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION AND RECEPTION

9.21. This church shall recognize, receive, and maintain on the roster those congregations which by their practice as well as their governing documents:

- **a. preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission;**
- **b. accept this church's Confession of Faith;**
- **c. agree to the Statement of Purpose of this church;**
- **d. agree to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church in accordance with the call procedures of this church, except in special circumstances as defined in the bylaws accompanying this provision, and with the approval of the synod bishop;**
- **e. agree to be responsible for their life as a Christian community;**
- **f. agree to support the life and work of this church; and**
- **g. adhere to the additional commitments expressed in this chapter of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.**

9.21.01. Approval of the synod bishop, as required in 9.21.d., involves the bishop's attesting that a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church has been approved, in conformity with the governing documents and policies of this church, through the synod candidacy process for first call as a seminary graduate or for call in this church through approval for reception into this church from another Lutheran church body or another Christian church body. Consultation with the synod bishop in accordance with the call procedures and governing documents of this church and the synod is required for the calling of pastoral leadership from among:

- a. persons on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
- b. persons who are candidates for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have been recommended for a congregation by the synod bishop.

9.21.02. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of the congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which this church officially has established a relationship of full communion by action of a Churchwide Assembly may serve temporarily under contract as pastor of a congregation of this church.

9.22. **In addition to this Chapter 9, all congregations of this church shall abide by the provisions of 6.01., 7.46., and 7.75., and bylaws 20.41.01. through 20.41.11.**

9.23. **In accord with constitutional provision 9.21.d. and its accompanying bylaws and without invoking the provisions of Chapter 20, a congregation that calls or otherwise maintains as its pastor a person who is neither:**

a. on this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament; nor

b. approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and called pursuant to bylaw 9.21.01.; nor

c. authorized as a minister pursuant to bylaw 7.31.10.; nor

d. a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which this church has established a relationship of full communion and contracted with pursuant to bylaw 9.21.02.;

may be removed from the roster of congregations of this church by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop.

9.24. **A recognized and received congregation that is part of this church shall, when legally possible, be incorporated and may, in its sole discretion:**

a. own property and be responsible for its care; and

b. call or employ staff.

9.25. **A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:**

a. Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of this constitution.

b. Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements of this constitution and the Constitution for Synods of this church. Bylaws and continuing resolutions, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the constitution of the synod, or the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be adopted as described in Chapters 17 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

c. Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of this church as stated in *C6.01., *C6.02., and *C6.03. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

9.26. **Recognition and reception of additional congregations into this church is based upon the judgment of the synod that the congregations satisfy the criteria in 9.21. and 9.25. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.**

a. Recognition and reception of congregations newly formed by this church is accomplished by action of the Synod Council.

b. Recognition and reception of transferring or independent congregations is accomplished by the action of the Synod Assembly upon the recommendation of the Synod Council.

1) If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.

2) The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

9.27. Each congregation, except those which are in relationship with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish a relationship with the synod in whose territory it is located.

9.30. RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY

9.31. Congregations of this church shall have authority in all matters that are not assigned by the constitution and bylaws of this church to synods and the churchwide organization.

9.40. FUNCTIONS

9.41. The congregation shall:

a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.

b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.

c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily life and in their congregation.

d. Teach the Word of God.

e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.

f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.

g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of the synod and the churchwide organization.

h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization.

i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

9.50. GOVERNANCE

9.51. Each congregation shall structure itself in such a way as to involve its members in fulfilling the definition, purpose, and functions of a congregation of this church.

9.52. The governing documents of congregations recognized at the establishment of this church shall continue to govern such congregations until amended. When such a congregation wishes to amend any provision of its governing documents, the governing documents of that congregation shall be so amended to conform to 9.25.b. The synod responsible for the review of such amendments may permit, for good cause, a congregation to retain particular unamended provisions in the congregation's governing documents that were in force at the establishment of this church.

9.53. Each congregation shall have governing documents, no terms of which shall conflict with provision 9.21. Subject to the provisions of 9.52., these documents shall contain the elements listed in the bylaws. The judgment on whether a congregation meets the criteria listed in 9.21. shall be made by this church through the synod of this church to which the congregation relates.

9.53.01. The governing documents of congregations shall include:

a. the Confession of Faith;
b. the Statement of Purpose;
c. provisions describing the congregation's relationship to this church;
d. a process for calling a rostered minister;
e. a listing of the duties of a rostered minister;
f. provisions describing the role of the rostered minister in the governance of the congregation;
g. a process for removal of a rostered minister;
h. provisions regulating the disposition of property;
i. a legislative process;
j. an enumeration of officers with definition of authority and functions of each;
k. a definition of each organizational component (e.g., committees, boards); and
l. a process for the discipline of members.

9.53.02. A *Model Constitution for Congregations* shall be provided by this church. Amendments to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* shall be made in the same manner as prescribed in Chapter 22 for amendments of the bylaws of this church. Congregations are expected to resolve conflicts between their current governing documents and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

9.53.03. Each congregation shall provide a copy of its governing documents to the synod. If a congregation wishes to amend any portion of its governing documents, 9.52. and the following provisions shall apply:

a. The congregation shall follow the process for amending its governing documents set forth in its governing documents;
b. The congregation shall submit all proposed changes to its governing documents, including changes to its constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions, to the synod with which the congregation is affiliated for review;

c. The synod shall approve or disapprove proposed changes to the congregation's constitution which do not conform to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* and notify the congregation of its decisions; such changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them; and
d. The synod shall recognize that congregations may organize themselves in a manner which they deem most appropriate, consistent with this chapter.

9.53.04. Each congregation shall take the necessary steps to protect its members and this church from liability, including incorporation as indicated in 9.24, appropriate insurance coverage, and similar actions.

9.53.05. Congregations shall normally maintain a fiscal year of January 1 through December 31.

9.53.06. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

9.53.07. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located before any steps are taken leading to such action.

9.53.08. Congregations shall have the right to petition this church. Such petitions will be presented as resolutions or memorials in the form prescribed by the secretary of this church. Any resolution or memorial shall be addressed to the synod to which the congregation relates for response by the synod. By action of the Synod Council or Synod Assembly, resolutions or memorials may be forwarded to the Church Council or Churchwide Assembly.

9.60. TERMINATION OF RELATIONSHIP

9.61. The relationship between a congregation and this church is terminated in one of the following ways:

a. The congregation takes action to dissolve.
b. The congregation ceases to exist.
c. The congregation is no longer recognized by this church under the disciplinary provisions of Chapter 20.
d. The congregation terminates its relationship according to the procedure outlined in 9.62.
e. The congregation is removed by the synod pursuant to 9.23.
f. The synod takes charge and control of the property of the congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to †S13.24. of the synod constitution. The congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.

9.62. A congregation may terminate its relationship with this church by the following procedure:

a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of the congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time the congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's

designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of the congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.

b. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation.

c. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the meeting, the bishop of the synod and the congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.

d. If the congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of the congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the meeting.

e. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated, subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs g., h., and i. below.

f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that the congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, the congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case 9.71.e. shall apply.

g. Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in 9.62. shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.

h. Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in 9.62., to receive synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.

i. Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in 9.62., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and

receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.

j. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote at the congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above, another first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above to consider termination of relationship with this church may be called no sooner than six months after that first meeting. If a congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at the congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of 9.62. and may begin no sooner than six months after that second meeting.

k. Notice of a congregation's termination of its relationship with this church shall be forwarded by the bishop to the secretary of this church, who shall report the termination to the Churchwide Assembly.

9.70. OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY

9.71. Subject to the provisions of 9.52., the following shall govern the ownership of property by congregations of this church:

a. Title to property shall reside in the congregation. The congregation may dispose of its property as it determines, subject to any self-accepted indebtedness or other self-accepted restrictions.

b. Title to the undisposed property of a congregation that ceases to exist shall pass to the synod of this church to which the congregation is related.

c. Title to the property of a congregation that is no longer recognized by this church as a result of discipline shall continue to reside in the congregation.

d. Title to the property of a congregation that has acted to terminate its relationship with this church by the provisions of 9.62. and has voted to relate to another Lutheran church body shall continue to reside in the congregation.

e. Title to the property of a congregation that has acted to terminate its relationship with this church by the provisions of 9.62. and has voted to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body shall continue to reside in the congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with the congregation, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of the congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of this church. In neither case does title to the congregation's property transfer to the synod.

9.80. UNION OR FEDERATED CONGREGATIONS

9.81. A synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may authorize a particular congregation or recognized ministry related to the synod to

form a federated congregation or union congregation with a congregation or recognized ministry of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or a synod may organize a federated congregation or union congregation, with the synod acting in concert with a comparable ecclesiastical entity of another church body or church bodies with which a relationship of full communion has been established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

9.81.01. A union congregation is one congregation that is formed and maintained with the approval of both the synod in which the congregation is located and the comparable ecclesiastical entity of one or more church bodies with which a relationship of full communion has been established. A union congregation shall conduct its life and work under a plan of agreement adopted by the union congregation in accord with policy of the synod in which the union congregation is located and the comparable entity or entities of a church body or church bodies with which a relationship of full communion has been declared by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in accord with 8.61. and 9.81.

a. The plan of agreement shall follow, as clearly as is practicable, the model provisions developed by the secretary of this church, after consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or units and the Conference of Bishops. Such a plan of agreement shall be subject to the constitutions of each church body involved.
   1) Whenever the constitutions of the respective church bodies differ, the mandatory provisions of one shall apply in all cases when the others are permissive.
   2) Whenever conflicting mandatory provisions or conflicting permissive provisions exist, petition shall be made to the appropriate governing bodies of the church bodies involved to resolve the conflict under the internal procedures of the respective church bodies.

b. The plan of agreement of a union congregation shall be consistent with the commitments made by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in church-to-church resolutions and documents for the continuing relationship of full communion.

c. The plan of agreement of each union congregation shall be subject to review and ratification by the Synod Council of the synod in which the union congregation is located.

d. Implementation of the plan of agreement of a union congregation shall be guided by policies and procedures developed in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or units by the Office of the Secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

e. A union congregation shall be incorporated, when legally possible, under the laws of the state of location. A union congregation shall take the necessary steps to protect its members and the related church bodies from liability.

9.81.02. A federated congregation may be formed by two or more separate congregations that shall continue to exist as separate but cooperating entities. The separate congregations in a federated congregation shall be related to their respective church bodies that have established a relationship of full communion in accord with 8.61. and 9.81. A federated congregation shall conduct its life and work under a plan of agreement approved by the two or more separate congregations upon recommendation of the synod in which the congregation is located, with the synod acting in concert with the comparable ecclesiastical entity of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists.

a. The plan of agreement of a federated congregation shall follow, as clearly as is practicable, the model provisions of such a plan of agreement developed by the secretary of this church, after consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or units and the Conference of Bishops. Such a plan of agreement for a federated congregation shall be subject to the constitutions of each church body involved.
b. The plan of agreement of a federated congregation shall be consistent with the commitments made by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in church-to-church resolutions and documents for the continuing relationship of full communion.
c. The plan of agreement of a federated congregation shall be subject to review and ratification by the Synod Council of the synod in which the federated congregation is located.
d. Implementation of the plan of agreement of a federated congregation shall be guided by policies and procedures developed in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or units by the Office of the Secretary, and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops.
e. Each congregation in a federated congregation shall take the necessary steps to protect its members and the related church body from liability.

Chapter 10.
SYNODS

10.01. The territory of this church shall be divided into geographic synods, except the Slovak Zion Synod, the names and boundaries of which shall be determined by the Churchwide Assembly except as provided in the bylaws. The names and boundaries of the synods shall be included in the bylaws.

10.01.01. Names and Boundaries. The names and boundaries of the synods shall be:

Synod 1.A—Alaska. The state of ALASKA.

Synod 1.B—Northwest Washington. The counties of Island, King (north), San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom in the state of WASHINGTON; the congregation Bethany, Kitsap County, in the state of WASHINGTON.

Synod 1.C—Southwestern Washington. The counties of Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, King (south), Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum in the state of WASHINGTON.

Synod 1.D—Northwest Intermountain. The state of IDAHO; the counties of Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman, Yakima in the state of WASHINGTON; the counties of Lincoln and Teton, in the state of WYOMING; the congregations St. Paul, Malheur County, and Christ the King, Umatilla County, in the state of OREGON.

Synod 1.E—Oregon. The state of OREGON with the exception of the congregations St. Paul, Malheur County, and Christ the King, Umatilla County; and the city of Tulelake in the state of CALIFORNIA.

Synod 1.F—Montana. The state of MONTANA, with the exception of the congregation Immanuel, Sheridan County; and the counties of Big Horn, Park, Sheridan, and Washakie in the state of WYOMING.

Synod 2.A—Sierra Pacific. The counties of Alameda, Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Inyo, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Benito, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo, Yuba in the state of CALIFORNIA; the counties of Churchill, Douglas, Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lyon, Mineral, Pershing, Storey, Washoe, White Pine and the consolidated municipality of Carson City in the state of NEVADA.

Synod 2.B—Southwest California. The counties of Kern, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura in the state of CALIFORNIA.

Synod 2.C—Pacifica. The counties of Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego in the state of CALIFORNIA; the congregations St. Andrew, Salem Evangelical, Shepherd of the Hills, and Good Shepherd Evangelical, Los Angeles County, in the state of CALIFORNIA; the state of HAWAII; the territories of the U.S. in the Pacific Ocean.

Synod 2.D—Grand Canyon. The state of ARIZONA; the counties of Clark, Esmeralda, Lincoln, Nye in the state of NEVADA; the congregation New Promise, Washington County, in the state of UTAH.

Synod 2.E—Rocky Mountain. The states of COLORADO; NEW MEXICO; UTAH; the counties of Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Loving, Presidio, Reeves, Ward, Winkler in the state of TEXAS; the counties of Albany, Campbell, Carbon, Converse, Crook, Fremont, Goshen, Hot Springs, Johnson, Laramie, Natrona, Niobrara, Platte, Sublette, Sweetwater, Uinta, Weston in the state of WYOMING.

Synod 3.A—Western North Dakota. The counties of Adams, Billings, Bottineau, Bowman, Burke, Burleigh, Divide, Dunn, Emmons, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, Kidder, Logan, McHenry, McIntosh, McKenzie, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Mountrail, Oliver, Pierce, Renville, Sheridan, Sioux, Slope, Stark, Ward, Wells, Williams in the state of NORTH DAKOTA; the congregation Leeds Evangelical, Benson County in the state of NORTH DAKOTA; the congregation Lemmon, Perkins County, and the congregation Ralph, Harding County in the state of SOUTH DAKOTA; the congregations Trinity, Wibaux County, and Immanuel, Sheridan County, in the state of MONTANA.

Synod 3.B—Eastern North Dakota. The counties of Barnes, Benson, Cass, Cavalier, Dickey, Eddy, Foster, Grand Forks, Griggs, LaMoure, Nelson, Pembina, Ramsey, Ransom, Richland, Rolette, Sargent, Steele, Stutsman, Towner, Traill, Walsh in the state of NORTH DAKOTA; the congregations Martin Luther and Emmanuel, Logan County, in the state of NORTH DAKOTA.

Synod 3.C—South Dakota. The state of SOUTH DAKOTA; the congregation Union Creek, Plymouth County, in the state of IOWA.

Synod 3.D—Northwestern Minnesota. The counties of Becker, Beltrami, Clay, Clearwater, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Wilkin in the state of MINNESOTA.

Synod 3.E—Northeastern Minnesota. The counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Crow Wing, Itasca, Kanabec, Koochiching, Lake, Mille Lacs (part), Morrison, Pine, St. Louis in the state of MINNESOTA.

Synod 3.F—Southwestern Minnesota. The counties of Benton, Big Stone, Blue Earth (part), Brown, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Martin, Meeker, Mille Lacs (part), Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Sherburne (part), Sibley, Stearns, Stevens, Swift, Watonwan, Wright (part), Yellow Medicine in the state of MINNESOTA.

Synod 3.G—Minneapolis Area. The counties of Anoka, Carver, Hennepin, Isanti, Scott, Sherburne (part), Wright (part) in the state of MINNESOTA.

Synod 3.H—Saint Paul Area. The counties of Chisago, Dakota, Ramsey, Washington in the state of MINNESOTA; the congregations St. Mark, Our Savior's, and Living Waters in Anoka County, the congregation Spring Lake,

Isanti County, and the congregation Christiania, Scott County, in the state of MINNESOTA.

Synod 3.I—Southeastern Minnesota. The counties of Blue Earth (part), Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Le Sueur, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Winona in the state of MINNESOTA.

Synod 4.A—Nebraska. The state of NEBRASKA.

Synod 4.B—Central States. The states of MISSOURI and KANSAS.

Synod 4.C—Arkansas-Oklahoma. The states of ARKANSAS and OKLAHOMA.

Synod 4.D—Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana. The counties of Andrews, Archer, Armstrong, Bailey, Baylor, Bell, Borden, Bosque, Bowie, Briscoe, Brown, Callahan, Camp, Carson, Cass, Castro, Childress, Clay, Cochran, Coke, Coleman, Collin, Collingsworth, Comanche, Concho, Cooke, Coryell, Cottle, Crosby, Dallam, Dallas, Dawson, Deaf Smith, Delta, Denton, Dickens, Donley, Eastland, Ector, Ellis, Erath, Falls, Fannin, Fisher, Floyd, Foard, Franklin, Gaines, Garza, Glasscock, Gray, Grayson, Gregg, Hale, Hall, Hamilton, Hansford, Hardeman, Harrison, Hartley, Haskell, Hemphill, Henderson, Hill, Hockley, Hood, Hopkins, Howard, Hunt, Hutchinson, Irion, Jack, Johnson, Jones, Kaufman, Kent, King, Knox, Lamar, Lamb, Lampasas, Limestone, Lipscomb, Lubbock, Lynn, McCulloch, McLennan, Marion, Martin, Midland, Mills, Mitchell, Montague, Moore, Morris, Motley, Navarro, Nolan, Ochiltree, Oldham, Palo Pinto, Panola, Parker, Parmer, Potter, Rains, Randall, Reagan, Red River, Roberts, Rockwall, Runnels, Rusk, San Saba, Scurry, Shackelford, Sherman, Smith, Somervell, Stephens, Sterling, Stonewall, Swisher, Tarrant, Taylor, Terry, Throckmorton, Titus, Tom Green, Upshur, Van Zandt, Wheeler, Wichita, Wilbarger, Wise, Wood, Yoakum, Young in the state of TEXAS; the parishes of Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, DeSoto, East Carroll, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Red River, Richland, Sabine, Tensas, Union, Webster, West Carroll, Winn in the state of LOUISIANA; the congregation Trinity, Curry County, in the state of NEW MEXICO.

Synod 4.E—Southwestern Texas. The counties of Aransas, Atascosa, Bandera, Bastrop, Bee, Bexar, Blanco, Brooks, Burnet, Caldwell, Calhoun, Cameron, Comal, Crane, Crockett, De Witt, Dimmit, Duval, Edwards, Frio, Gillespie, Goliad, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Hays, Hidalgo, Jackson, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Karnes, Kendall, Kenedy, Kerr, Kimble, Kinney, Kleberg, La Salle, Lavaca, Lee, Live Oak, Llano, McMullen, Mason, Maverick, Medina, Menard, Milam, Nueces, Pecos, Real, Refugio, San Patricio, Schleicher, Starr, Sutton, Terrell, Travis, Upton, Uvalde, Val Verde, Victoria, Webb, Willacy, Williamson, Wilson, Zapata, Zavala in the state of TEXAS.

Synod 4.F—Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast. The counties of Anderson, Angelina, Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Burleson, Chambers, Cherokee, Colorado, Fayette, Fort Bend, Freestone, Galveston, Grimes, Hardin, Harris, Houston, Jasper, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Matagorda, Montgomery, Nacogdoches, Newton, Orange, Polk, Robertson, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby,

Trinity, Tyler, Walker, Waller, Washington, Wharton in the state of TEXAS; the parishes of Acadia, Allen, Ascension, Assumption, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, LaFourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermilion, Vernon, Washington, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana in the state of LOUISIANA.

Synod 5.A—Metropolitan Chicago. The counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake in the state of ILLINOIS.

Synod 5.B—Northern Illinois. The counties of Boone, Bureau, Carroll, De Kalb, Grundy, Henderson, Henry, Jo Daviess, Kendall, Knox, La Salle, Lee, McHenry, Mercer, Ogle, Putnam, Rock Island, Stephenson, Warren, Whiteside, Will, Winnebago in the state of ILLINOIS.

Synod 5.C—Central/Southern Illinois. The counties of Adams, Alexander, Bond, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Champaign, Christian, Clark, Clay, Clinton, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, De Witt, Douglas, Edgar, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Ford, Franklin, Fulton, Gallatin, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Iroquois, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jersey, Johnson, Kankakee, Lawrence, Livingston, Logan, McDonough, McLean, Macon, Macoupin, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Mason, Massac, Menard, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Moultrie, Peoria, Perry, Piatt, Pike, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, St. Clair, Saline, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby, Stark, Tazewell, Union, Vermilion, Wabash, Washington, Wayne, White, Williamson, Woodford in the state of ILLINOIS.

Synod 5.D—Southeastern Iowa. The counties of Appanoose, Benton, Boone, Cedar, Clarke, Clinton, Dallas (east), Davis, Decatur, Des Moines, Henry, Iowa, Jackson (south), Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Jones, Keokuk, Lee, Linn, Louisa, Lucas, Madison, Mahaska, Marion, Marshall, Monroe, Muscatine, Polk, Poweshiek, Scott, Story (south), Tama (south), Van Buren, Wapello, Warren, Washington, Wayne in the state of IOWA; the congregation St. John Lutheran Church, Schuyler County, in the state of MISSOURI.

Synod 5.E—Western Iowa. The counties of Adair, Adams, Audubon, Buena Vista, Calhoun, Carroll, Cass, Cherokee, Clay, Crawford, Dallas (west), Dickinson, Emmet, Fremont, Greene, Guthrie, Hamilton (west), Hancock (west), Harrison, Humboldt, Ida, Kossuth, Lyon, Mills, Monona, Montgomery, O'Brien, Osceola, Page, Palo Alto, Plymouth, Pocahontas, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Sac, Shelby, Sioux, Taylor, Union, Webster, Winnebago (west), Woodbury, Wright (west) in the state of IOWA.

Synod 5.F—Northeastern Iowa. The counties of Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy, Hamilton (east), Hancock (east), Hardin, Howard, Jackson (north), Mitchell, Story (north), Tama (north), Winnebago (east), Winneshiek, Worth, Wright (east) in the state of IOWA.

Synod 5.G—Northern Great Lakes. The counties of Florence, Forest, Iron, Marinette, Oneida, Vilas in the state of WISCONSIN; the counties in the Upper Peninsula in the state of MICHIGAN.

Synod 5.H—Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. The counties of Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Buffalo (north), Burnett, Chippewa, Clark, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson (north), Marathon (west), Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Price, Rusk, St. Croix, Sawyer, Taylor, Trempealeau (north), Washburn, Wood (northwest corner) in the state of WISCONSIN.

Synod 5.I—East-Central Synod of Wisconsin. The counties of Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond Du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Langlade, Lincoln, Manitowoc, Marathon (east), Marquette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Portage, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago, Wood (southeast) in the state of WISCONSIN; the congregation Redeemer, Sheboygan County, in the state of WISCONSIN.

Synod 5.J—Greater Milwaukee. The counties of Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Washington, Waukesha in the state of WISCONSIN; the congregations of Cross and St. Matthew, Jefferson County, and the congregations St. Olaf and Zion, Dodge County, in the state of WISCONSIN.

Synod 5.K—South-Central Synod of Wisconsin. The counties of Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Walworth in the state of WISCONSIN; the congregation Trinity, Adams County, in the state of WISCONSIN, and the congregation Jefferson Prairie, Boone County, in the state of ILLINOIS.

Synod 5.L—La Crosse Area. The counties of Adams, Buffalo (south), Crawford, Jackson (south), Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau (south), Vernon in the state of WISCONSIN; and congregations in or near the towns of La Crescent, Caledonia, and Spring Grove in the state of MINNESOTA.

Synod 6.A—Southeast Michigan. The counties of Genesee, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Saint Clair, Shiawasee, Washtenaw, Wayne in the state of MICHIGAN; the congregation Trinity, Sanilac County, in the state of MICHIGAN.

Synod 6.B—North/West Lower Michigan. The counties of Alcona, Allegan, Alpena, Antrim, Arenac, Barry, Bay, Benzie, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Clare, Clinton, Crawford, Eaton, Emmet, Gladwin, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Huron, Ingham, Ionia, Iosco, Isabella, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kalkaska, Kent, Lake, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Midland, Missaukee, Montcalm, Montmorency, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Ogemaw, Osceola, Oscoda, Otsego, Ottawa, Presque Isle, Roscommon, St. Joseph, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola, Van Buren, Wexford in the state of MICHIGAN.

Synod 6.C—Indiana-Kentucky. The state of INDIANA and the commonwealth of KENTUCKY.

Synod 6.D—Northwestern Ohio. The counties of Allen, Auglaize, Crawford, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Huron, Lucas, Marion, Mercer,

Morrow, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, Wood, Wyandot in the state of OHIO; the congregation St. James, Jay County, in the state of INDIANA.

Synod 6.E—Northeastern Ohio. The counties of Ashland, Ashtabula, Carroll, Columbiana, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Richland, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Wayne in the state of OHIO.

Synod 6.F—Southern Ohio. The counties of Adams, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Coshocton, Darke, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Gallia, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Highland, Hocking, Jackson, Knox, Lawrence, Licking, Logan, Madison, Meigs, Miami, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Preble, Ross, Scioto, Shelby, Union, Vinton, Warren, Washington in the state of OHIO; the congregation St. Mark, Auglaize County, in the state of OHIO, and the congregation Bethel, Greenup County, in the commonwealth of KENTUCKY.

Synod 7.A—New Jersey. The state of NEW JERSEY.

Synod 7.B—New England. The states of CONNECTICUT; MAINE; NEW HAMPSHIRE; RHODE ISLAND; and VERMONT; the commonwealth of MASSACHUSETTS; and the counties of Clinton, Essex, and Franklin in the state of NEW YORK.

Synod 7.C—Metropolitan New York. The counties of Bronx, Dutchess, Kings, Nassau, New York, Orange, Putnam, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester in the state of NEW YORK.

Synod 7.D—Upstate New York. The counties of Albany, Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Erie, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Rensselaer, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates in the state of NEW YORK.

Synod 7.E—Northeastern Pennsylvania. The counties of Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming in the commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA.

Synod 7.F—Southeastern Pennsylvania. The counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia in the commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA.

Synod 7.G—Slovak Zion. A non-geographic synod consisting of congregations distinctively Slovak in language or antecedents.

Synod 8.A—Northwestern Pennsylvania. The counties of Armstrong (part), Cameron, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Indiana (part), Jefferson, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango, Warren in the commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA.

Synod 8.B—Southwestern Pennsylvania. The counties of Allegheny, Armstrong (part), Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana (part), Lawrence, Washington, Westmoreland in the commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA.

Synod 8.C—Allegheny. The counties of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clearfield, Huntingdon, Somerset in the commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA; the congregation Christ, Garrett County, in the state of MARYLAND.

Synod 8.D—Lower Susquehanna. The counties of Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, York in the commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA; the Klingerstown Lutheran Parish in Schuylkill County in the commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA.

Synod 8.E—Upper Susquehanna. The counties of Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Tioga, Union in the commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA; the congregation Trinity, Luzerne County, and the congregation Zion, Pillow, Dauphin County, in the commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA.

Synod 8.F—Delaware-Maryland. The state of DELAWARE; the city of Baltimore and the counties of Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, Worcester in the state of MARYLAND; the congregation of Holy Trinity, Prince George's County, in the state of MARYLAND; the congregation of Mt. Joy, Adams County, in the commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA; the counties of Accomack, Northampton in the commonwealth of VIRGINIA.

Synod 8.G—Metropolitan Washington, D.C. The District of Columbia; the counties of Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's, St. Mary's in the state of MARYLAND; the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, and the independent cities within the territory of these counties in the commonwealth of VIRGINIA; BERMUDA.

Synod 8.H—West Virginia-Western Maryland. The county of Garrett in the state of MARYLAND; the state of WEST VIRGINIA; the congregation Mount Calvary, Allegany County, the congregations Holy Trinity Memorial and Salem, Washington County in the state of MARYLAND; the congregation Fairview, Frederick County, in the commonwealth of VIRGINIA.

Synod 9.A—Virginia. The counties of Albemarle, Alleghany, Amelia, Amherst, Appomattox, Augusta, Bath, Bedford, Bland, Botetourt, Brunswick, Buchanan, Buckingham, Campbell, Caroline, Carroll, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Clarke, Craig, Culpeper, Cumberland, Dickenson, Dinwiddie, Essex, Fauquier, Floyd, Fluvanna, Franklin, Frederick, Giles, Gloucester, Goochland, Grayson, Greene, Greensville, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, Henry, Highland, Isle of Wight, James City, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Lee, Louisa, Lunenburg, Madison, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Montgomery, Nelson, New Kent, Northumberland, Nottoway, Orange, Page, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Pulaski, Rappahannock, Richmond, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Russell, Scott, Shenandoah, Smyth, Southampton, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Surry, Sussex, Tazewell, Warren,

Washington, Westmoreland, Wise, Wythe, York, and the independent cities within the territory of these counties in the commonwealth of VIRGINIA; the congregation of Immanuel in Mercer County in the state of WEST VIRGINIA; the congregation Lakeside in Halifax County in the state of NORTH CAROLINA.

Synod 9.B—North Carolina. The state of NORTH CAROLINA.

Synod 9.C—South Carolina. The state of SOUTH CAROLINA.

Synod 9.D—Southeastern. The states of ALABAMA; GEORGIA; MISSISSIPPI; and TENNESSEE.

Synod 9.E—Florida-Bahamas. The state of FLORIDA; the BAHAMAS.

Synod 9.F—Caribbean. The commonwealth of PUERTO RICO; the territory of the U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS.

10.01.02. The Slovak Zion Synod shall continue as a non-geographic synod of this church. In all other respects it shall be bound by the provisions of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church. In addition, it shall enter into relationships with geographic synods in order to provide opportunities for congregations, rostered ministers, and other leaders to share in the programmatic services of such synods, workshops, and conferences. It shall also periodically review and evaluate its ministries to ascertain their continuing effectiveness.

10.01.03. Any congregation in a border area desiring to change its synod relationship may do so upon approval of the synod assemblies of the synods concerned. The synods concerned shall notify the secretary of this church of any change. Such change shall be introduced into this constitution by the secretary and shall be reported to the Churchwide Assembly through the Office of the Secretary.

10.01.04. Within the territory of each geographic synod, the synod—in keeping with criteria, policies, and procedures proposed by the secretary of this church, after consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or units, and approved by the Church Council—may acknowledge certain authorized worshiping communities and authorized outreach ministries as related to the synod and part of the synod's life and mission. Such worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

10.10. INCORPORATION AND CONSTITUTION

10.11. Each synod shall be incorporated. The articles of incorporation of each synod in existence on January 1, 1988, shall continue to govern such synods. The articles of incorporation of each synod organized after December 31, 1987, shall be submitted to the Church Council for ratification before filing. Amendments to the articles of incorporation of all synods shall be submitted to the Church Council for ratification before filing.

10.11.01. Any synod contemplating amending articles of incorporation or undertaking other fundamental changes such as dissolution, merger, partition into multiple synods, creating a new synod corporation, incorporating in another jurisdiction, or any similar or related action, especially those that may affect relationships with other expressions of this church, must first consult with the Office of the

Presiding Bishop, the Office of the Secretary, and with the bishops of any synods affected before seeking ratification by the Church Council.

10.12. Each synod shall have a constitution, which shall become effective upon ratification by the Church Council. Each synod constitution shall include all mandatory provisions of the *Constitution for Synods*. Each synod may amend its constitution in accordance with the required provisions in Chapter 18 of the *Constitution for Synods*. Such amendments shall be subject to like ratification, provided, however, that an amendment which is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption and the Church Council shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.

10.13. A *Constitution for Synods* shall be provided by this church. Amendments to the *Constitution for Synods* shall be made in the same manner as prescribed in Chapter 22 for amendments of the bylaws of this church. No provision of the *Constitution for Synods* may be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.

10.20. PURPOSE

10.21. Each synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:

- **a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;**
- **b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;**
- **c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners; and**
- **d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.**

10.21.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:

a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
   1) approving candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
   2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Sacrament on behalf of this church;
   3) approving ministers of Word and Service, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
   4) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Service on behalf of this church; and
   5) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.

b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:

1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.

c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this constitution; and
d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.

10.21.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

a. developing new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
e. providing resources for congregational life; and
f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.

10.21.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical and global companions, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into mutually beneficial relationships with other synods in the region;
b. fostering organizations for persons of all ages and gender identities and organizations for language or ethnic communities;
c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
d. supporting relationships with and providing funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
e. maintaining relationships with and providing funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
f. fostering relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
g. fostering relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions; and

i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

10.21.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
b. participating in churchwide programs;
c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues; and
d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

10.22. In the event that this church or any synod of this church is charged with liability for any contingent debt, liability, or obligation arising or resulting from acts or omissions of any synod of the Lutheran Church in America, or The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, or district of The American Lutheran Church, occurring prior to January 1, 1988, the Church Council is authorized and empowered to determine whether and to what extent this church or such synod of this church shall be indemnified or reimbursed for any such debt, liability, or obligation by one or more synods of this church. In making its determination with respect to indemnification or reimbursement, the Church Council shall consider the nature of the activity which gave rise to the debt, liability, or obligation, the situs of that activity, and such other factors as the Church Council deems appropriate under the circumstances in order that such debt, liability, or obligation may be discharged in a manner that is fair and equitable to this church's congregations, synods, and churchwide organization. For purposes of this provision, a "contingent" debt, liability, or obligation means a debt, liability, or obligation (a) the amount of which had not been ascertained by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on December 31, 1987, or (b) the existence of which was unknown to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on December 31, 1987.

10.30. OFFICERS

10.31. The officers of each synod shall be a bishop, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

a. As the synod's pastor, the bishop shall:
1) Oversee and administer the work of the synod.
2) Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the faith of this church.
3) Provide pastoral care and leadership for the synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.
4) Advise and counsel its related institutions and organizations.
5) Be its chief ecumenical officer.
6) Direct and guide the work of the other officers.

7) **Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and be the chief executive officer of the synod; provide for the preparation of the agenda of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the Executive Committee; see to it that the constitution and bylaws of the synod are duly observed, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect; coordinate the work of all synod staff members; and appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made.**
8) **Coordinate the use of the resources available to the synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by the synod.**
9) **Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synod bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of this church); and to ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as a minister of Word and Service (and as provided in the bylaws of this church); and to install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.**
10) **Be *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly and a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod.**
11) **Submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work.**
12) **Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church.**

b. The vice president shall chair the Synod Council. In the event of the death, resignation, or disability of the bishop, the vice president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the conduct of the duties of the bishop until a new bishop shall be elected, or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop resumes full performance of the duties of the office.

10.31.01. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church. The bishop may have as many assistants as the synod shall authorize.

10.31.02. The presiding bishop of this church, or a bishop appointed by the presiding bishop of this church, shall preside for the installation into office, in accord with the policy and approved rite of this church, of each newly elected synod bishop.

10.31.03. The vice president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice president shall be a layperson. The vice president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

10.31.04. The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The secretary may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

10.31.05. The treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the Synod Council. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

10.31.06. The bishop of the synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be re-elected. The other officers shall be elected to a term as defined by each synod, but not to exceed six years, and may be re-elected.

10.31.07. Each officer shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of the synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of the synod at the time of election.

10.31.A24. *In special circumstances the synod bishop may, when authorized by the Synod Council, be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this church. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.*

10.31.B25. ***Association of Synod Vice Presidents:*** *The Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall be composed of the synod vice presidents of this church. The churchwide vice president shall be a member with voice but not vote. The Church Council may appoint a member to serve as a liaison to the association with voice but not vote. The Conference of Bishops may appoint a synod bishop as a liaison to the association with voice but not vote. Triennially, the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall elect a chair and vice chair to preside at meetings.*

a. The Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall provide to synod vice presidents opportunities for orientation, worship, spiritual renewal, continuing education, collaboration, and leadership development. To fulfill these responsibilities, the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall:

1) meet at every Churchwide Assembly and may hold one additional in-person meeting each triennium and periodically gather informally as desired;

2) provide a forum in which goals, objectives, and strategies concerning lay leadership may be developed and shared;

3) participate in cultural competency training at each in-person meeting;

4) serve as a resource for training and guidance in the governance of this church;

5) assist the vice presidents in their role as collaborative leaders with bishops in fostering the work of the synods; and

6) when requested, provide advice and counsel to the Church Council and others holding leadership positions in this church.

b. The Association of Synod Vice Presidents may establish committees as the members from time to time may determine to assist in fulfillment of its responsibilities.

c. Staff services for meetings of the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall be provided by the synod relations staff in the Office of the Secretary.

10.32. The procedures governing matters of potential conflicts of interest for synod bishops shall be set forth in the bylaws.

10.32.01. Whenever a synod bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in 10.32.02. may require the bishop's determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in 10.32.03., the synod bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synod bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.

10.32.02. Matters include any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provision 7.46. (†S14.18.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synod bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual's ministry on one of the rosters of this church.

10.32.03. A related individual is one who, with respect to the synod bishop, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families, and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

10.40. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

10.41. Each synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall meet at least triennially. Special meetings may be called as needed. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of synods other than their synod of residence, each member of the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council, a board, committee, or other organizational unit of the synod shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of the synod.

10.41.01. Membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

a. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of the synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
b. All ministers of Word and Service under call on the roster of the synod shall be voting members in the Synod Assembly.
c. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to the synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.
d. Voting membership shall include the officers of the synod.

10.41.02. Synods may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

10.41.03. Synods may establish processes that permit rostered ministers who are on leave from call on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

10.41.04. Synods may establish processes that permit representatives of worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod, under bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

10.41.05. Synods may establish processes that permit Synod Council voting members who are not otherwise serving as voting members of the Synod Assembly the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.

10.50. SYNOD COUNCIL

10.51. Each synod shall have a Synod Council, which shall be its board of directors, and which shall serve as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly, except that it may not take any action which is reserved exclusively for the Synod Assembly or which is in conflict with action taken by the Synod Assembly.

10.52. The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of the synod and 10 to 24 other members, at least one young adult and with a goal of at least one youth, all elected by the Synod Assembly. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of the synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of the synod who reside outside the territory of the synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise specified herein shall be determined by each synod. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America from the synod, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.

10.60. CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS, COALITIONS, AREA SUBDIVISIONS, AND NETWORKS

10.61. Each synod may establish conferences, clusters, coalitions, area subdivisions, and networks as appropriate within its territory and in collaboration with other synods and organizations as specified in the bylaws and continuing resolutions. The purpose of such groupings shall be to foster interdependent relationships for missional purposes among congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other affiliates.

10.62. Each synod may establish such boards, committees, task forces, and other organizational forms as it deems necessary to carry out effectively the functions assigned to the synod.

10.63. Each synod shall have an Executive Committee, a Consultation Committee, an Audit Committee, and a Committee on Discipline. Each synod also shall establish a Mutual Ministry Committee to provide support and counsel to the bishop.

10.70. FISCAL POLICY

10.71. Each synod shall remit to the churchwide organization a percentage or amount of all donor-unrestricted receipts contributed to it by the congregations of the synod. The actual percentage or amount shall be determined through individual consultations with each synod. Consultations may recognize and include receipts other than unrestricted receipts in establishing and reporting the synod's remittance to the churchwide organization.

10.71.01. The percentage or amount determined by consultation shall be acted upon by the synod assembly as part of the adoption of the synod's budget. Should the synod assembly not approve the agreed upon percentage or amount, the synod and the churchwide organization should engage in a new consultation process to reach a mutually agreed upon percentage or amount of donor-unrestricted receipts or other receipts.

10.71.02. The percentage or amount determined by consultation shall be reported to the Church Council.

10.72. Each synod shall arrange to have an annual audit of its financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm selected by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by the synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of the synod. Synod financial reports shall be in a format approved by the churchwide Office of the Treasurer in order to attain uniformity in reporting.

10.73. Each synod shall have the fiscal year of February 1 through January 31.

10.74. Each synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.

10.80. CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

10.81. The Conference of Bishops shall be composed of the bishops of the synods, the presiding bishop of this church, and the secretary of this church.

10.81.01. The Conference of Bishops shall consult with and advise the Church Council. It may make recommendations to the presiding bishop of this church and to the Church Council, respond to referrals from the Church Council, and refer concerns and proposals to the Church Council. At each meeting the Conference of Bishops shall receive a report from the Church Council brought by the vice president of this church.

10.81.02. The conference shall meet at least two times each year.

10.81.03. The responsibilities of the Conference of Bishops shall be enumerated in a continuing resolution. The resolution may be amended by majority vote of the Churchwide Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. Should the conference disagree with the action of the Church Council, it may appeal the decision to the Churchwide Assembly.

10.81.A16. ***Responsibilities of the Conference of Bishops***

The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall provide opportunities for worship, spiritual renewal, and theological enrichment for those elected to the office of bishop of a synod, the presiding

bishop of this church, and the secretary of this church, and it shall offer advice and counsel to the Church Council and the churchwide organization. To fulfill these responsibilities, the Conference of Bishops shall:

a. be a forum in which goals, objectives, and strategies may be developed and shared concerning pastoral leadership, care, and counsel for the synods;

b. review recommendations from the appropriate churchwide unit or office pertaining to standards for the admission to the rosters of this church, and for their retention on those rosters;

c. review recommendations and foster programs, in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or office, pertaining to policies related to ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service, and their families for pastoral care in such areas as call review, guidance, mobility, intervention, discipline, rehabilitation, and spiritual growth;

d. work with the appropriate churchwide unit or office in the processes for first call for candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church, first call for candidates for the ministry of Word and Service of this church, mobility of rostered ministers, and pastoral care;

e. offer programs for orientation and continuing education for bishops, officers, and their spouses;

f. assist the bishops in their role as teachers by being a forum for serious reflections on the theological and ethical implications of issues that affect the life of this church;

g. participate in the development and study of ecumenical documents and assist the bishops to promote the unity of this church through leadership and ecumenical worship, fellowship, and interaction; and

h. assist the bishops in their role as leaders in fostering support for the work of this church by being a forum for discussion of annual mission-support plans and serving as a means of providing advice and counsel to the Church Council in the council's responsibility for approval of those plans.

10.81.B24. ***Organization of the Conference of Bishops***

The Conference of Bishops may establish committees as the members, from time to time, may determine to assist in fulfillment of assigned responsibilities. Triennially, the Conference of Bishops shall elect a chair and vice chair to preside at meetings and serve as ex officio *members of the executive committee of the conference with the presiding bishop and secretary. The Conference of Bishops shall establish criteria and terms for three synod bishops to be elected by the conference as members of the executive committee.*

10.81.C20. ***Staff Services for the Conference of Bishops***

Staff services for meetings of the Conference of Bishops shall be provided by the Office of the Secretary. The executive for synod relations shall coordinate the operation of the Conference of Bishops.

Chapter 11.
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION—DEFINITION AND PURPOSES

11.10. DEFINITION OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

11.11. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall have a churchwide organization that shall function interdependently with the congregations and synods of this church. The churchwide organization shall serve on behalf of and in support of this church's members, congregations, and synods in proclaiming the Gospel, reaching out in witness and service both globally and throughout the territory of this church, nurturing the members of this church in the daily life of faith, and manifesting the unity of this church with the whole Church of Jesus Christ.

11.12. The churchwide organization shall be an instrument for accomplishing the purposes of this church, as defined by Chapter 4 of this constitution, that are shared with and supported by the members, congregations, and synods of this church. In keeping with this church's purposes, it shall develop churchwide policy, set standards for leadership, establish criteria for this church's endeavors, and coordinate the work of this church. It shall be a means for the sharing of resources throughout this church, and shall provide programs and services as determined by this church.

11.20. PURPOSES OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

11.21. In fulfillment of the purposes of this church, the churchwide organization shall:

- **a. Undergird the worship life of this church as the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.**
- **b. Provide resources to equip members to worship, learn, serve, and witness in their ministry in daily life.**
- **c. Support and establish policy for this church's mission and coordinate planning and evaluation for that mission throughout the world, including participation with other churches.**
- **d. Witness to the Word of God in Christ by united efforts in proclaiming the Gospel, responding to human need, caring for the sick and suffering, working for justice and peace, and providing guidance to members on social matters.**
- **e. Foster interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to implement the mission of this whole church.**
- **f. Provide for the rostered ministries for this church.**
- **g. Oversee and establish policy for this church's relationship to seminaries, colleges, universities, schools, and other education endeavors, and provide support as appropriate.**
- **h. Establish and reflect this church's ecumenical stance and its relationship to other churches, and direct this church's policy for relationship with persons of other faiths.**

i. Develop and administer policies for this church's relationship to social ministry organizations and cooperate with public and private agencies that enhance human dignity and justice.

j. Determine and implement policy for this church's relationship to governments.

k. Provide for a comprehensive financial support system for this church's mission and for the administration of financial resources necessary for fulfillment of the particular responsibilities of the churchwide organization.

l. Provide planned giving opportunities for the financial support of this church, its congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions through the establishment of a foundation.

m. Provide pension and other benefits plans for this church.

n. Provide a church publishing house.

o. Provide archives for the retention of its valuable records, and coordinate archival activity in the synods, regions, institutions, and agencies of this church.

p. Provide and monitor a system of discipline, appeals, and adjudication.

q. Establish and operate other programs and activities, as determined by this church, on behalf of and in support of the congregations and synods of this church.

11.30. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

11.31. The legislative function of the churchwide organization shall be fulfilled by the Churchwide Assembly as described in Chapter 12 of this constitution.

11.32. The Church Council shall exercise interim legislative authority and shall serve as the board of directors of the churchwide organization.

11.33. Leadership of this church shall be vested in the churchwide officers, the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and executive directors of churchwide units. The full-time officers shall be the presiding bishop, secretary, and treasurer. The vice president shall serve as chair of the Church Council, may perform such other tasks for the benefit of this church as the Church Council directs, and may be compensated as the Church Council determines.

11.34. The churchwide organization shall carry out its duties through units and offices. Units and offices shall be responsible to the Churchwide Assembly and to the Church Council in the interim between regular meetings of the assembly.

11.34.01. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the actions of boards, committees, task forces, or other decision-making bodies.

11.40. GENERAL FISCAL POLICIES

11.41. Within the limits established by the Churchwide Assembly in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions, the Church Council, as the board of directors, shall establish the fiscal policies of the churchwide organization.

11.41.01. A single treasury shall be maintained for the receipt and disbursement of unrestricted funds for the churchwide organization and its units receiving

budgetary support, except as otherwise provided in the constitution and bylaws or as approved by the Church Council. Restricted and designated funds are maintained separately.

11.41.02. Within the policies established by the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council, the management and investment of the funds of the churchwide organization and its units receiving budgetary support shall be the responsibility of the Office of the Treasurer.

11.41.03. On the basis of estimated income, and upon advice of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer, in consultation with the units receiving support from the churchwide budget, the Church Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year and the units may incur financial obligations up to the specified amounts. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Church Council, upon the advice of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer.

11.41.04. The Church Council shall establish a working capital fund to be administered by the Office of the Treasurer within the policies established by the Church Council.

11.41.05. The fiscal year for the churchwide organization shall be February 1 through January 31.

11.41.06. No churchwide appeal to congregations or individuals of this church for the raising of funds shall be conducted by the churchwide organization or churchwide units without the consent of the Churchwide Assembly or the Church Council, following consultation with the Conference of Bishops. No appeal to selected congregations and individuals of this church for the raising of funds shall be conducted by the churchwide organization or churchwide units without the consent of the Church Council, following consultation with either the Conference of Bishops or specific synods as appropriate. Proposals for such special appeals shall be presented to the Church Council through the appropriate council committee with recommendations by the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

11.41.07. This church shall not, in any manner, be responsible for the debts or liabilities of other Lutheran organizations, institutions, or agencies, whether independent of or affiliated with this church.

Chapter 12.
CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.10. DESCRIPTION AND AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.11. The Churchwide Assembly shall be the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization and shall deal with all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church. The powers of the Churchwide Assembly are limited only by the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, and the assembly's own resolutions.

12.12. Any matter for which adoption by a vote of two-thirds of those voting in a prior Churchwide Assembly was required by the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall require a two-thirds vote to be amended or repealed by a subsequent Churchwide Assembly.

12.12.01. A social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be developed pursuant to a policy approved by the Church Council, following consultation with the Conference of Bishops. The text of a proposed social statement shall be reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and approved and recommended to the assembly by the Church Council. A proposed social statement shall require for adoption a vote of two-thirds of those voting members present and voting in a Churchwide Assembly.

12.20. DUTIES OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.21. The Churchwide Assembly shall:

- **a. Review the work of the churchwide officers, and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.**
- **b. Review the work of the churchwide units, and for this purpose require and receive reports from them and act on business proposed by them.**
- **c. Receive and consider proposals from synod assemblies.**
- **d. Establish churchwide policy.**
- **e. Adopt a budget for the churchwide organization.**
- **f. Elect officers, board members, and other persons as provided in the constitution or bylaws.**
- **g. Establish churchwide units to carry out the functions of the churchwide organization.**
- **h. Have the sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws.**
- **i. Fulfill other functions as required in the constitution and bylaws.**
- **j. Conduct such other business as necessary to further the purposes and functions of the churchwide organization.**

12.30. MEETINGS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.31. The assembly shall meet triennially. Special meetings may be called by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. The purpose for a special meeting shall be stated in the notice.

12.31.01. The time and place of the Churchwide Assembly shall be determined by the Church Council. The date, time, and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced at the preceding assembly.

12.31.02. The secretary shall give notice of the date, time, and place of each regular assembly by publication thereof at least 30 days in advance on this church's website. The secretary shall give written notice of a special assembly to the bishop of each synod upon the issuance of a call thereof and shall publish the same on this church's website at least 30 days in advance of the special assembly. Notice shall be provided to all voting members or voting members-elect not more than 30 days or less than 10 days in advance of any meeting. Notice may be provided electronically for voting members or voting members-elect who have provided email addresses, unless the voting member or voting member-elect has requested that written notice be mailed.

12.31.03. At least 20 days prior to an assembly the secretary shall prepare and distribute to each congregation and synod-authorized worshiping community, and to the voting members-elect a bulletin of reports. Distribution to congregations and synod-authorized worshiping communities may be accomplished by posting the report on the website of this church. Distribution to voting members-elect may be accomplished electronically to those who have provided email addresses. A written copy of the bulletin of reports will be mailed to any voting member-elect who does not provide an email address and to any congregation or voting member-elect who requests a written copy.

12.31.04. The arrangements for agenda, program, and worship shall be under the supervision of the presiding bishop.

12.31.05. Logistical arrangements for churchwide assemblies shall be made by the secretary or by an assembly manager working under the secretary's supervision. Such committees as may be necessary to facilitate the planning for and operation of the assembly may be established by the secretary in consultation with the presiding bishop.

12.31.06. The churchwide organization shall be responsible for the costs of the Churchwide Assembly, including reasonable costs for travel, housing, and board for voting and advisory members.

12.31.07. At least one-half of all persons elected as voting members must be present at a meeting to constitute a quorum for the legal conduct of business. If such a quorum is not present, those voting members present may adjourn the meeting to another time and place, provided that only those persons eligible to vote at the original meeting may vote at the adjourned meeting.

12.31.08. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted at a Churchwide Assembly.

12.31.09. The Churchwide Assembly shall use parliamentary procedures in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.

12.31.A25. *Certain proposals that are scheduled on the agenda for assembly action or information at the Churchwide Assembly are the subject of hearings. Hearings for the Churchwide Assembly may be held either during the assembly or by remote communication prior to the assembly. Notice of the hearings shall be provided electronically.*

a. *Voting members, advisory members, resource members, and other categories approved by the Church Council may attend with voice.*

b. *Other categories of non-members may attend the hearing, if space permits, and shall not have voice.*
c. *The chair of the hearing shall endeavor to maintain decorum and order. For serious breaches of order, the chair may call upon the assistance of sergeants-at-arms, if the hearing is held in-person, or technology support staff, if the hearing is held remotely.*
d. *Insofar as is possible during discussion, a speaker on one side of the question shall be followed by a speaker on the other side.*
e. *Hearings have no legislative authority.*

Hearing procedures shall follow Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, unless otherwise ordered by the Church Council.*

12.40. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.41. The voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be the voting members of this corporation. The requirements for voting members of the assembly and other members shall be specified in the bylaws.

12.41.10. VOTING MEMBERS

12.41.11. In electing voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution, subject to the following requirements:

a. Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in the synod.
b. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations and synod-authorized worshiping communities in the synod.
c. The synod bishop shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod's voting members so determined.
d. Unless otherwise determined by the synod, the synod vice president shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod's voting members.
e. If the synod has elected or identified voting members in accordance with a. through d. of this bylaw, then:
    1. The synod may elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election.
    2. The synod may elect one additional voting member who is a person of color and/or a person whose primary language is other than English.

The Church Council may allocate up to 10 additional voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect.

12.41.12. The secretary of each synod shall submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly. If a voting member elected by the Synod Assembly is unable to serve or the Synod Assembly fails to elect its full allocation of voting members at least nine months prior to the start of the Churchwide

Assembly, the names of eligible persons chosen by the Synod Council shall be submitted by the secretary of the synod to the secretary of this church. If a vacancy occurs or exists within 30 days of the convening of the Churchwide Assembly or during the meeting of the Churchwide Assembly, the synod bishop may submit the name of an eligible person to the secretary of this church. The individual whose name is submitted to the secretary of this church shall be registered and seated by the Credentials Committee as a voting member from the synod.

12.41.13. Each voting member of the Churchwide Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church. Any such voting member (except a rostered minister described in 7.42. or 7.72.) shall cease to be a member of the assembly if no longer a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church within the synod from which elected.

12.41.14. Voting members elected through the process of 12.41.11. through 12.41.13. shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Churchwide Assembly and shall continue serving until voting members are seated at the next regular Churchwide Assembly.

12.41.15. Except as defined in 12.41.16., employees of the churchwide organization or of a separately incorporated ministry, including those serving under call, appointment, employment agreement, or contract, shall not be eligible for election and service as voting members of the Churchwide Assembly.

12.41.16. ***Ex Officio*** **Members.** The officers of the churchwide organization, the members of the Church Council, and the bishops of the synods shall serve as *ex officio* members of the Churchwide Assembly. Unless otherwise determined by a synod, the synod vice presidents shall also serve as *ex officio* members of the Churchwide Assembly. *Ex officio* members shall have voice and vote.

12.41.17. **Advisory Members.** Executive directors of units of the churchwide organization, the executive for administration, and other persons from the churchwide organization designated by the presiding bishop shall serve as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly. The Church Council also may designate other persons as advisory members of the Churchwide Assembly. Advisory members shall have voice but not vote.

12.41.18. **Other Non-Voting Members.** Other categories of non-voting members may be established by the Churchwide Assembly.

12.41.A89. *Presidents of the colleges, universities, and seminaries of this church, unless elected as voting members of the assembly, shall have voice but not vote.*

12.41.B07. *Faculty Resource Persons. A representative of the faculty of each seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be appointed by the president of each seminary to serve as a seminary faculty resource person for each Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In addition, a teaching theologian who is a member of a congregation of this church and who is teaching at a college or university of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be appointed by the steering committee of the Association of Teaching Theologians in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to serve as a faculty resource person. Faculty resource persons shall have voice, if so granted in the assembly's rules,*

but not vote in plenary sessions of the assembly. Travel, food, and housing costs for the faculty resource persons shall be an expense of the assembly. Other expenses will be the responsibility of the individual or sending institution.

12.41.C25. *Congregation Observers. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may register with the secretary of this church one congregation observer for the Churchwide Assembly prior to May 31 in the year of a Churchwide Assembly.*

a. Provision shall be made for such an individual to have reserved seating in the observers section of the plenary hall. Such congregation observers will have access to the report of recommendations for assembly action and also materials distributed to voting members, advisory members, and non-voting members during the assembly. Such observers shall have neither voice nor vote in plenary sessions of the assembly.

b. A registration fee shall be established by the secretary of this church for registration and related costs.

c. Transportation costs, housing, meals, and related expenses shall be the responsibility of the registered observer or sending congregation.

12.41.D24. *If the term of office of an* ex-officio *member of the Churchwide Assembly ends during a Churchwide Assembly, such person shall nevertheless remain an* ex-officio *member of the Churchwide Assembly, and shall not be replaced in that capacity, until the conclusion of the Churchwide Assembly.*

12.50. COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.51. The Churchwide Assembly shall have a Reference and Counsel Committee, a Memorials Committee, a Nominating Committee, and an Elections Committee. The description of these committees shall be in the bylaws. The Churchwide Assembly may authorize such other committees as it deems necessary.

12.51.01. Reference and Counsel Committee. A Reference and Counsel Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review all proposed changes or additions to the constitution and bylaws and other items submitted that are not germane to items contained in the stated agenda of the assembly.

12.51.02. Memorials Committee. A Memorials Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review memorials from synod assemblies and make appropriate recommendations for assembly action.

12.51.03. Nominating Committee. A Nominating Committee, elected by the Churchwide Assembly, shall nominate at least one person for each position for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with Chapter 19 of this constitution.

12.51.04. Elections Committee. An Elections Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall be responsible for the conduct and supervision of elections.

Chapter 13.
OFFICERS

13.10. OFFICERS

13.11. The officers shall be the presiding bishop, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Each officer shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church.

13.20. PRESIDING BISHOP

13.21. The presiding bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church who, as its pastor, shall be a teacher of the faith of this church and shall provide leadership for the life and witness of this church. The presiding bishop shall:

- **a. Be the president and chief executive officer of the corporation, overseeing the work of the churchwide organization.**
- **b. Be the chief ecumenical officer of this church and its primary representative in the national and international interchurch agencies in which this church holds membership.**
- **c. Preside at the Churchwide Assembly.**
- **d. Provide leadership and care for the bishops of the synods.**
- **e. Oversee the work of the other officers.**
- **f. Provide for the preparation of the budget for the churchwide organization.**
- **g. Nominate and direct the work of the executive for administration.**
- **h. Appoint and supervise the executive directors of churchwide units.**
- **i. Appoint members of all churchwide committees for which election procedures are not provided.**
- **j. Relate, through the appropriate churchwide unit, to the chaplaincies of this church in federal agencies, institutions, and armed forces.**
- **k. Serve as an advisory member, with voice but not vote, on all committees of this church and all boards or designate a person to serve as the presiding bishop's representative.**

13.22. The presiding bishop shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office.

13.22.01. The presiding bishop shall be elected as provided in Chapter 19 and shall take office on the first day of the third month after election.

13.22.02. The presiding bishop shall be a full-time, salaried position.

13.30. VICE PRESIDENT

13.31. The vice president shall be a layperson who shall serve as chair of the Church Council and, in the event the presiding bishop is unable to do so, as chair of the Churchwide Assembly. The vice president shall serve under the presiding bishop of this church, providing leadership as specified in provision 11.33. of this constitution.

13.32. The vice president shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office.

13.32.01. The vice president shall be elected as provided in Chapter 19 and shall take office on the first day of the third month after election.

13.32.02. The vice president may perform such other tasks for the benefit of this church as the Church Council directs, and may be compensated as the Church Council determines.

13.32.03. Staff services for the work of the vice president shall be provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary, as needed.

13.40. SECRETARY

13.41. The secretary shall serve under the presiding bishop of this church, providing leadership, as specified in Chapter 11 of this constitution, and shall fulfill the normal functions of the secretary of a corporation.

13.41.01. The secretary, as the recording officer of this church, shall keep the minutes, have responsibility for rosters, records, and reporting of congregation statistics, oversee the archives, attest to all documents that require such signature, be the custodian of the seal, and perform other duties as prescribed by the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

13.41.02. The secretary shall:

a. Be responsible for the minutes and records of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Executive Committee, and Conference of Bishops, and shall receive complete minutes for permanent record of all boards and committees of the churchwide organization.
b. Maintain the rosters of ministers, congregations, and synods.
c. Provide for the publication of official documents and policies of this church; assembly reports; assembly minutes; a directory of congregations, rostered ministers, and entities of this church; and other informational and statistical material.
d. Receive the annual report of the congregations in a form devised by the secretary, summarize the information, and make the summary available to this church.
e. Oversee the general counsel and coordinate the use of legal services by the churchwide organization.
f. Be responsible for the archives of this church.
g. Implement and operate a records management system for the churchwide organization.
h. In collaboration with the presiding bishop and the leadership of each group, provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Executive Committee, and Conference of Bishops.
i. Arrange for and manage churchwide meetings, including the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Conference of Bishops, and others.
j. Have custody of the seal, maintain a necrology, and attest documents.

13.41.03. The secretary, in consultation with the presiding bishop, shall be responsible for preparation and research of amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, as well as the *Constitution for Synods* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, to be proposed by the Church Council for action by the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with provisions of Chapter 22.

13.41.04. The secretary shall prepare interpretations, as necessary, of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. If a board (including a board of a separately incorporated ministry), committee, or synod disagrees with the interpretations, as rendered, the objecting entity may appeal the secretary's interpretation to the Church Council.

13.41.05. The secretary may, upon two successive unexcused absences of a member of the Church Council, board, or committee of the churchwide organization, declare that member's position vacant.

13.41.06. The secretary shall provide staff services to the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly and the nomination process of the Church Council; shall be responsible for declaring an interim vacancy resulting from the resignation, death, removal, disqualification, or disability of a member of a board (including a board of a separately incorporated ministry), committee, or council; and shall arrange for an election by the Church Council to fill the vacancy consistent with Chapter 14.

13.42. The secretary shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office.

13.42.01. The secretary shall be elected as provided in Chapter 19 and shall take office on the first day of the third month after election.

13.42.02. The secretary shall be a full-time, salaried position.

13.50. TREASURER

13.51. The treasurer shall serve under the presiding bishop of this church, providing leadership as specified in Chapter 11 of this constitution, and shall fulfill the normal functions of the treasurer of a corporation.

13.51.01. The treasurer shall propose policy for review and action by the Church Council and provide for the implementation, within such policies, of the financial, accounting, investment, and money management systems, and related services for the units of the churchwide organization.

13.52. The treasurer shall be elected by the Church Council to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office.

13.52.01. The treasurer shall be elected as provided in Chapter 19 and shall take office on the first day of the third month after election.

13.52.02. The treasurer shall be a full-time, salaried position.

13.52.03. The Church Council, by a two-thirds vote, may dismiss the treasurer for cause.

13.60. DEATH, RESIGNATION, OR DISABILITY OF AN OFFICER

13.61. Should the presiding bishop die, resign, or be unable to serve, the vice president shall convene the Church Council to arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the presiding bishop until an election of a new presiding bishop can be held or until the presiding bishop is able to serve again. The term of the successor presiding bishop, elected by the next Churchwide Assembly, or a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly called for the purpose of election, shall be six years, with the subsequent election to take place at the assembly closest to the expiration of such a term.

13.62. Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the presiding bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Church Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the

responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor vice president or secretary, elected by the next Churchwide Assembly, shall be six years. The Church Council shall elect the successor treasurer for a term of six years.

13.63. The Executive Committee of the Church Council shall determine whether an officer is unable to serve; the officer may appeal the decision of the Executive Committee by requesting a hearing before the Church Council. A meeting to determine the ability of an officer to serve shall be called upon the request of at least three members of the Executive Committee and prior notice of the meeting shall be given to the officer in question.

13.70. OFFICERS OF PREDECESSOR CONTINUING CORPORATIONS

13.71. Whenever an existing but inactive corporate entity that previously functioned as a predecessor or more remote predecessor of this church or as an incorporated board, agency, or synod related to such predecessors, and such entity is otherwise without officers or directors, the officers of this church shall constitute the directors of such entity and shall hold the same office as they hold in this church.

Chapter 14.
CHURCH COUNCIL

14.10. PURPOSE AND MEETINGS

14.11. The Church Council shall exercise interim legislative authority and shall serve as the board of directors of the churchwide organization.

14.12. The Church Council shall meet at least two times each year.

14.12.01. The Church Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

14.12.02. The Church Council shall use parliamentary procedure in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, unless otherwise ordered by the council.

14.12.03. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted at meetings of the Church Council.

14.13. "Interim legislative authority" is defined to mean that between meetings of the churchwide assemblies, the Church Council may exercise the authority of the Churchwide Assembly, including dealing with all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church, so long as:

a. the actions of the Church Council do not conflict with the actions of and policies established by the Churchwide Assembly; provided, however, that nothing in this constitution and bylaws precludes the Church Council from establishing policies concerning areas where the Churchwide Assembly has not acted; and

b. the Church Council is not precluded by the Articles of Incorporation or this constitution and bylaws from taking action on the matter.

14.14. The Church Council shall elect the treasurer.

14.15. The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may remove for cause a voting member of the Church Council, other than the presiding bishop, secretary, vice president, or chair of the Conference of Bishops, at a duly held regular meeting by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members of the Church Council, provided that at least 30 days written notice shall be given to each voting member of the Church Council that removal of a specific member of the Church Council will be on the agenda for such a meeting. The Church Council may remove an advisory member for cause, provided notice has been given as specified in this provision, by a majority vote of the voting members of the council.

14.20. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

14.21. The specific duties of the Church Council shall be listed in the bylaws.

14.21.01. The Church Council shall act on the policies proposed by churchwide units, when requested by the presiding bishop or the churchwide unit. The Church Council shall ensure that the actions of the Churchwide Assembly are implemented by the applicable unit or office.

14.21.02. The Church Council shall receive from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regular reports on the programs and procedures of the churchwide units. The Church

Council, through the presiding bishop, shall ensure that the purposes, policies and objectives of this church are being fulfilled.

a. Specific policies identified in this constitution and bylaws, developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, shall be submitted to the Church Council for approval.
b. Separately incorporated ministries of this church, as defined in Chapter 17, shall submit a report to the Church Council on their policies and programs. The Church Council shall act to approve those policies and programs as required in this constitution and bylaws.

14.21.03. The Church Council shall review all recommendations from churchwide units for possible consideration by the Churchwide Assembly and determine which, if any, should be forwarded to the Churchwide Assembly for action.

14.21.04. The Church Council may adopt policies in accord with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

14.21.05. The Church Council, upon recommendation of the presiding bishop, shall submit budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorize expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets.

14.21.06. The Church Council shall adopt personnel policies for the churchwide organization. Salary structures of churchwide units shall be within the personnel policies of the churchwide organization, unless exceptions are granted by the Church Council.

14.21.07. The Church Council shall report its actions to the Churchwide Assembly.

14.21.10. OTHER DUTIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

14.21.11. The Church Council shall consult with and refer matters to the Conference of Bishops as well as receive reports from it. The Church Council shall act on resolutions from Synod Councils.

14.21.12. The Church Council shall provide for the installation of the churchwide officers. At the installation of a newly elected presiding bishop of this church, the presiding minister shall be the previous presiding bishop of this church or, where that is not possible, a synod bishop designated by the Church Council.

14.21.13. The Church Council shall establish ranges for the salaries for the presiding bishop, secretary, and treasurer.

14.21.14. The Church Council 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.

14.21.15. The Church Council shall establish the criteria and policies for the relationship between the churchwide organization and independent, cooperative, and related Lutheran organizations. The policies adopted by the Church Council shall be administered by the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization. The determination of which organization shall relate to a specific unit of the churchwide organization shall be made by the Church Council.

14.21.22. The Church Council shall arrange the process for all elections as specified in this constitution and bylaws for churchwide units to assure conformity with established criteria.

14.22. The Church Council shall fulfill responsibilities for elections as provided in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical*

Lutheran Church in America **and, in the event that a vacancy on the council or on a board (including the board of a separately incorporated ministry) or committee of the churchwide organization is declared by the secretary, the Church Council shall elect an individual to serve the balance of the term.**

14.22.01. Before electing an individual to fill a vacancy on a board (including the board of a separately incorporated ministry) or committee, the Church Council shall consult with the board or committee.

14.30. COMPOSITION OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

14.31. The voting members of the Church Council shall consist of the four churchwide officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and at least 32 and not more than 45 other persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly.

14.32. With the exception of the officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and youth members, Church Council members shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to one six-year term and shall not be eligible for consecutive re-election. Youth members of the Church Council shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to one three-year term.

14.32.01. The Church Council shall have as liaison members nine synod bishops, each elected by the Conference of Bishops to one three-year term. One bishop shall be elected from each region.

14.32.02. Liaison members of the Church Council shall have voice but not vote.

14.32.03. Any Church Council member appointed to fill a vacancy of less than half a term in a Church Council position not restricted to a specific synod shall not be deemed to have served a term and is eligible for election to a full term if the member otherwise satisfies the criteria for election.

14.32.A13. *A member of the Church Council, upon invitation, may serve as a liaison for a board of trustees of a separately incorporated ministry.*

14.33.01. Advisory Members. Categories of advisory members may be designated by the Church Council. These categories shall be set forth in continuing resolutions. Advisory members shall have voice but not vote.

14.33.A22. *The Church Council shall have as advisory members each president, or the designated representative of the president, of the ELCA ethnic associations, as well as a representative of ReconcilingWorks. Advisory membership of the Church Council shall be reviewed each triennium.*

14.40. CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

14.41. The Church Council shall establish committees and nominate or elect such persons as necessary to carry out the functions assigned to it. The description of such committees shall be set forth in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.

14.41.01. Executive Committee. The Church Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the churchwide officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and eight members of the Church Council elected by the council. The vice president of this church shall chair this committee. The Executive Committee shall:

a. perform those functions of the Church Council assigned to it by the Church Council, which shall include acting for the Church Council between meetings of the council;

b. transmit resolutions from synods to the appropriate unit or units of the churchwide organization;
c. fulfill the responsibilities of the Church Council related to nominations, with staff services for the nomination and election processes of the Church Council provided by the Office of the Secretary;
d. provide advice and counsel for the officers;
e. review the work of the officers and, with the absence of the salaried officers from such deliberations, set salaries of the presiding bishop, secretary, and treasurer within the ranges established by the Church Council;
f. demonstrate concern for the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the officers of this church; and
g. when necessary, serve as members of the U.S.A. National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation.

14.41.02. Liaison bishops, ecumenical guests, and other advisors to the Church Council may serve as advisory members to the council's committees with voice but not vote.

14.41.A15. ***Budget and Finance Committee***

A Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The treasurer of this church shall serve as an ex officio *member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer. The committee shall prepare and present a comprehensive budget to the Church Council for its consideration and presentation to the Churchwide Assembly. The committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Treasurer.*

14.41.B22. ***Christian Community and Leadership Committee***

A Christian Community and Leadership Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. This committee shall relate to the work of the Christian Community and Leadership unit, and have staff services provided by the Christian Community and Leadership unit. This committee shall receive reports from the Christian Community and Leadership unit, act upon policies and strategies recommended from this unit to the Church Council, and provide periodic review of this unit.

14.41.C22. ***Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee***

A Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. This committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Innovation unit, and have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Innovation unit. This committee shall assist the presiding bishop in coordinated, strategic planning for the work of the churchwide organization. Further, in consultation with the executive for administration, this committee shall evaluate and report annually to the Church Council and to the Churchwide Assembly on how the churchwide organization complies with and implements commitments and policies adopted by the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council. This committee shall be responsible for reviewing policies related to ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious activities, and make recommendations to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly. It shall provide ongoing review of the development of this church's social teaching documents and act upon

recommendations from the Office of the Presiding Bishop. All churchwide policies and strategies recommended by the Office of the Presiding Bishop that have implications for congregations, synods, other churchwide units, or institutions and agencies of this church shall be considered by this committee for recommendation to the Church Council. This committee also shall receive reports from the Innovation unit, act upon policies recommended from the Innovation unit to the Church Council, and provide periodic review of the Innovation unit.

14.41.D22. ***Legal and Constitutional Review Committee***

A Legal and Constitutional Review Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The secretary of this church shall serve as an ex officio *member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Secretary. This committee shall provide ongoing review of legal and constitutional matters. It shall review all proposed amendments to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.*

14.41.E22. ***Service and Justice Committee***

A Service and Justice Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. This committee shall relate to the work of the Service and Justice unit, and have staff services provided by the Service and Justice unit. This committee shall receive reports from this unit, act upon policies and strategies recommended from this unit to the Church Council, and provide periodic review of the Service and Justice unit.

14.41.F22. ***Audit Committee***

An Audit Committee—composed of five to seven members appointed by the Budget and Finance Committee and approved by the Church Council for two-year, renewable terms—shall assist the Budget and Finance Committee and the Church Council in fulfilling oversight of the churchwide organization's accounting and financial reporting, internal control systems, and audit functions, consistent with its responsibilities as specified in the charter recommended by the Audit Committee, reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee, and approved by the Church Council. A minimum of two members of the Audit Committee shall be members of the Budget and Finance Committee. The chair of the Audit Committee shall be a member of the Budget and Finance Committee and shall be appointed by the chair of the Budget and Finance Committee. In consultation with the executive for administration, the Audit Committee approves the selection of and dismissal of the internal auditors.

14.41.G22. ***Board Development Committee***

A Board Development Committee—composed of six to eight members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Executive Committee, and of which at least two shall be from each elected class of the Church Council—shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Church Council for three-year, renewable terms to assist the presiding bishop and the Church Council in developing and implementing efforts to help members of the Church Council to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the council's role and fiduciary responsibility as the board of directors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The executive for administration shall relate to this committee, with staff services

provided by the Office of the Secretary. Members appointed to the Board Development Committee shall be eligible for service on other committees of the Church Council.

14.41.H22. ***Resource Development Committee***

A Resource Development Committee—composed of eight to ten members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Budget and Finance Committee, and appointed by the Executive Committee – shall assist the Budget and Finance Committee and the Church Council in developing strategies related to funding initiatives and churchwide appeals. This committee shall oversee how to grow resources to support the ministries and priorities of the churchwide organization. The treasurer and executive for development shall serve as ex officio *members of the committee. Church Council members shall be appointed for three-year terms, renewable for so long as they are on Church Council. Non-Church Council members, who shall be members of an ELCA congregation, shall be appointed for three-year terms with the possibility of two consecutive re-appointments. No member shall serve more than nine consecutive years. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer. Church Council members appointed to the Resource Development Committee shall be eligible for service on other committees of the Church Council.*

Chapter 15.
CHURCHWIDE ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICES

15.10. OFFICES AND ADMINISTRATION

15.11. An office of the churchwide organization is directly related to and under the authority of a full-time officer of this church. Each office is related to the Church Council through the officer, who reports to the Church Council in the interim between regular meetings of the Churchwide Assembly. Each office may have executive assistants to undergird the officer in the performance of specified functions that are the responsibility of that officer.

15.11.01. There shall be the following offices:

a. Office of the Presiding Bishop;
b. Office of the Secretary; and
c. Office of the Treasurer.

15.11.02. Administrative Team. The presiding bishop, secretary, treasurer, and executive for administration, along with the executive directors of the churchwide units, shall function as an administrative team, directed by the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop may appoint up to two additional members to the administrative team for terms of one year with the possibility of reappointment. This administrative team shall assist the presiding bishop in providing leadership, planning, oversight, management, supervision, and coordination in the operation of the churchwide organization.

15.12. OFFICE OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

15.12.01. Responsibilities of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in addition to those specified in the bylaws, shall be set forth in continuing resolutions.

15.12.A25. ***Responsibilities of the Executive for Administration***

The executive for administration shall be accountable to the presiding bishop and shall serve as chief administrator of the churchwide organization. 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. At the direction of the presiding bishop, the executive for administration shall:

a. supervise the day-to-day functioning of the churchwide organization and coordinate the work of churchwide units;
b. facilitate the interdependent functioning of churchwide units in the fulfillment of the responsibilities assigned to them;
c. coordinate the strategic planning and day-to-day staff activities within the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the functioning of the administrative team;
d. develop the budget for the churchwide organization and report to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly through the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council with regard to the preparation of the budget;
e. provide staff services and documentation to the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee and the Board Development Committee of the Church Council; and
f. oversee churchwide strategic communications, including branding, messaging, and content development.

15.12.B25. ***Responsibility for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations***

Responsibility for ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious relations shall be exercised by the Office of the Presiding Bishop by upholding this church's ecumenical vision and inter-religious commitments through various bilateral discussions, dialogues, and multi-lateral and conciliar bodies and initiatives, as well as in supporting synods, congregations, and the churchwide organization in their ecumenical and inter-religious vocation. This includes guiding reception of theological agreements, implementation of inter-religious commitments, and advising on relational matters. Responsibility also includes supporting membership in ecumenical and inter-religious organizations such as the World Council of Churches, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and The Lutheran World Federation. The presiding bishop, who serves as this church's chief ecumenical and inter-religious officer, shall appoint an executive who will assist the presiding bishop, coordinate the staff and groups that engage in this work, and recommend policies, guidelines, and agreements through the presiding bishop to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly.

a. From time to time as necessary, the Executive Committee of the Church Council shall convene as the USA National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation. The USA National Committee also consists of the members of this church who serve as voting members of the council of The Lutheran World Federation. An ELCA advisor to the council of The Lutheran World Federation and/or the executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations shall serve as consultants to the USA National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation.

b. Ecumenical representatives shall be chosen by the presiding bishop in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Church Council. These representatives include members of delegations to national and international inter-church entities in which this church holds membership and members of inter-Lutheran, inter-faith, and ecumenical discussions and bilateral dialogues in which this church participates. All such appointments shall be reported to the Church Council as information.

15.12.C25. ***Responsibility for Human Resources and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion***

Responsibility for human resources and diversity, equity, and inclusion shall be exercised by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, which shall develop and manage the personnel policies and procedures for the churchwide organization, including policies and procedures regarding equal-employment opportunity; recruitment, interview, and selection of staff; compensation and benefits; employee-assistance programs; just and equitable employee-relations practices; performance evaluation; maintenance of personnel records; and training. In accordance with bylaw 14.21.06., the Church Council shall adopt personnel policies upon recommendation of the Office of the Presiding Bishop. The presiding bishop shall appoint an executive who shall be responsible for human resources and this church's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

15.12.D25. ***Responsibility for Theological Discernment***

Responsibility for theological discernment shall be exercised by the Office of the Presiding Bishop by promoting, coordinating, and facilitating theological discernment of this church's message and its theological foundations in collaboration with all who share in the responsibilities to be teachers of the faith in the Church, including the Conference of Bishops, seminary faculties, teaching theologians, theological networks, the publishing ministry, and all rostered ministers. This includes upholding this church's commitments to address matters of theological ethics in church and society through ELCA social teaching and to advance full participation, equal opportunity, and justice through work that addresses issues including patriarchy and white supremacy, economic injustice, sexism, and gender injustice. To fulfill these responsibilities, the presiding bishop shall appoint an executive who will assist the presiding bishop and coordinate the staff and groups that provide theological resources and support programmatic implementation.

15.12.E25. ***Responsibility for Development***

Responsibility for planning, coordination, and management of the execution of this church's fundraising efforts and donor communications shall be exercised by the Office of the Presiding Bishop. To fulfill these responsibilities, the presiding bishop shall appoint an executive who, in collaboration with the Endowment Fund of the ELCA, shall:

a. set and implement strategy and development of donor communications, engagement, and solicitation;

b. provide for Mission Support interpretation, consultation, and stewardship support for synods and congregations;

c. develop and execute programs to seek current gifts, major and deferred gifts, bequests, grants, and endowment funds to support ministries of this church;

d. engage individuals, congregations, synods, and institutions in efforts to raise financial support for the ministries of this church;

e. provide advice to the Office of the Treasurer in the recommendation and establishment within that office of policies and procedures for gift acceptance and management, as well as annual revenue projections;

f. process gifts, support constituents, steward donors, and manage constituent data in collaboration with the Office of the Treasurer; and

g. coordinate its programs with other stewardship and financial resource development activities of this church in alignment with its mission objectives.

15.12.F25. ***Responsibility for Worship***

Responsibility for leadership of the worship life of this church shall be exercised by the Office of the Presiding Bishop. This includes supporting the worship ministry of this church, overseeing the development, review, interpretation, and introduction of worship resources intended for use throughout this church, and, through the presiding bishop, recommending policies related to worship and sacramental practices to the Church Council and, when appropriate, the Churchwide Assembly. Responsibility also includes assisting synods,

congregations, and the churchwide organization in carrying out the ministry of worship; developing and implementing worship for churchwide assemblies and other events; providing worship opportunities for the churchwide organization; and representing the presiding bishop and the churchwide organization to other church bodies and organizations on matters related to worship. The Office of the Presiding Bishop shall provide, through the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, worship resources and shall support the development of a variety of congregational resources that are consistent with the proclamation, prayer, worship, and sacramental practices of this church. To fulfill these responsibilities, the presiding bishop shall appoint an executive for worship.

15.12.G25. *The Office of the Presiding Bishop shall relate to the Alliance for Faith, Science, and Technology, the Association for Christian Fundraising, the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, and the Lutheran Music Program/Lutheran Summer Music Academy and Festival.*

15.13. OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

15.13.01. The responsibilities of the Office of the Secretary, in addition to those specified in the bylaws, shall be set forth in continuing resolutions.

15.13.A10. ***Responsibility for Risk Management***

The Office of the Secretary, in collaboration with the Office of the Treasurer, shall provide and manage insurance (exclusive of life and health) programs for the churchwide organization and shall make available insurance programs to congregations, synods, regions, and related institutions, agencies, and organizations. Recommendations on standards for adequate, continuous insurance coverage to be maintained by synods, as required in constitutional provision 10.74., may be provided.

15.13.B20. ***Responsibility for Synod Relations***

The Office of the Secretary, in collaboration with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, shall coordinate the relationships between the churchwide organization and synods, render support for synod bishops and synod staff, and provide staff services for the Conference of Bishops.

15.13.C20. ***Responsibility for Governance***

The Office of the Secretary, in collaboration with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, shall provide staff services for the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, and the Executive Committee.

15.14. OFFICE OF THE TREASURER

15.14.01. The responsibilities of the Office of the Treasurer, in addition to those specified in the bylaws, shall be set forth in continuing resolutions.

15.14.A25. ***Responsibilities of the Office of the Treasurer***

a. This office shall be related to the treasurer, who shall be its full-time executive officer.

b. This office shall have the sole authority and responsibility to establish and maintain banking relationships for the churchwide organization.

c. This office shall have the authority to borrow; issue bonds, notes, certificates, or other evidence of obligation; or increase contingent liabilities within the overall limits determined by the Churchwide Assembly and the more restrictive limits established by the Church Council. No churchwide board shall make a commitment that binds the churchwide organization to an outside lending or other similar institution or which creates a liability of this church to such an institution without prior approval of the Office of the Treasurer.

d. This office, through the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council, shall recommend to the Church Council a certified public accounting firm to audit the financial records of the churchwide organization. Synod financial reports shall be submitted to this office for compilation.

e. This office shall provide for internal audit procedures of the churchwide organization.

f. This office shall provide legal documents pertaining to the financial and property management matters of the churchwide organization. These legal documents shall be signed by the officers authorized by the Church Council.

g. This office shall be authorized, within policies established by the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council, to purchase or otherwise acquire title to real property; to mortgage, lease, sell, or otherwise dispose of the same; and otherwise to act on behalf of the churchwide organization regarding real property.

h. This office shall provide for a common system of financial reporting from synods and regions.

i. This office, within the policies established by the Church Council, shall assure the implementation of a donor gift acknowledgment process.

j. This office, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop (Development) and the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall recommend:

1) policy for the valuation process for noncash gifts;

2) the management of assets of its life-income agreements;

3) gift acceptance policies for the establishment and management of memorial funds administered by the Endowment Fund of the ELCA in cooperation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

4) the distribution of earned-income payments to remainder beneficiaries as regulated by the life-income, trust, and other fiduciary donor agreements held by the churchwide organization.

k. This office shall provide for the management of operating and capital funds within the policies established by the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council.

l. This office shall manage capital loan funds established by the Church Council. The management shall be within policies established jointly by the Office of the Treasurer and other affected churchwide units.

m. This office shall provide for building management and coordinate central services for the churchwide organization.

n. This office, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary, shall examine the risk management and insurance needs of the churchwide organization and synods.

15.14.B25. ***Responsibility for Information Technology***

The treasurer shall provide for information technology and digital solutions in support of the work of the churchwide organization. The treasurer shall appoint an executive who shall be responsible for the development and review of guidelines and policies for computer standards, security of electronic data, application development, data storage and data retrieval, and shall enable use of electronic technologies and digital solutions for churchwide staff to assist in support of congregations, synods, and related institutions and agencies of this church.

15.20. STAFF

15.21. The churchwide organization shall employ staff according to churchwide policies. Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff there will be a balance of women and men, persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English, members of historically underrepresented groups, laypersons, and persons on the rosters of this church. This balance is to be evident in the selection of staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.

15.21.01. The presiding bishop shall recommend to the Church Council the personnel policies of the churchwide organization. Such policies shall be binding unless exceptions are granted by the Church Council or specified in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

15.21.02. In consultation with the executive for administration, the presiding bishop shall authorize all staff positions in the churchwide organization.

Chapter 16.
UNITS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

16.10. CHURCHWIDE UNITS

16.11. A unit of the churchwide organization is assigned leadership responsibility for major, identified portions of the mission and ministry of this church.

16.11.A21. *As it pertains to the churchwide organization, a unit may also be described as a home area.*

16.11.B25. ***Identity of Units***

Units of the churchwide organization, which shall function through cooperation, coordination, and collaboration, are the following:

a. Christian Community and Leadership unit;
b. Innovation unit; and
c. Service and Justice unit.

Each unit shall have an executive director.

16.12. Each unit shall report to the Churchwide Assembly and will report to the Church Council in the interim.

16.12.01. The responsibilities of the units shall be described in continuing resolutions.

16.12.02. Executive directors of each unit shall be appointed by the presiding bishop to a four-year term. The presiding bishop, as chief executive officer, shall arrange within the personnel policies of the churchwide organization for an annual review of each executive director. A unit executive director shall be eligible for re-appointment. The employment of the executive director may be terminated in accordance with the personnel policies of the churchwide organization.

16.12.A25. ***Responsibilities of the Christian Community and Leadership Unit***

The Christian Community and Leadership unit shall foster and facilitate the work of synods, congregations, the churchwide organization, and others in reaching and welcoming more people into the Christian faith through Christian communities. It energizes and engages the core membership and works with the whole of this church to recruit, train, and send lay and rostered leadership to fulfill this church's purpose. It works across all expressions of this church to accomplish these goals domestically and internationally.

This unit shall:

a. create and revitalize congregations and ministries;
b. inspire and coordinate evangelism;
c. oversee development of multicultural ministries and collaborate with the Service and Justice unit on this development and the commitment of this church to diversity and inclusivity;
d. support efforts to reach and disciple new and young people, and to become more diverse;
e. foster relationships with educational institutions, including participation in and support of the Network of Colleges and Universities of this church;
f. recruit, train, and send lay and rostered leaders;
g. manage and maintain the candidacy and assignment processes;
h. coordinate the work of Young Adults in Global Mission;
i. organize the ELCA Youth Gathering and the Rostered Ministers Gathering; and

j. oversee the chaplaincies of this church in domestic specialized ministry settings as well as federal chaplaincies both at home and abroad.

This unit shall relate to Lutheran Men in Mission, National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc., Educational and Institutional Insurance Administrators, Inc., the Order of Lutheran Franciscans, the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association, the Association of Partners in Christian Education, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, LuMIN, the ELCA Youth Ministry Network, the Christian Education Network of the ELCA, the Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association, Kogudus Renewal Ministry, and Lutheran Suicide Prevention Ministry.

16.12.B20. ***Responsibilities of the Innovation Unit***

The Innovation unit shall promote, coordinate, and facilitate organizational collaboration, culture, and development, including innovation processes and leadership development for churchwide organization staff, members of this church, and others. This unit shall:

a. provide, manage, and design experiments and processes (including related goals, metrics, and measurement) to assist this church to develop and evaluate new and existing programs and initiatives;

b. be responsible for leadership development through teaching and promoting innovation culture, skills, and tools within the churchwide organization and throughout this church; and

c. equip the churchwide organization and this church to conduct relevant research, data collection, analysis, and evaluation to make data-informed decisions; in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary, provide for required reporting and other items related to policies established by the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly.

16.12.C25. ***Responsibilities of the Service and Justice Unit***

The Service and Justice unit shall foster and facilitate this church's engagement in service and promote efforts to call and act for justice. It shall engage in mission, service, and justice in accompaniment with churches and organizations in other countries; serve as the means through which churches in other countries engage in mission to this church and society; engage with communities, coalitions and networks, congregations, and synods in service and justice work within the territorial jurisdiction of this church; and provide guidance to members on matters of social justice.

The Service and Justice unit shall support the freedom of Christians to love and serve their neighbor through the following areas:

a. Global Mission: sustain and accompany this church's global church-to-church relationships and mutual endeavors for evangelical witness and sharing of mission personnel; engage with synods and congregations in shared partnership of the global work;

b. Ministries of Diverse Cultures and Communities: support ethnic specific and multicultural ministries, serve as a resource on behalf of these communities to the wider Church and carry out this church's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging;

c. Building Resilient Communities: meet human need and enhance human dignity; work to overturn oppression and injustice; and engage members and

constituents collaboratively toward the flourishing of human community and creation through domestic and international programs including ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, and AMMPARO; and

d. Witness in Society: equip and encourage members to engage with systems and processes in the public square, with local and federal government, and with corporations and the international community to promote the well-being of the human community and creation.

This unit shall relate to Independent Lutheran Organizations and other social ministries that engage in efforts related to service, justice, and global mission, including Global Refuge, Lutheran Services in America, Lutheran World Relief, Friends of Mwangaza, Global Health Ministries, Lutheran Health Care Bangladesh, Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry, ReconcilingWorks, and the Deaconess Community of the ELCA; the service, justice, and global mission efforts of full communion churches; and Church World Service.

The Service and Justice unit shall develop personnel policies for long-term and other missionaries in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and administer such policies after their approval by the Church Council.

Chapter 17.
SEPARATELY INCORPORATED MINISTRIES

17.10. This church may fulfill some of its purposes, as described in Chapter 4, through separately incorporated ministries.

17.11. Each member of the board of directors of a separately incorporated ministry described in this chapter shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church, unless otherwise specified in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.

17.11.01. A board of a separately incorporated ministry described in this chapter may remove a director or trustee from the board, if done in accordance with the governing documents of such corporation after at least 30 days' prior notice to the secretary of this church. The decision to remove a director or trustee shall be reported to the Church Council by the secretary, who shall then declare a vacancy.

17.11.02. The nominations and elections processes for separately incorporated ministries shall be more fully specified in Chapter 19.

17.11.03 When used in Chapters 17 and 19, the term "board" shall include the boards of separately incorporated ministries unless expressly excluded. When used other than in Chapters 17 and 19, the term "board" shall not include the boards of separately incorporated ministries unless expressly included.

17.20. This church shall have a separately incorporated ministry, known as the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to provide church retirement and other benefits, and complementary services within and beyond this church. The president of the corporation shall serve as its chief executive officer.

17.20.01. The Churchwide Assembly shall:

a. approve amendments to the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits that have been referred by the Church Council; and
b. refer any amendments to the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits initiated by the Churchwide Assembly to the Board of Pensions for recommendation before final action by the Church Council, assuring that no amendment shall abridge the rights of sponsored members in the ELCA Retirement Plan.

17.20.02. The Church Council shall:

a. review policy established by the board and take action on any policy that would change significantly the documents establishing and governing the Pension and Other Benefits Program.
b. approve any changes in the Pension and Other Benefits Program when there is to be:
    1) a significant increase in cost to ELCA employers or sponsored members; or
    2) a significant decrease in benefits to sponsored members in the Pension and Other Benefits Program.
c. refer any amendments to the Pension and Other Benefits Program initiated by the Church Council to the board for recommendation before final action

by the Church Council, assuring that no amendment shall abridge the rights of sponsored members in the ELCA Retirement Plan.

d. approve any changes to the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits.

e. refer, as it deems appropriate, proposed amendments to the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits to the Churchwide Assembly for final action.

Provisions a., b., and c. of this bylaw do not apply to benefit programs offered by the Board of Pensions to entities other than the ELCA, its separately incorporated ministries, its synods, and its congregations.

17.20.03. The Board of Pensions shall have a board of trustees composed of 14–18 persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly for three-year terms with the possibility of two consecutive re-elections. The terms of members of the board of trustees elected by the Churchwide Assembly shall begin at the commencement of the first board meeting following the assembly.

a. The composition of the board of trustees shall comply with the representational principles described in constitutional provision 5.01.e. The board of trustees of the Board of Pensions shall include persons with expertise in investments, insurance, and retirement plans, and at least four persons who are members of the plan, at least one of whom shall be a lay plan member or lay recipient of plan benefits and at least one of whom shall be a rostered minister who is a plan member. Up to two trustees may be members of congregations of church bodies with which this church is in a relationship of full communion, provided that both are not from the same church body.

b. The presiding bishop shall serve as an advisory member of the board of trustees, with voice but not vote, or shall designate a person to serve as the presiding bishop's representative as provided in constitutional provision 13.21.

c. The Conference of Bishops shall elect one bishop to serve as an advisory member of the board of trustees with voice but not vote.

d. The treasurer of this church shall serve as an advisory member of the board of trustees with voice but not vote.

17.20.04. The board shall organize itself as it deems necessary.

17.20.05. Constitutional provisions 15.21. and 16.12. and bylaws 11.34.01. and 14.21.02. shall apply to the operation of this organization.

17.20.06. The president shall be elected by the board of trustees of the Board of Pensions to a four-year term in consultation with and with the approval of the presiding bishop of this church. Nomination of a candidate for president shall be made jointly by the presiding bishop and the search committee of the board. The board, together with the presiding bishop, shall arrange for an annual review of the president. The president shall be eligible for re-election. The board shall establish the compensation of the president with the concurrence of the presiding bishop. The president may be terminated at any time jointly by the board of trustees of the Board of Pensions and the presiding bishop of this church, following recommendation by the executive committee of the board of trustees.

17.20.07. The specific responsibilities of the Board of Pensions shall be enumerated in continuing resolutions.

17.20.A21. ***Responsibilities of the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America***

The Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America —also known as Portico Benefit Services—shall:

a. manage and operate the Pension and Other Benefits Program for this church and plans for other non-profit organizations having a formal affiliation with a church or a religious organization, and invest the assets according to fiduciary standards set forth in the plans and trusts.

b. provide retirement, health, and other benefits for the benefit of eligible members working within the structure of this church and other non-profit organizations having a formal affiliation with a church or a religious organization.

c. provide summary plan descriptions outlining all benefits to be provided as a part of the Pension and Other Benefits Program.

d. provide complementary services within and beyond this church.

e. report to the appropriate committee of the Church Council on the financial effect of changes to the Pension and Other Benefits Program.

f. report to the Churchwide Assembly through the Church Council, with the Church Council making comments on all board actions needing approval of the Churchwide Assembly.

g. maintain appropriate communication with other units of this church.

h. be self-supporting, except for certain ELCA minimum pensions and post-retirement health benefits of certain ELCA retirees, with all costs being paid from the administrative and management charges to the employers and members utilizing the plans and from investment income.

i. manage its finances in a manner that assures an efficient and effective administration of the plans for retirement and other benefits. The board shall maintain its own accounting, data processing, personnel, and other administrative functions essential to the ongoing work of this organization.

j. not be responsible, nor assume any liability for, health-insurance programs provided by this church through voluntary employees' beneficiary associations or similar arrangements.

k. manage and operate those portions of The American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church in America plans requiring continuation in this church.

l. provide an appeal process with the Board of Pensions to enable members in the plans to appeal decisions.

m. make editorial and administrative changes and routine modifications to the benefits programs, as well as changes required to comply with federal and state law.

n. set contribution rates for the ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan, the ELCA Disability Benefits Plan, and the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan, and establish interest crediting rates for the ELCA Retirement Plans.

o. manage assets, as requested, for this church and other organizations operated exclusively for religious purposes.

17.20.B11. *The Corporate Social Responsibility Committee of the Board of Pensions shall receive advice and counsel from the churchwide organization and, within the*

context of fiduciary responsibility for ELCA assets, make appropriate recommendations to the board.

17.30. **This church shall have a separately incorporated ministry, known as the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to provide investment opportunities to individuals, congregations, synods, institutions, agencies, and organizations, and administer loans to congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other organizations and institutions that are related to this church. The president of the corporation shall serve as its chief executive officer.**

17.30.01. The Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall have a board of trustees composed of 9–12 persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly to one six-year term and shall not be eligible for consecutive re-election. The terms of members of the board of trustees elected by the Churchwide Assembly shall begin at the commencement of the first board meeting following the assembly. The composition of the board of trustees shall comply with the representational principles described in constitutional provision 5.01.e. Up to two trustees may be members of congregations of church bodies with which this church is in a relationship of full communion, provided that both are not from the same church body.

a. The presiding bishop shall serve as an advisory member of the board of trustees, with voice but not vote, or shall designate a person to serve as the presiding bishop's representative as provided in constitutional provision 13.21.
b. The Conference of Bishops shall elect one bishop to serve as an advisory member of the board of trustees with voice but not vote.

17.30.02. The president shall be elected by the board of trustees of the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to a four-year term in consultation with and with the approval of the presiding bishop of this church. Nomination of a candidate for president of the Mission Investment Fund shall be made jointly by the presiding bishop and the search committee of the board. The board, together with the presiding bishop, shall arrange for an annual review of the president. The president shall be eligible for re-election. The employment of the president may be terminated jointly by the board of trustees of the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the presiding bishop of this church, following recommendation by the Executive Committee of the board of trustees. The Executive Committee of the board of trustees, with the concurrence of the presiding bishop, shall establish the compensation of the president.

17.30.03. Constitutional provisions 15.21. and 16.12. and bylaws 11.34.01., 14.21.02., and 14.21.06. shall apply to the operation of this organization.

17.30.04. The specific responsibilities of the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be enumerated in continuing resolutions.

17.30.A21. ***Operation of the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America***

The Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall:

a. have primary responsibility for the development, administration, promotion, and sale of investment obligations.

b. develop and administer a loan program, including management responsibilities for the underwriting, legal, accounting, reporting, servicing, marketing, and other related functions.

c. provide expertise for management of real property and execute all necessary documents for the acquisition and disposition of such property.

d. relate to the Christian Community and Leadership unit, which may request real estate acquisition for new and existing ministries within the limits of the capital funds available and within established criteria.

e. confer with the Christian Community and Leadership unit on any loans to developing ministries.

17.30.B25. *To effect the change from the possibility of three three-year terms to one six-year term for trustees of the Mission Investment Fund adopted by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, the Executive Committee of the Church Council shall divide the trustees to be elected by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly into two classes, one class elected to three-year terms and one class elected to six-year terms. The two classes shall be as nearly equal in size as possible.*

17.40. This church shall have a separately incorporated ministry, the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to carry out the publishing ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The president of the corporation shall serve as its chief executive officer.

17.40.01. This publishing house shall have a board of trustees composed of 11–15 persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly for three-year terms with the possibility of two consecutive re-elections. The terms of members of the board of trustees elected by the Churchwide Assembly shall begin at the commencement of the first board meeting following the assembly.

a. The composition of the board of trustees shall comply with the representational principles described in constitutional provision 5.01.e. Laypersons on the board of trustees shall include persons with expertise in publishing, education, business management, finance and investment. Rostered ministers shall include persons with expertise in rural, urban, and suburban ministry in small and large congregations and in advanced theological study. Up to two trustees may be members of congregations of church bodies with which this church is in a relationship of full communion, provided that both are not from the same church body.

b. The presiding bishop shall serve as an advisory member of the board of trustees, with voice but not vote, or shall designate a person to serve as the presiding bishop's representative as provided in constitutional provision 13.21.

c. The Conference of Bishops shall elect one bishop to serve as an advisory member of the board of the publishing house with voice but not vote.

d. The board of trustees of the publishing house shall serve as the board of any separate corporation of this church's publishing house and the president of the publishing house shall be the chief executive officer of any such corporation.

17.40.02. Constitutional provisions 15.21. and 16.12. and bylaws 11.34.01. and 14.21.02. shall apply to the operation of this organization.

17.40.03. The president shall be elected by the board of trustees of the Publishing House to a four-year term in consultation with and with the approval of the presiding bishop of this church. Nomination of a candidate for president shall be made jointly by the presiding bishop and the search committee of the board. The board, together with the presiding bishop, shall arrange for an annual review of the president. The president shall be eligible for re-election. The board shall establish the compensation of the president with the concurrence of the presiding bishop. The president may be terminated at any time jointly by the board of trustees of the Publishing House and the presiding bishop of this church, following recommendation by the executive committee of the board of trustees.

17.40.04. The specific responsibilities of this publishing house shall be enumerated in continuing resolutions.

17.40.A24. ***Responsibilities of the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America***

The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—also known as Augsburg Fortress Publishers—shall:

a. be responsible for the publishing, production, and distribution of publications to be sold to accomplish the mission of this church.

b. work in close cooperation with congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to provide a diversity of published resources.

c. work with churchwide units to plan the publication of materials to assist congregations in fulfilling their life in mission.

d. develop, produce, and distribute materials required to carry out its functions.

e. be financed from the sale and distribution of materials, not from the budget of this church.

f. create, develop, and publish a diversity of resources in various media; make available other publications, materials, and church supplies; produce official documents and publications of this church; and produce materials in a manner that assures their ready availability.

g. provide for the wide distribution of resources within and beyond this church.

h. manage its finances and other resources in a manner that assures the continuity and extension of its activities. This publishing house shall maintain its own accounting, information technology, human resources, employee benefits, and other functions essential to a cohesive, efficient, and effective operation.

i. identify and nurture talented authors, composers, artists, and others involved in creating various media.

j. determine its necessary financial reserves, appropriations, and publishing subsidies.

k. make available resources to meet unique language and cultural needs, as feasible.

17.50. This church shall have a separately incorporated ministry, known as Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to assist its

women to commit themselves to full discipleship, affirm their gifts, and support each other in their particular callings.

17.50.01. Membership of this organization shall be women of this church who wish to participate through local and other groupings that affirm the purposes of this organization. This organization shall function in local, synod, and churchwide settings.

17.50.02. This organization shall be incorporated, self-supporting financially, and shall manage its own assets within the policies of this church. The personnel policies and salary structures of the churchwide organization shall be followed.

17.50.03. Constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 11.34.01., 14.21.02., and 14.21.06. shall apply to this organization. Constitutional provision 15.21. shall apply to the women's organization with the exception of the balance provisions for women and men and for laypersons and rostered ministers.

17.50.04. This organization shall have a board of 15 members elected by the assembly of this organization for one three-year term with eligibility for one consecutive re-election. At least 10 percent of the members of this board shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. No more than one elected board member shall be from any one synod. Board members are to serve with the perspective of the interdependence of all units of this church. In the event of a vacancy, the board shall elect a member to serve the balance of the term. The Conference of Bishops shall select one bishop to serve as an advisory member of the board of this organization with voice but not vote.

17.50.05. The board of this organization shall meet at least two times per year and shall be responsible to the assembly that elected it. The assembly of this organization shall be representative of local and other groupings of women who are members of the women's organization. Upon two successive absences that have not been excused by the board, a board member's position shall be declared vacant and the board shall arrange for election to fill the vacancy under Article XIII, Section 5, Item 9, of the constitution and bylaws of the women's organization.

17.50.06. This organization's board shall elect its executive director to a four-year term in consultation with and with the approval of the presiding bishop of this church. This board, together with the presiding bishop, shall arrange for an annual review of the executive director. The executive director shall be eligible for re-election. Consistent with applicable personnel policies, the board shall establish the salary of the executive director with the concurrence of the presiding bishop. The board may terminate the employment of the executive director in consultation with and with the approval of the presiding bishop of this church.

17.50.07. The specific responsibilities of the women's organization shall be enumerated in continuing resolutions.

17.50.A11. ***Responsibilities of the Women's Organization***

The Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall:

a. enable its members to grow through biblical study, theological reflection, and prayer.

b. cooperate with other units of this church in advocating for the oppressed and voiceless, urging change in systems and structures that exclude and alienate, and working for peace and justice as messengers of hope.

c. provide for development and distribution of resources for and to its members, including a magazine.

d. facilitate local initiative in creating programs and identifying alternative structural models that encourage and support flexibility.

e. design and implement a leadership development program for its members, assisting its members to identify, develop, and express their gifts for ministry.

f. develop networks for communication among women locally, ecumenically, and globally.

g. relate to other women's organizations ecumenically and globally.

h. work interdependently with all units of this church in program development, research, and planning in order to enhance the ministries and participation of women in church and in society.

i. develop working arrangements in areas of mutual responsibility with the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

17.60. This church shall have a separately incorporated ministry, the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to hold and manage endowment assets, to offer pooled investment services for endowment funds of this church and its related congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions, and to provide planned giving programs that support this church's mission and ministry. The president of the corporation shall serve as its chief executive officer.

17.60.01. The Endowment Fund shall have a board of trustees composed of the presiding bishop of this church and 9–15 persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly for three-year terms with the possibility of two consecutive re-elections. Any vacancies occurring because of the death, resignation, or removal of a member of the board of trustees shall be filled by the Church Council for the unexpired term of such member of the board of trustees. The composition of the board of trustees shall comply with the representational principles described in constitutional provision 5.01.e. Up to two trustees may be members of congregations of church bodies with which this church is in a relationship of full communion, provided that both are not from the same church body.

17.60.02. The advisory members of the board of trustees of the Endowment Fund shall have voice but not vote and shall include: the treasurer of this church, a synod bishop elected by the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and such other persons as may be designated by the board of trustees.

17.60.03. The presiding bishop of this church shall be a member of the board of trustees, *ex officio*, with voice and vote.

17.60.04. The president of the Endowment Fund shall be elected to a four-year term by the board of trustees in consultation with and with the approval of the presiding bishop of this church. Nomination of a candidate for president shall be made jointly by the presiding bishop and the executive committee of the board. The board, together with the presiding bishop, shall arrange for an annual review of the president. The president shall be eligible for re-election. The employment of the president may be terminated jointly by the board of trustees and the presiding bishop of this church, following recommendation by the executive committee of the board of trustees.

The executive committee of the board of trustees, with the concurrence of the presiding bishop, shall establish the compensation of the president.

17.60.05. Constitutional provisions 15.21. and 16.12. and bylaws 11.34.01., 14.21.02., and 14.21.06. shall apply to the operation of this organization.

17.60.06. The specific responsibilities of the Endowment Fund shall be enumerated in continuing resolutions.

17.60.A19. ***Operation of the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America***

The Endowment Fund of the ELCA—also known as the ELCA Foundation—shall:

a. offer, promote, administer, and oversee endowment, deferred giving, life-income, and similar planned giving programs for individual donors, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and related institutions and agencies in support of ELCA ministries;

b. offer pooled investment services for endowment funds of this church and its congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and related institutions and agencies;

c. manage assets of endowment, deferred giving, life-income agreements, donor-advised funds, and funds held for external participants;

d. oversee the administration of earned-income payments to donors and to remainder beneficiaries as regulated by life-income, trust, and other fiduciary donor agreements;

e. determine annual endowment fund distribution rate;

f. set fees associated with endowment and deferred giving programs;

g. hire and oversee such managers, service providers, consultants, advisors, and sub-advisors as it deems appropriate;

h. develop and approve an annual budget that will be financed through revenue from its gift planning and investment activities and programs; and

i. coordinate programs and ministries with the priorities of this church and other stewardship and financial-resource development activities of this church.

17.60.B19 ***Initial Election of Board of Trustees of Endowment Fund Under Chapter 17***

For the first election of members of the board of trustees of the Endowment Fund under this Chapter 17, the Church Council shall divide the currently serving trustees, other than the presiding bishop, into three classes: one class which shall be deemed to have served one full term and be eligible for election to two more terms; one class which shall be deemed to have served two full terms and be eligible for election to one more term; and one class which shall be deemed to have served three full terms and not be eligible for further election.

17.70. This church may fulfill some of its purposes, as described in Chapter 4, through other separately incorporated ministries, which shall be described in continuing resolutions.

Chapter 18.
REGIONS

18.01. This church shall have regions as an association among nine specific groups of synods and the churchwide organization for the purpose of exercising mutual responsibilities for mission and ministry throughout this church.

18.01.01. Functions. The regions shall be a means for coordinated responses by synods and the churchwide organization to mission and program opportunities within the region.

18.01.02. The region shall be a forum where the synods and the churchwide organization may study, plan, and share together in developing common programs unique to the region. Responsibilities carried out together will vary from region to region depending on the decision of the synods and churchwide units.

18.01.03. Additional programs or services may be offered by each region upon the request of two or more synods, or upon the request of the churchwide organization and one or more synods, providing that each requesting synod and the churchwide organization supply the necessary financial support for the services requested.

18.01.A21. *The regions shall be numbered 1 through 9 and composed of the following synods (as designated in bylaw 10.01.01.):*

Region 1—Alaska Synod; Northwest Washington Synod; Southwestern Washington Synod; Northwest Intermountain Synod; Oregon Synod; and Montana Synod.

Region 2—Sierra Pacific Synod; Southwest California Synod; Pacifica Synod; Grand Canyon Synod; and Rocky Mountain Synod.

Region 3—Western North Dakota Synod; Eastern North Dakota Synod; South Dakota Synod; Northwestern Minnesota Synod; Northeastern Minnesota Synod; Southwestern Minnesota Synod; Minneapolis Area Synod; Saint Paul Area Synod; and Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

Region 4—Nebraska Synod; Central States Synod; Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod; Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod; Southwestern Texas Synod; Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod.

Region 5—Metropolitan Chicago Synod; Northern Illinois Synod; Central/Southern Illinois Synod; Southeastern Iowa Synod; Western Iowa Synod; Northeastern Iowa Synod; Northern Great Lakes Synod; Northwest Synod of Wisconsin; East-Central Synod of Wisconsin; Greater Milwaukee Synod; South-Central Synod of Wisconsin; and La Crosse Area Synod.

Region 6—Southeast Michigan Synod; North/West Lower Michigan Synod; Indiana-Kentucky Synod; Northwestern Ohio Synod; Northeastern Ohio Synod; and Southern Ohio Synod.

Region 7—New Jersey Synod; New England Synod; Metropolitan New York Synod; Upstate New York Synod; Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod; Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; and Slovak Zion Synod.

Region 8—Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod; Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod; Allegheny Synod; Lower Susquehanna Synod; Upper Susquehanna Synod; Delaware-Maryland Synod; Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; and West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod.

Region 9—Virginia Synod; North Carolina Synod; South Carolina Synod; Southeastern Synod; Florida-Bahamas Synod; and Caribbean Synod.

18.01.B19. *In fulfilling the region's function and the purposes of this church, each region may assist in:*

a. planning for this church's participation in God's mission in the region, with special attention to the opportunities for outreach with the Gospel;

b. providing for ongoing dialogue between the synods of the region and churchwide units for the purpose of identifying functions that may be done together;

c. forming resource planning groups to recommend resources and services needed for congregations;

d. facilitating, when requested, relationships with colleges, universities, and campus ministries and supportive funding responsibilities of the synods and churchwide organization on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;

e. facilitating gatherings of synod bishops, synod staff, and regional staff; and

f. coordinating the work of the churchwide staff within the territory of the region.

18.01.C91. *Additional functions may include:*

a. relating to seminaries;

b. relating to camps and other outdoor ministries;

c. developing communication plans and projects;

d. planning for and coordinating continuing education programs;

e. providing for various services to congregations;

f. facilitating global mission education and interpretation;

g. providing for stewardship and evangelism events;

h. providing for events for the growth and equipping of God's people for their ministries in the world;

i. compiling lists of personnel that may be used by synods for interim ministries;

j. providing a financial service bureau for the cooperating synods for banking, payroll, accounts payable, and accounts receivable;

k. providing for regional archives, associated with institutions of this church wherever possible;

l. coordinating resources for youth ministry;

m. assisting synods in facilitating the mobility of rostered ministers;

n. facilitating, when requested, relationships with social ministry organizations and assisting in advocacy work; and

o. addressing other functions, as deemed appropriate by synods and the churchwide organization.

Chapter 19.
NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION PROCESS

19.01. The Churchwide Assembly shall elect the presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary of this church and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

19.01.01. The treasurer shall be elected by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council.

19.01.02. The presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons receiving the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be required for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons receiving the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to the two persons receiving the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot, and a majority of the legal votes cast shall elect.

19.01.A24. *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 per office 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 30 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members.*

19.01.B09. *Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as churchwide officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Church Council.*

19.01.C19. ***Ecclesiastical Ballot.*** *An "ecclesiastical ballot" for the election of officers (other than treasurer) of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is an election process:*

a. in which on the first ballot the name of any eligible individual may be submitted for nomination by a voting member of the assembly;

b. through which the possibility of election to office exists on any ballot by achievement of the required number of votes cast by voting members of the assembly applicable to a particular ballot;

c. that precludes spoken floor nominations but allows nomination of persons not in attendance at the meeting;

d. in which those casting ballots have primary responsibility to nominate persons willing to serve if elected;

e. in which the first ballot is the nominating ballot if no election occurs on the first ballot;

f. in which the first ballot defines the total slate of nominees for possible election on a subsequent ballot, with no additional nominations;

g. in which each synod bishop will seek to inform nominees from that synod that they have been nominated and that they may withdraw if they do not seek election;

h. that allows, after the reporting of the first ballot, the persons nominated to withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot;

i. in which any name appearing on the second ballot may not be subsequently withdrawn;

j. that does not preclude an assembly's adoption of rules that permit, at a defined point in the election process and for a defined period of time, speeches to the assembly by nominees or their representatives and/or a question-and-answer forum in which the nominees or their representatives participate; and

k. in which the number of names that appear on any ballot subsequent to the second ballot shall be determined in accordance with provisions of the governing documents.

19.01.D24. ***Election Procedures Utilizing the Ecclesiastical Ballot***

a. The chair will announce what type of voting system is to be used for the election.

b. On the first ballot for each office being selected by ecclesiastical or nominating ballot, both the first and last names of a nominee should be used. Members should endeavor to use correct spelling and should provide any additional accurate information identifying the nominee, such as title, position, synod, congregation, or residence.

c. A member may vote for only one nominee on each ballot.

d. Ballots should not be marked prior to the time the chair advises the voting members to do so.

e. When the results of the first ballot are presented, the chair of the assembly will announce when and how persons nominated may withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot.

f. On the second and subsequent ballots, the first position on each ballot shall be given to the nominee who received the greatest number of votes on the immediately preceding ballot, with the remaining positions assigned to the other nominees in descending order of the number of votes received on the immediately preceding ballot. If two or more nominees were tied with the same number of votes on the immediately preceding ballot, their respective positions shall be in alphabetical order.

g. On each ticket, the polls will remain open for a reasonable time, as determined by the chair, to permit voting members to record their votes.

19.02. **The members of the Church Council, except the chair of the Conference of Bishops and the treasurer of this church, shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly.**

a. In preparation for the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council shall determine how this church's commitment to inclusive representation will affect the next election to the Church Council. For 32 of the council members, the Nominating Committee shall invite each eligible synod to submit suggested nominees and shall then nominate persons who fulfill the categories assigned by the Church Council. With respect to the other nominees, the Church Council shall review its size and composition and take into consideration the experience and expertise of existing members and synod nominees as well as the needs of the council in seeking to fulfill its duties and responsibilities. Based upon this analysis, the Church Council shall instruct the Nominating Committee to provide nominations in specific categories for the remaining positions up to 13.

b. Excluding the churchwide officers and the chair of the Conference of Bishops, there shall not be more than two members of the Church Council from a synod. The Church Council shall have at least two members from each region.

c. No synod bishop, with the exception of the chair of the Conference of Bishops, shall serve as a voting member of the Church Council.

d. The terms of office of persons elected to regular terms on the Church Council by the Churchwide Assembly shall begin at the conclusion of the Churchwide Assembly at which such persons were elected.

19.02.A24. *On behalf of the Nominating Committee, the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—in the year preceding each regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly—shall solicit from eligible synods on a rotating basis the names of two persons in specified categories, in keeping with the principles of organization as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution, for possible election to the Church Council. Upon their nomination by the assemblies of the respective synods, the names of the two persons shall be presented to the Nominating Committee for submission to the Churchwide Assembly. In the event that any nominee withdraws or is disqualified from possible service, the Nominating Committee shall request that the nominee's synod provide a replacement name. In the event that the vacancy occurs subsequent to the preparation of the report of the Nominating Committee to the Churchwide Assembly, a floor nomination shall be provided from the same synod as the original nominee. Except as provided herein, no floor nominations for positions on the Church Council shall be permitted at the Churchwide Assembly.*

19.02.B19. *For purposes of nominations for the Church Council on a rotating basis, the following pairing of synods shall be observed insofar as possible: Alaska Synod and Northwest Washington Synod; Northwest Intermountain Synod and Montana Synod; Southwestern Washington Synod and Oregon Synod; Sierra Pacific Synod and Southwest California Synod; Pacifica Synod and Grand Canyon Synod; Rocky Mountain Synod and South Dakota Synod; Western North Dakota Synod and Eastern North Dakota Synod; Northwestern*

Minnesota Synod and Northeastern Minnesota Synod; Southwestern Minnesota Synod and Southeastern Minnesota Synod; Minneapolis Area Synod and Saint Paul Area Synod; Nebraska Synod and Central States Synod; Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod and Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod; Southwestern Texas Synod and Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod; Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and Northern Great Lakes Synod; East-Central Synod of Wisconsin and South-Central Synod of Wisconsin; La Crosse Area Synod and Northeastern Iowa Synod; Western Iowa Synod and Southeastern Iowa Synod; Northern Illinois Synod and Central/Southern Illinois Synod; Metropolitan Chicago Synod and Greater Milwaukee Synod; North/West Lower Michigan Synod and Southeast Michigan Synod; Indiana-Kentucky Synod and Northwestern Ohio Synod; Northeastern Ohio Synod and Southern Ohio Synod; New Jersey Synod and New England Synod and Slovak Zion Synod; Metropolitan New York Synod and Upstate New York Synod; Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod and Allegheny Synod; Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod; Upper Susquehanna Synod and Lower Susquehanna Synod; Delaware-Maryland Synod and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; Virginia Synod and North Carolina Synod; South Carolina Synod and Southeastern Synod; Florida-Bahamas Synod and Caribbean Synod.

19.03. Elections shall be for one six-year term, without consecutive re-election, with approximately one-half of the members of the Church Council and of each board or committee elected each triennium, unless otherwise specified in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

19.03.01. Persons appointed to fill vacancies of less than half of a term may be subsequently elected to full terms provided that they are otherwise eligible for the positions to which they are elected.

19.03.02. The terms of office of persons elected to regular terms on the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly, the Committee on Discipline, and the Committee on Appeals shall begin at the conclusion of the Churchwide Assembly at which such persons were elected, except as may be specified in continuing resolutions with respect to particular pending discipline matters.

19.03.A21. *With respect to committees that consider disciplinary cases or appeals:*

a. Any member of the churchwide Committee on Discipline who has been appointed to serve on a discipline hearing committee for a particular pending case shall continue to serve to discharge that appointment notwithstanding that a successor has been subsequently elected at a Churchwide Assembly.

b. Any member of the synod Committee on Discipline who is serving at the time that the Executive Committee of the Church Council appoints members from the churchwide Committee on Discipline to a discipline hearing committee shall continue as a member of that discipline hearing committee for the particular pending case, notwithstanding that a successor has been subsequently elected at a Synod Assembly.

c. *Any member of the Committee on Appeals who is serving at the time that an appeal is made shall continue to serve to decide that appeal, notwithstanding that a successor has been subsequently elected at a Churchwide Assembly.*

19.04. Each nominee for an elected position in the churchwide organization and each nominee for a position on the board of a separately incorporated ministry elected by the Churchwide Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church, unless otherwise specified in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.

19.04.01. Each voting member of the Church Council, board, or committee of the churchwide organization shall cease to be a member of the Church Council, board, or committee if no longer a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church.

19.04.02. For purposes of nomination to and service on the Church Council, a committee of the churchwide organization, or a board of a separately incorporated ministry, "synod membership" shall be defined as follows:

a. A layperson shall be recorded in the synod that includes the congregation in which such a person holds voting membership, with the recognition that such a person shall reside within the territory of the synod or in an area immediately adjacent to the territory in the case of border areas.
b. A rostered minister shall be recorded in the synod on whose roster such a minister's name is maintained.

19.05. Further procedures for elections and qualifications for office may be set forth in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.

19.05.01. It shall be the responsibility of the Church Council to assure that this church maintains its commitment to inclusive representation.

19.05.02. In all elections by the Churchwide Assembly, other than for the presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary, a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot shall be necessary for election. If an election does not occur on the first ballot, the names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the second ballot. On the second ballot, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

19.05.03. No member of the Church Council, a committee of the Church Council, a board of a separately incorporated ministry, or committee of the churchwide organization shall receive emolument for such service. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the payment of salaries and benefits of the officers of this church, nor to prohibit the payment of the costs of insurance on behalf of a person who is or was a member of the Church Council, a committee of the Church Council, or committee against any liability asserted against and incurred by such person in or arising from that capacity, whether or not the churchwide organization would have been required to indemnify such person against the liability under provisions of law or otherwise.

19.05.04. Except for the full-time salaried officers, no employee of the churchwide organization of this church, its regions, or its separately incorporated ministries, nor any individual under contract to any unit of the churchwide organization, a

region, or a separately incorporated ministry shall be eligible for nomination or election to voting or advisory membership on the Church Council, an advisory committee, a board of a separately incorporated ministry, the Committee on Appeals, the Committee on Discipline, the Committee of Hearing Officers, or the churchwide Nominating Committee during the period of employment or service under contract. (For purposes of this provision only, "employee 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. The phrase "under contract" shall not mean short-term contracts for specific, limited purposes, usually not to exceed six months.)

19.05.05. No person related to a staff member of the churchwide organization shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Church Council or a committee that advises the unit in which the person's relative is employed. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the churchwide employee, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

19.05.06. A member of a committee, a board of a separately incorporated ministry, or an at-large member of the Church Council who has served less than half a term is not deemed to have served a regular term and is eligible for election to a full term if the member otherwise satisfies the criteria for election.

19.05.A22. *A former full-time or part-time employee shall not be eligible for three years subsequent to such employment for nomination or election to the board of a separately incorporated ministry or committee related to the churchwide unit or office in which the employee served.*

19.05.B25. *No member of the Church Council other than the salaried officers may serve on the board of a separately incorporated ministry. No member of the Church Council may serve on the Nominating Committee, the Committee on Appeals, the Committee on Discipline, or the Committee of Hearing Officers.*

19.11. Further procedures relating to nominations may be set forth in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.

19.11.01. The Nominating Committee shall consist of 12–18 members elected by the Churchwide Assembly. Each member shall be elected to one six-year term and shall serve until a successor is elected. Members of the Nominating Committee shall not be eligible for consecutive re-election. The Church Council shall place in nomination the names of two persons for each position. The committee shall consist of at least one member but no more than three members from any region. Nominations from the floor shall also be permitted, but each floor nomination shall be presented in the specific category named by the Church Council and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the

assembly, the Church Council shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor.

19.11.02. Except as otherwise provided, the Nominating Committee shall nominate two persons for each council or committee position, according to the process described in continuing resolutions, for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly. Nominations from the floor, where permitted in the nomination process, shall be presented in the specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor.

19.11.03. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each position on the board of trustees of each of the separately incorporated ministries identified in Chapter 17 of this constitution, according to the process described in continuing resolutions, for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly. In the case of re-election, if authorized, or for nominees from church bodies with which this church is in a relationship of full communion, only one person need be nominated. Nominations from the floor, where permitted in the nomination process, shall be presented in the specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor.

19.11.04. In each case in which there are floor nominations, there shall be a preliminary ballot that shall include the names of the nominees presented by the Nominating Committee or the Church Council, and the person or persons nominated from the floor, where permitted. The names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the final ballot.

19.11.05. The Church Council shall endeavor to ensure that every synod has at least one person serving on the Church Council or churchwide boards, committees, task forces, or other groups. Among those persons elected by the assembly, excluding the officers, no more than two persons from any one synod shall serve on the Church Council or any one board, committee, task force, or other group.

19.11.06. The Nominating Committee shall strive to ensure that all persons nominated for any position, including the boards of separately incorporated ministries, possess the necessary competence and experience for the position. All persons elected to any position, whether nominated by the Nominating Committee or not, shall strive to represent this church and not just a particular geographic area.

19.11.A24. ***Churchwide Assembly Nominations Desk and Nominations Form***

a. Nominations from the floor at the Churchwide Assembly shall be made at the Nominations Desk, which shall be maintained under the supervision of the secretary of this church.

b. A nomination from the floor shall be made by using the form provided by the secretary of this church. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Nominations Desk at times prescribed in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure.

c. *The required form to be used in making nominations from the floor shall include the nominee's name, address, phone number, congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community membership, synod membership, information that enables compliance with the principles of organization as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution, and such other information as the secretary of this church shall require.*

d. *For purposes of nomination procedures, "synod membership" is defined in 19.04.02.*

19.11.B21. ***Churchwide Assembly Floor Nominations***

a. *Floor nominations for the Church Council, the Nominating Committee, or other committee or board to be elected by the Churchwide Assembly require, in addition to the nominator, the documented support of at least 20 other voting members.*

b. *A nomination from the floor for any position (other than presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary) shall be made by filing the completed nomination form with the Nominations Desk at times prescribed in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure.*

c. *Nominations will be considered made in the order in which filed at the Nominations Desk.*

19.11.C21. ***Restrictions on Churchwide Assembly Floor Nominations for Boards and Committees***

a. *Nominations from the floor for positions on boards or committees shall comply with criteria and restrictions established by the Nominating Committee and set forth in materials provided to each voting member of the assembly.*

b. *So long as the number of incumbent members from a given synod serving on a board or committee with terms not expiring plus the number of positions on the same board or committee to which individuals from the same synod already have been nominated (whether by the Nominating Committee or from the floor) total less than the maximum number of two individuals from the same synod who may serve on that board or committee, an individual from the same synod may be nominated for another position on that board or committee, provided other criteria and restrictions are met. Individuals from the same synod may be nominated for a position on a board or committee to which individuals from the same synod already have been nominated, provided other criteria and restrictions are met.*

19.11.D21. ***Restrictions on Churchwide Assembly Floor Nominations for Church Council***

Nominations for positions on the Church Council shall comply with criteria and restrictions established by the Church Council and Nominating Committee and set forth in materials provided to each voting member of the assembly.

19.11.E21. ***Restrictions on Churchwide Assembly Floor Nominations for Nominating Committee***

a. *Nominations from the floor for positions on the Nominating Committee shall comply with criteria and restrictions established by the Church*

Council and set forth in materials provided to each voting member of the assembly.

b. So long as the number of incumbent members from a given region serving on the Nominating Committee with terms not expiring plus the number of Nominating Committee positions to which individuals from the same region have already been nominated (whether by the Church Council or from the floor) total less than the maximum number of three individuals from the same region who may serve on the Nominating Committee, an individual from the same region may be nominated for another Nominating Committee position, provided other criteria and restrictions are met. Provided other criteria and restrictions are met, individuals may be nominated for a Nominating Committee position for which someone from the same region has already been nominated.

19.11.F24. ***Election Procedures Utilizing the Common Ballot***

a. The common ballot is used in those elections when the ecclesiastical or nominating ballot is not used.

b. Each ticket for which an election is held will be considered a separate ballot.

c. A voting member may vote for only one nominee on each ticket.

d. Failure to vote for a nominee for every ticket does not invalidate a ballot for the tickets for which a nominee is marked.

e. Ballots must be marked in accordance with the instructions presented in plenary session.

f. Unless otherwise ordered by the assembly, polls for the first common ballot close at the time designated in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure.

g. On the second ballot, the polls will remain open for a reasonable time, as determined by the chair, to permit members to record their votes.

h. On the second ballot, the first position on each ticket shall be given to the nominee who received the greatest number of votes on the first ballot. If two nominees are tied for the highest number of votes, their respective positions shall be in alphabetical order.

19.11.G21. ***Breaking Ties in Elections***

a. On the ballot for the election of the presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary, when only two names appear, the marked ballot of the treasurer shall be held by the chair of the Elections Committee and shall be counted only where necessary to break a tie that would otherwise exist.

b. On the first common ballot, the blank ballots of the treasurer and vice president shall be held by the chair of the Elections Committee to be presented to the treasurer for vote only in those elections where a tie would otherwise exist, and to be presented to the vice president for vote only in those elections to break a tie remaining after the ballot of the treasurer has been counted.

c. On the second common ballot, the marked ballot of the treasurer shall be held by the chair of the Elections Committee and shall be counted only where necessary to break a tie that would otherwise exist.

Chapter 20.
CONSULTATION, DISCIPLINE, APPEALS, AND ADJUDICATION

20.10. **CONSULTATION AND DISCIPLINE**

20.11. **There shall be set forth in the bylaws a process of discipline governing officers, ministers of Word and Sacrament, ministers of Word and Service, congregations, and members of congregations. Except as provided in 20.18. or 20.19., such process shall assure due process and due protection for the accused, other parties, and this church. Since synods have responsibility for admittance of persons into the rostered ministries of this church and have oversight of pastoral and congregational relationships, the disciplinary process shall be a responsibility of the synod on behalf of this church.**

20.12. **As used in this constitution and bylaws, due process means the right to be given specific written notice of the charges against any person or entity of this church, the right to testify in person or remain silent (at the election of the accused), the right to call witnesses and introduce documentary evidence concerning the pending charges, the right to confront and cross-examine all witnesses in support of such charges, the right to a hearing before a discipline hearing committee as provided in 20.13., the right to a written decision of the discipline hearing committee as provided in the bylaws, and the right to be treated with fundamental procedural fairness. Any violation of these rights shall be grounds for reversal of an unfavorable finding and the right to a new hearing.**

20.12.01. "Fundamental procedural fairness" means and includes: avoidance by committee members of written communications to or from either the accused or accuser(s) without copy to the other; avoidance by committee members of oral communications with either the accused or accuser(s) outside the presence of the other; maintaining decorum during the hearing; allowing both the accuser(s) and the accused to present their cases without unnecessary interruptions; keeping a verbatim record of the hearing, made either by a stenographer or court reporter or by audio or video recording; allowing both the accuser(s) and the accused to be accompanied at the hearing by a representative (who may, but need not, be an attorney) who also may participate in the proceedings; impartiality of the committees that consider the charges; and the right to be treated in conformity with the governing documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

20.13. **The accused shall be entitled to a hearing before a discipline hearing committee as described in the bylaws. If the accused is a congregation, the hearing shall be open to the public unless both the accuser and the accused agree to a hearing not open to the public. If the accused is an individual, the hearing shall not be open to the public unless both the accusers and the accused agree to a public hearing. At a hearing not open to the public, a limited number of concerned persons may attend as provided in the bylaws.**

20.13.01. In a hearing not open to the public,

a. the accuser and the accused may each be represented by not more than two representatives who may present or assist in the presentation of the evidence; and

b. the discipline hearing committee may permit attendance by a limited number of persons, with the consent of both the accused and the accuser.

20.13.02. Irrespective of whether a hearing is or is not open to the public, the discipline hearing committee may decide that witnesses (other than the accused and the accuser) shall be permitted in the hearing only when testifying. A witness may be accompanied by a friend or advocate.

20.14. Once a charge against a person or entity has been considered by a discipline hearing committee, that person or entity shall not be required to answer that charge again except under the circumstances set forth in the bylaws.

20.14.01. The circumstances in which a person or entity shall be required to answer again charges before a discipline hearing committee shall be limited to the following:

a. The Committee on Appeals has ordered a rehearing as its disposition of a timely appeal to it.

b. The Committee on Appeals has ordered a further hearing after either an accuser or an accused has petitioned for a further hearing on the basis of newly discovered evidence or testimony that was not available at the time of the original hearing.

20.14.02. After a charge against a person or entity has been considered by a discipline hearing committee, evidence related to that charge may be introduced at a subsequent hearing before another discipline hearing committee on a different but related charge. Charges are "related" if they involve similar alleged conduct on the part of the accused.

20.15. The procedures for consultation and discipline set forth in the bylaws shall be the exclusive means of resolving all matters pertaining to the discipline of congregations of this church. Neither the churchwide organization nor a synod of this church shall institute legal proceedings in which conduct described in provision 20.31.01. is the basis of a request for relief consisting of suspension of that congregation from this church or removal of that congregation from the roll of congregations of this church. A congregation of this church shall not institute legal proceedings against the churchwide organization or a synod of this church seeking injunctive or other relief against the imposition or enforcement of any disciplinary action against that congregation.

20.16. It is the intent of this church that all matters of discipline should be resolved internally to the greatest extent possible. It is the policy of this church not to resort to the civil courts of this land until all internal procedures and appeals have been exhausted, except for emergency situations involving a significant imminent risk of physical injury or severe loss or damage to property.

20.17. None of the provisions of this chapter is intended nor shall be construed to limit the authority of a Synod Council to determine roster status, under the bylaws of this church, of a minister who is without regular call, for any reason, even though such reason might also be the basis for disciplinary proceedings under this chapter.

20.18. The authority to administer private censure and admonition upon an individual or public censure and admonition upon a congregation is inherent

in the office of bishop. Proceedings under this chapter or any other provision of the constitutions and bylaws of this church or of its synods are not required for the exercise of such authority.

20.19. Where the written notice of charges specifically requests that the discipline to be imposed shall consist of suspension for not more than three months (during which time requirements for evaluation, therapy, continuing education, or similar experience may be imposed), the due process and due protection provisions of this constitution shall apply only as specified in the bylaws.

20.20. There shall be a Committee on Appeals to which may be referred appeals from disciplinary proceedings and petitions for the recall of an officer as described in this chapter, as well as petitions for recall of synod officers as described in chapter 8 of the *Constitution for Synods*. The Committee on Appeals shall be composed of six rostered ministers, at least one of whom shall be a minister of Word and Service, and six laypersons, elected by the Churchwide Assembly for a term of six years, without consecutive re-election. The Committee on Appeals shall elect its own officers.

20.21. The Committee on Appeals shall establish definitions and guidelines, subject to approval by the Church Council, to enable clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline of officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations. The Church Council shall appoint three members from the Committee on Appeals who shall recommend rules of procedure for the performance of its duties. The rules shall become effective when ratified by the Church Council.

20.21.01. The churchwide Committee on Discipline shall consist of 24–36 members, half of whom shall be rostered ministers (including at least two ministers of Word and Service) and half of whom shall be laypersons, elected by the Churchwide Assembly for a term of six years. Each member will serve until a successor is elected, without consecutive re-election, and will serve as needed on a discipline hearing committee in any of the synods in this church.

20.21.02. The churchwide Committee of Hearing Officers shall consist of six to nine persons elected by the Church Council for a term of six years, each without consecutive re-election, to serve as needed on a discipline hearing committee in any of the synods of this church.

20.22. The disciplinary process for ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be set forth in the bylaws.

20.22.01. Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be subject to discipline for:

a. preaching and teaching in conflict with the faith confessed by this church;
b. conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office;
c. willfully disregarding or violating the functions and standards established by this church for the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament;
d. willfully disregarding the provisions of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church; or
e. willfully failing to comply with the requirements ordered by a discipline hearing committee under 20.24.08.

20.22.02. The disciplinary actions which may be imposed are:

a. private censure and admonition by the bishop of the synod;
b. suspension from the office and functions of the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this church for a designated period or until there is satisfactory evidence of repentance and amendment; or
c. removal from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

20.22.03. Charges against a minister of Word and Sacrament which could lead to discipline must be specific and in writing, subscribed to by the accuser(s), and be made by one or more of the following:

a. at least two-thirds of the members of the Congregation Council of a congregation served by the minister of Word and Sacrament, submitted to the synod bishop;
b. at least one-third of the voting members of a congregation served by the minister of Word and Sacrament, submitted to the synod bishop;
c. at least two-thirds of the members of the governing body to which the minister of Word and Sacrament, if not a congregational pastor, is accountable, submitted to the synod bishop;
d. at least 10 rostered ministers of the synod on whose roster the accused minister of Word and Sacrament is listed, submitted to the synod bishop;
e. the synod bishop; or
f. the presiding bishop of this church, but only with respect to an accused who is a synod bishop (or who was a synod bishop at any time during the 12 months preceding the filing of written charges), submitted to the secretary of this church.

20.22.04. When there are indications that a cause for discipline may exist the bishop of the synod may request, and the general counsel of this church shall make available, resources for investigation into the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct that gives rise to the potential cause for discipline. Such resources may include, but are not limited to, contracting for investigatory expertise in matters of alleged sexual abuse, forensic accounting in matters of alleged fiscal misconduct, or other specialized professional services. The cost of such investigation shall generally be borne one-half by the churchwide organization and one-half by the synod of the bishop requesting such investigation. Procedural details relating to such investigations shall be set forth in the Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings. Before charges are made, efforts shall be made by the bishop of the synod to resolve the situation by consultation; for assistance in these efforts, the bishop may utilize either a consultation panel or an advisory panel as herein provided:

a. When requested by the synod bishop, a consultation panel consisting of five persons (three rostered ministers and two laypersons) appointed from the members of the Consultation Committee of the synod by the synod bishop, or, at the request of the synod bishop, by the Synod Council's Executive Committee or other committee authorized to do so by the Synod Council, shall assist the synod bishop in efforts to resolve a situation by consultation.
b. When requested by the synod bishop, an advisory panel consisting of five persons (three rostered ministers and two laypersons) appointed by the synod

bishop shall assist the synod bishop in efforts to resolve a situation by consultation. Up to two members of the advisory panel appointed by the synod bishop may be members of church bodies with which this church is in a relationship of full communion.

20.22.05. If appointed, a consultation panel or advisory panel shall advise the synod bishop as to whether or not the bishop should bring charges or may make other recommendation for resolution of the controversy that would not involve proceedings before a discipline hearing committee. To these ends, the panel may meet with complaining witnesses as well as with the concerned minister of Word and Sacrament. If requested by the synod bishop, members of the panel also may assist, as representatives of the accuser, in the presentation of evidence and examination of witnesses before a discipline hearing committee.

20.22.06. When charges are brought other than by the synod bishop or the presiding bishop of this church, the synod bishop may refer such charges to a consultation panel as provided in 20.22.04.a.

a. If as a result of meeting with a consultation panel the charges are withdrawn by the accuser(s), no further proceedings shall be required.
b. Upon recommendation of the consultation panel that the charges be dismissed, the synod bishop may dismiss the charges, in which case no further proceedings shall be required.
c. Upon recommendation of the consultation panel that some of the allegations supporting the charges be stricken, the synod bishop may strike some or all of such allegations, and further proceedings shall be required on the remaining allegations.
d. In the case of charges that do not anticipate disciplinary action, the consultation panel shall submit a report in writing to the synod bishop that sets forth the action or actions recommended by the consultation panel, and the synod bishop shall convey the recommendations to the parties. If either party does not accept the recommendations, that party may appeal to the Synod Council, whose decision shall be final.
e. In the case of charges that anticipate disciplinary action that have not been withdrawn or dismissed as a result of 20.22.06.a. or b. above, the charges shall be referred to a discipline hearing committee for a hearing.
f. The work of a consultation panel under this section shall be completed within 30 days from the time the panel was constituted.

20.22.07. When charges are brought by a synod bishop or the presiding bishop of this church, or when charges are brought other than by a synod bishop and have not been withdrawn or dismissed or otherwise disposed of as provided in 20.22.06., the synod bishop or the presiding bishop, as appropriate, shall deliver a copy of the charges to the accused and the secretary of this church.

20.22.08. A discipline hearing committee shall be convened to conduct a hearing. The voting members of this committee shall be composed of 12 persons of whom six shall be selected by the Synod Council's Executive Committee from the Committee on Discipline of the synod and six shall be selected from the churchwide Committee on Discipline under the process described in 20.22.11. The rules authorized in 20.22.14. shall establish the method, based upon the remainder of the term, for

determining which members of the synod committee shall serve as the voting members and which shall serve as alternates. A hearing officer selected from the churchwide Committee of Hearing Officers under the process described in 20.22.12. shall preside as the non-voting chair of the discipline hearing committee.

20.22.11. The accused shall have the privilege of selecting two persons (one rostered minister and one layperson) and their alternates of the six persons from the churchwide Committee on Discipline to serve on a discipline hearing committee. The remaining four persons (two rostered ministers and two laypersons) and their alternates, or six, if the accused does not exercise the privilege, and their alternates shall be selected by the Executive Committee of the Church Council.

20.22.12. The presiding bishop of this church shall select one member of the churchwide Committee of Hearing Officers to serve as the non-voting chair of a discipline hearing committee.

20.22.13. The presiding bishop of this church may appoint one or more persons as facilitators to make arrangements for, and to provide technical assistance to, a discipline hearing committee.

20.22.14. The Church Council shall appoint three members from the Committee on Appeals who shall recommend rules of procedure for the performance of the duties of hearing officers and discipline hearing committees. The rules shall become effective when ratified by the Church Council.

20.22.15. The discipline hearing committee shall, within 60 days after the secretary of this church has given notice of the selection by the Executive Committee of the Church Council of the members of the churchwide Committee on Discipline to serve on a discipline hearing committee, meet with the accused and the accuser(s) to hold a hearing. The committee shall render its written decision within 15 days after the committee concludes the hearing. The 60-day period may be extended one or more times to a specified date by a written stipulation signed by the accuser(s), the accused, and the hearing officer prior to the expiration of the original 60-day period or prior to the extended specified date.

20.22.16. Written notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing and a copy of the charges shall be delivered to the accused and to the accuser(s) at least 20 days prior to the date of the hearing.

20.22.17. At the hearing, the accuser(s) may present evidence in support of the charges and thereafter the accused shall be entitled to present evidence. The accused and the accuser(s), or other person acting on behalf of either of them, shall be entitled to question the other party or any of the witnesses appearing on behalf of the other party. A verbatim record shall be made by a stenographer or court reporter or by audio or video recording of the hearing.

20.22.21. The discipline hearing committee shall render its decision in writing. The written decision shall be in two parts:

a. Findings of Fact. In this part, the committee shall set forth what it has found to be the relevant facts, that is, what it believes to be the truth of the matter.
b. Determination. In this part, the committee shall state whether, based upon the facts that it has found, it believes discipline should be imposed and, if so, what discipline it has chosen to impose.

20.22.22. The decision of the discipline hearing committee shall be made by a majority vote of its members who were present at the hearing. The decision of the discipline hearing committee shall be final on the date it is issued by the committee. Within 30 days, one of the parties may appeal to the Committee on Appeals and may request the Committee on Appeals to stay the effective date of the decision. A stay may be granted in whole or in part and subject to such conditions, if any, as the Committee on Appeals may require. The decisions of the Committee on Appeals shall be final.

20.22.23. If there are indications that a cause for discipline exists or if in the course of the proceedings it should become apparent to the bishop of the synod that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation(s) being served by the minister of Word and Sacrament due to local conditions or that local conditions may be adversely affected by the continued service by the minister of Word and Sacrament, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the pastor from service in the congregation(s) without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint synod and churchwide fund and with housing provided by the congregation(s).

20.22.24. If there are indications that a cause for discipline exists or if, in the course of proceedings, it becomes apparent to the bishop of the synod that the circumstances require, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend a minister of Word and Sacrament serving under letter of call issued other than by a congregation from the office and functions of the ministry of Word and Sacrament without prejudice and without affecting compensation and housing.

20.23. The disciplinary process for ministers of Word and Service shall be set forth in the bylaws.

20.23.01. Ministers of Word and Service shall be subject to discipline for:

a. confessing and teaching in conflict with the faith confessed by this church;
b. conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office;
c. willfully disregarding or violating the functions and standards established by this church for ministers of Word and Service;
d. willfully disregarding the provisions of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church; or
e. willfully failing to comply with the requirements ordered by a discipline hearing committee under 20.24.08.

20.23.02. The disciplinary actions that may be imposed are:

a. private censure and admonition by the bishop of the synod;
b. suspension from the role and functions of a minister of Word and Service in this church for a designated period or until there is satisfactory evidence of repentance and amendment; or
c. removal from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church.

20.23.03. Charges against a minister of Word and Service of this church that could lead to discipline must be specific and in writing, subscribed to by the accuser(s), and be made by one or more of the following:

a. at least two-thirds of the members of the Congregation Council of a congregation served by the minister of Word and Service, submitted to the synod bishop;

b. at least one-third of the voting members of a congregation served by the minister of Word and Service, submitted to the synod bishop;
c. at least two-thirds of the members of the governing body to which the minister of Word and Service is accountable, submitted to the synod bishop;
d. at least 10 rostered ministers on the rosters of the synod on whose roster the accused minister of Word and Service is listed, submitted to the synod bishop; or
e. the synod bishop.

20.23.04. When there are indications that a cause for discipline exists, efforts shall be made by the bishop of the synod to resolve the situation by consultation in the same manner as set forth above for ministers of Word and Sacrament in 20.22.04. through 20.22.06.

20.23.05. If those efforts fail, the procedures for discipline shall be the same as that set forth above for ministers of Word and Sacrament in 20.22.07. through 20.22.22.

20.23.06. If there are indications that a cause for discipline exists or if in the course of the proceedings it should become apparent to the bishop of the synod that the role and function of a minister of Word and Service cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation(s) being served by the minister of Word and Service due to local conditions or that local conditions may be adversely affected by the continued service by the minister of Word and Service, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend the minister of Word and Service from service in the congregation(s) without prejudice and with pay provided through a joint churchwide-synod-congregation fund.

20.23.07. If there are indications that a cause for discipline exists or if in the course of proceedings it becomes apparent to the bishop of the synod that the circumstances require, the bishop of the synod may temporarily suspend a minister of Word and Service serving under letter of call issued other than by a congregation from the office and functions of a minister of Word and Service without prejudice and without affecting compensation.

20.24. A process for limited discipline of rostered ministers shall be set forth in the bylaws.

20.24.01. Where the written charges specify that the accuser(s) will not seek the rostered minister's removal from the ministry of this church or suspension from the office/role and functions of the ministry of this church for a period not exceeding three months, 20.24.01. through 20.24.09. shall apply to the exclusion of 20.22.08. through 20.22.24. and 20.23.05. through 20.23.07.

20.24.02. The voting members of a discipline hearing committee convened to conduct a hearing on charges described in 20.24.01. shall be six members of the synod's Committee on Discipline selected by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council. A hearing officer selected from the churchwide Committee of Hearing Officers by the secretary of this church shall preside as the nonvoting chair of the discipline hearing committee described in this 20.24.02.

20.24.03. The secretary of this church may appoint one or more persons as facilitators to make arrangements for, and to provide technical assistance to, a discipline hearing committee considering charges described in 20.24.01.

20.24.04. Three members of the Committee on Appeals, appointed by the Church Council, shall develop rules of procedure for the performance of the duties of hearing officers and discipline hearing committees considering charges described in 20.24.01. The rules become effective when adopted by the Church Council.

20.24.05. In each case for which a discipline hearing committee has been constituted, the committee shall, within 60 days after the secretary of this church has given notice of the selection of the hearing officer to serve on a discipline hearing committee, commence a meeting or series of meetings with the accused and the accuser(s) to receive testimony or other evidence offered by the accused or the accuser(s). The 60-day period may be extended one or more times to a specified date by a written stipulation signed by the accuser(s), the accused, and the hearing officer prior to the expiration of the original 60-day period or prior to the extended specified date.

20.24.06. Written notice of the date, time, and place of the first meeting of the discipline hearing committee at which testimony will be received, and a copy of the charges, shall be delivered to the accused and to the accuser(s) at least 20 days prior to the date of the meeting.

20.24.07. The discipline hearing committee shall decide, consistent with rules adopted under 20.24.04., to what extent the accused shall be able to confront or cross-examine witnesses testifying on behalf of the accuser and to what extent the accuser shall be able to confront or cross-examine witnesses testifying on behalf of the accused. A verbatim record shall be made by a stenographer or court reporter or by audio or video recording of all meetings of the committee at which testimony is presented. The accused and the accuser may be accompanied at the meeting(s) by a friend or advisor. Such friend or advisor shall not participate in the proceedings before the committee.

20.24.08. The discipline hearing committee shall conclude its meeting(s) and render its decision in writing within 45 days of the commencement of the meeting for which written notice was given under 20.24.06. The written decision shall be in two parts:

a. Findings of Fact. In this part, the committee shall set forth what it has found to be the relevant facts, that is, what it believes to be the truth of the matter.
b. Determination. In this part, the committee shall state whether, based upon the facts that it has found, it believes discipline should be imposed and if so, which one or more of the following should be imposed:
    1) private censure and admonition by the synod bishop.
    2) suspension for a period not exceeding three months from the office/role and functions of ministry in this church.
    3) participation in such programs of evaluation, therapy, continuing education, or similar experience as the committee may direct.
    4) referral of written charges (amended to reflect additional evidence presented to the committee) to a discipline hearing committee convened under 20.22.08. through 20.22.24. or 20.23.05. through 20.23.07.

20.24.09. The decision of the discipline hearing committee shall be made by a majority vote of its members who were present at the hearing. The decision of the

discipline hearing committee shall be final on the date it is issued by the committee. Within 30 days of that date, one of the parties may appeal to the Committee on Appeals and may request the Committee on Appeals to stay the effective date of the decision. A stay may be granted in whole or in part and subject to such conditions, if any, as the Committee on Appeals may require. The decisions of the Committee on Appeals shall be final.

20.31. The disciplinary process for congregations shall be set forth in the bylaws.

20.31.01. Congregations shall be subject to discipline for:

a. departing from the faith confessed by this church;
b. willfully disregarding or violating the criteria for recognition as congregations of this church; or
c. willfully disregarding or violating the provisions of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.

20.31.02. The disciplinary actions which may be imposed are:

a. censure and admonition by the bishop of the synod;
b. suspension from this church for a designated period, the consequences of such suspension being the loss of voting rights of any member (including ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service) of the congregation at synod or churchwide assemblies, the loss of the right to petition, and the forfeiture of eligibility by any member of the congregation to serve on any council, board (including the board of a separately incorporated ministry), committee, or other group of this church, any of its synods, or any other subdivision thereof;
c. suspension of the congregation from this church for a designated period (with the same consequences as in b.) during which the congregation shall be under the administration of the synod, provided that a congregation may refuse to accept such administration in which case it shall be removed from the roster of congregations of this church; or
d. removal from the roster of congregations of this church.

20.31.03. Charges against a congregation which could lead to discipline must be specific and in writing, subscribed to by the accuser(s), and be made by one or more of the following:

a. at least one-fifth of the voting members of the congregation, submitted to the synod bishop;
b. at least three other congregations of the synod, submitted to the synod bishop;
c. the Synod Council; or
d. the synod bishop.

20.31.04. When there are indications that a cause for discipline exists, efforts shall be made by the bishop of the synod to resolve the situation by consultation in the same manner as set forth above for ministers of Word and Sacrament in 20.22.04. and 20.22.05.

20.31.05. If those efforts fail, the procedures for discipline shall be the same as that set forth above for ministers of Word and Sacrament in 20.22.07. through 20.22.22.

20.41. The disciplinary process for members of congregations shall be set forth in the bylaws.

20.41.01. The offenses for which a member or members of a congregation may be disciplined are:

a. persistent and public denial of the Christian faith;
b. willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ;
c. continual and intentional interference with the ministry of the congregation; or
d. willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of the congregation.

20.41.02. Discipline for an offense shall be administered consistent with the procedure which Christ instructed his disciples to follow (Matthew 18:15–17), proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary:

a. seeking repentance and reconciliation through private counsel and admonition by a pastor;
b. censure and admonition by a pastor in the presence of two or three members of the Congregation Council;
c. written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel, pursuant to bylaw 20.41.03.; and
d. written referral of the matter pursuant to bylaw 20.41.04. by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod, which shall hold a hearing and render a final decision.

20.41.03. If for any reason a pastor of the congregation is unable to offer the counsel and administer the admonitions required by bylaw 20.41.02., those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council. No one shall serve as a member of the consultation panel or the discipline hearing panel if such individual (I) is the accused; (ii) is related to an accused; (iii) is a member, an employee, or a former member or employee of the congregation bringing the charges; or if the participation of an individual on either panel could give rise to the appearance of partiality even if the individual would in fact be impartial. For these purposes, a related individual is one who, with respect to the accused, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

20.41.04. If the counseling, censure and admonitions pursuant to bylaw 20.41.02.a. and b. do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two rostered ministers). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate.

20.41.05. The goal of the consultation panel is to seek repentance, amendment of life, forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. The consultation panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it. If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, the panel, upon the request of the Congregation Council, shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the consultation panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod.

20.41.06. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall select six members from the Committee on Discipline of the synod to decide the case, and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members plus the nonvoting chair comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.

20.41.07. The discipline hearing panel shall, within 30 days after its selection, commence a meeting or series of meetings to receive testimony or other evidence offered by the Congregation Council and the accused member(s). Written notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing shall be sent by the nonvoting chair to the Congregation Council and the accused member(s) 10 days in advance of the meeting. Until that first meeting is convened, the vice president of the synod shall, if necessary, appoint other members of the Committee on Discipline to fill vacancies so that the discipline hearing panel consists of six members plus the nonvoting chair.

20.41.08. The discipline hearing panel shall decide the time, manner, and procedures for its meetings consistent with the following:

a. the hearing before the discipline hearing panel is intended to be informal;
b. the hearing shall be closed to the public unless the Congregation Council and the accused member(s) agree to a public hearing;
c. all Congregation Council members, including any elected after written charges were first submitted, may attend the hearing and be witnesses;
d. only one Congregation Council member may participate in the proceedings as the council representative;
e. the accused member(s) may choose to testify in person or remain silent;
f. the council representative and the accused member(s) will be allowed to present their arguments and evidence without unnecessary interruption;
g. the accused member(s) may be accompanied by a spouse and one friend or advisor, but the spouse and friend or advisor may not participate in the proceedings, except as witnesses;
h. the panel may conduct some of its sessions outside the presence of the parties to the case;
i. rules of evidence and similar rules used in secular judicial proceedings shall not apply in these hearings; and
j. the parties to the case cannot be compelled to provide any information or documents to each other or to the panel.

20.41.09. Upon conclusion of the hearing, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed by the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting:

a. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
b. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
c. termination of membership in the congregation; or
d. termination of membership in the congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

20.41.10. The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council in writing within 45 days of the convening of the first hearing for which written notice was given pursuant to 20.41.06. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.

20.41.11. No member of a congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for an offense that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to these bylaws.

20.51. A process for the recall or dismissal of officers shall be set forth in the bylaws.

20.51.01. The recall or dismissal of the presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary of this church and the vacating of office may be effected:

a. for willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions;
b. for such disability or incapacity as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; or
c. for such conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action as a rostered minister or as a member of a congregation of this church.

20.51.02. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of such an officer shall be instituted by petition by:

a. the Church Council on a vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members; or
b. the Churchwide Assembly on a vote of at least two-thirds of its members.

The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.

20.51.03. Notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the accused person, the Church Council shall be notified of the entry of such judgment, and the office shall be vacated.

20.51.A24. ***Recall or Dismissal of an Officer***

a. The petition for recall or dismissal described in 20.51.02. shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631, except if the subject of the petition is the secretary,

the petition shall be in care of the presiding bishop of this church at the same address).

b. In the case of alleged disability or incapacity of the officer,

1) with respect to the officer the procedures outlined in 13.63. shall first be followed, and if such officer does not accept the decision of the Church Council, the Church Council may proceed to petition for proceedings for recall or dismissal.

2) in the event of such petition, four members of the Committee on Appeals, designated by the committee chair and consisting of two ministers of Word and Sacrament and two laypersons, shall

a) investigate such conditions in person;

b) seek competent medical testimony;

c) seek the counsel and advice of the other officers of this church; and

d) submit a written report of their findings to the other members of the Committee on Appeals.

3) the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who investigated the conditions and other than those who are disqualified, shall review the findings of the investigation committee and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.

c. The grounds and process for recall or dismissal of an officer are as described in Chapter 20 of this constitution.

d. In the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:

1) The petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in 20.22.14., except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with 20.51.01., 20.51.02., 20.51.03., or with the provisions of this continuing resolution; and

2) the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.

e. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Church Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee.

20.61. The decision of a discipline hearing committee may be appealed to the Committee on Appeals by:

a. the accuser(s) who brought charges upon which a discipline hearing committee has acted;

b. a minister of Word and Sacrament upon whom discipline has been imposed by a discipline hearing committee;

c. a minister of Word and Service upon whom discipline has been imposed by a discipline hearing committee; or

d. a congregation upon whom discipline has been imposed by a discipline hearing committee.

20.61.A21. ***Rules of the Committee on Appeals***

a. Any appeal to the Committee on Appeals shall be made in writing by the accused or the accuser(s) or their respective designated representative. Notice of the appeal shall be given by certified or registered letter addressed to the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of this church, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631), with a copy to the other party. The letter containing the notice of appeal must be postmarked within 30 days after the discipline hearing committee has delivered its decision to the accused and the accuser(s).

b. The Committee on Appeals shall normally render its written decision within 60 days from the due date for the last written statement to be submitted under item h. below.

c. The material that shall be reviewed by the Committee on Appeals (herein referred to as the record on appeal) shall consist of the following:

1) a copy of the specific charges referred to the discipline hearing committee;

2) copy of any rules governing the hearing before the discipline hearing committee;

3) information concerning the composition of the discipline hearing committee that heard the case;

4) the verbatim record made by the stenographer or court reporter or the audio or video recording of the hearing before the discipline hearing committee;

5) all documents or physical evidence presented at the hearing before the discipline hearing committee;

6) the written decision of the discipline hearing committee; and

7) proof that the written decision was delivered to the accused and the accuser(s).

d. It shall be the responsibility of the chair of the discipline hearing committee to furnish the record on appeal to the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of this church, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631), certifying to the completeness and accuracy of the record on appeal, within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal, unless the chair of the Committee on Appeals grants additional time for compelling reasons.

e. If the Committee on Appeals has reason to believe that a required action was taken by a discipline hearing committee, but such action is not revealed in the record on appeal, the Committee on Appeals may, by written request to the chair of the discipline hearing committee, with copies to the accused and the accuser(s), solicit written confirmation of such action. Copies of such confirmation shall be supplied to the accused and the accuser(s).

f. The persons or entities who may appeal to the Committee on Appeals are set forth in 20.61.

g. The circumstances for which the Committee on Appeals may reverse or set aside the decision of a discipline hearing committee are set forth in

20.62.01., and consequences of such circumstances are set forth in 20.62.02.

h. The party taking an appeal may present a written statement of reasons why the decision of a discipline hearing committee should be reversed or set aside. The other party shall have an opportunity to make a written response to the Committee on Appeals. The party taking an appeal then may present a written rebuttal. Appropriate limitations and due dates for these statements may be established by the committee chair. In the event of cross appeals, the committee chair may permit the filing of additional statements so that both parties have adequate opportunity to present their respective appeals and respond to the statement of each other. Parties shall promptly give to each other copies of any written statement filed with the Committee on Appeals.

i. Final decisions of the Committee on Appeals require an affirmative vote by at least two-thirds of those present and voting.

j. Notice of decisions of the Committee on Appeals shall be given in writing to the accused, the accuser(s), the chair of the discipline hearing committee, the synod bishop, and the secretary of this church.

k. The Committee on Appeals also shall prepare a brief summary of each appeal, which shall be presented to the Churchwide Assembly. Such summary shall not disclose the names of the accused, the accuser(s), or any witness. If the decision of the discipline hearing committee was reversed or remanded, the summary shall indicate the reasons for such reversal or remand.

l. The Committee on Appeals shall elect the following officers: chair, vice-chair, secretary, and assistant secretary. In addition to the duties prescribed in Chapter 20, the chair shall schedule and preside at committee meetings. In the absence of the chair, the vice-chair shall act as chair. The secretary, or assistant secretary, shall keep such record of proceedings of the committee as is necessary.

m. Meetings of the Committee on Appeals may be held in person or by an aural method in which all parties can participate.

n. A majority of the members of the Committee on Appeals who are not disqualified shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of its business at a scheduled meeting.

o. Members of the Committee on Appeals shall refrain from discussing appeals made to the committee, except as required to discharge the duties of the committee membership.

p. No member of the Committee on Appeals shall serve on any case if such a member is related (as defined in 19.06.07.) to the accused, the accuser(s), any witness who testified before the discipline hearing committee, or a member of the consultation or discipline hearing committee that considered the case, or where such member is a member or former member of a congregation that was an accuser or an accused. Members of the Committee on Appeals also may voluntarily disqualify themselves.

q. See 20.51.A19. and †S8.57. for additional rules of procedure applicable in proceedings for recall or dismissal.

r. See 20.61.B95. for additional rules of procedure applicable to stays.

20.61.B95. *Any party who has appealed to the Committee on Appeals for review of a decision of a discipline hearing committee may request a stay in the effective date or other provision contained in said decision pending the appeal. Such request shall be in writing and shall set forth the reasons why the requested stay is advisable. The request shall be forwarded to the Committee on Appeals, c/o ELCA Secretary, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631, with copy to the other party. The Committee on Appeals may grant the other party an opportunity to respond in writing. The Committee on Appeals may grant a stay for such period, and may renew the stay for such further periods, as it determines to be appropriate. The Committee on Appeals may make the grant of a stay subject to such conditions as it determines to be appropriate. Such determinations shall be final.*

20.62. The circumstances for which the Committee on Appeals may reverse or set aside the decision of a discipline hearing committee and the consequences of such action shall be set forth in the bylaws.

20.62.01. The judgment of a discipline hearing committee must be sustained unless the Committee on Appeals finds that one of the following conditions exists:

a. The discipline hearing committee abused its discretion. The discipline hearing committee may not be found to have abused its discretion unless at least one of the following is true:
   1) The discipline hearing committee's Determination was not supported by any evidence in the record.
   2) One or more of the discipline hearing committee's Findings of Fact is clearly erroneous. A Finding of Fact is clearly erroneous when, although there is evidence to support it, the Committee on Appeals on the entire evidence is left with the definite and firm conviction that a mistake has been committed. The Committee on Appeals may not reverse a finding of the discipline hearing committee simply because the Committee on Appeals concludes that it would have found differently had it been the discipline hearing committee. The Committee on Appeals must give due regard to the opportunity of the discipline hearing committee to judge the credibility of the witnesses.
   3) Although the Findings of Fact are not clearly erroneous, the discipline hearing committee's Determination is nevertheless one with which no reasonable person, acting objectively, could agree. The committee's Determination may not be reversed simply because the Committee on Appeals, had it been the discipline hearing committee, would have reached a different conclusion. The discipline hearing committee's Determination must be sustained if reasonable people can disagree as to its propriety.
b. Due process has not been followed.
c. New evidence has been submitted by one of the parties, which evidence, in the judgment of the Committee on Appeals, should be considered.
d. The record of the proceedings before the discipline hearing committee is insufficient to permit the Committee on Appeals to determine whether the committee abused its discretion or followed due process.

20.62.02. When the Committee on Appeals has decided to reverse or set aside the decision of the discipline hearing committee, the Committee on Appeals shall proceed as follows:

a. If the Committee on Appeals has determined that one of the conditions listed in 20.62.01.a.1) or 20.62.01.a.2) exists, the Committee on Appeals may return the matter to the discipline hearing committee for further proceedings or render its own decision, which shall be final and unappealable.

b. If the Committee on Appeals has determined that the condition listed in 20.62.01.a.3) exists, it shall render its own decision, which shall be final and unappealable.

c. If the Committee on Appeals has determined that one of the conditions listed in 20.62.01.b., 20.62.01.c., or 20.62.01.d. exists, it shall return the matter to the discipline hearing committee for further proceedings.

20.63. Decisions of the Committee on Appeals shall be final; an affirmative vote by at least two-thirds of those present and voting shall be necessary to render a decision or opinion. Each decision or opinion shall be reported as soon as practical in writing to the parties concerned, and a summary of action taken shall be reported to the Churchwide Assembly.

20.70. CONSULTATION AND ADJUDICATION

20.71. The presiding bishop and the Executive Committee of the Church Council shall be available to give guidance and counsel when disputes arise among the three expressions of this church.

20.72. When there is disagreement on a substantive issue between or among churchwide units and offices of the churchwide organization that cannot be resolved by the parties, the aggrieved party or parties may appeal to the presiding bishop, or the presiding bishop's designee, for consultation. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, a petition may be addressed by the parties to the Church Council requesting a resolution of the matter.

20.73. When there is disagreement on a substantive issue between or among synods which cannot be resolved by the parties, the synod affected may address an appeal to the presiding bishop and the Executive Committee of the Church Council. In this case, the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, unless, upon the motion of a member of the Church Council, the decision is referred to the Church Council for final action.

20.74. When there is disagreement on a substantive issue between a synod or synods and the churchwide organization that cannot be resolved by the parties, any party may appeal to the Committee on Appeals for consultation. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, a petition may be addressed by the parties to the Churchwide Assembly for a final decision.

20.75. When there is disagreement between or among congregations in the same synod on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, the council of an affected congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the other affected congregation(s) of its intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue(s), the bishop shall refer the

matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the issue(s), the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

20.76. When there is disagreement between or among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of the congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of the Congregation Council of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 21.
INDEMNIFICATION

21.01. **Subject to the limitations and duties imposed by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Church Council member, officer, employee, or committee member of the churchwide organization, or member of the Conference of Bishops, shall be indemnified against all costs and expenses incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. Indemnification by the churchwide organization of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of a separately incorporated ministry or of any other organization is subject to the provisions of section 21.02.**

a. The term "proceeding" means a threatened, pending, or completed lawsuit, whether civil or criminal, an administrative or investigative matter, arbitration, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, or any other similar legal or governmental action. Except as otherwise required by law, the term "proceeding" does not include (a) any action by the churchwide organization or any unit thereof against the individual seeking indemnification, or (b) a disciplinary hearing or related process described in Chapter 20 of this constitution.

b. The term "indemnification" includes reimbursement and advances of costs and expenses for judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, reasonable attorneys' fees, disbursements, and similar required expenditures.

21.02. **Where a person who, while a member of the Church Council, officer, employee, or committee member of the churchwide organization, or member of the Conference of Bishops, is or was serving at the request of the churchwide organization as (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall be entitled to indemnification only if (a) the Church Council has established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such person is entitled to indemnification.**

21.03. **The churchwide organization may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of itself or any person entitled to indemnification pursuant to this chapter against any liability asserted against and incurred by this church or by such other person in or arising from a capacity described in section 21.01. or section 21.02.**

Chapter 22.
AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

22.10. AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

a. The Church Council may propose an amendment, with an official notice to be sent to the synods at least six months prior to the next meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. The adoption of such an amendment shall require a two-thirds vote of the members of the next meeting of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting.

b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next regular Churchwide Assembly.

22.20. BYLAWS

22.21. Bylaws not in conflict with this constitution may be adopted or amended at any meeting of the Churchwide Assembly when presented in writing by the Church Council or by at least 15 members of the assembly. An amendment proposed by at least 15 members of the assembly shall immediately be submitted to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation. An amendment may not be placed before the assembly for action sooner than the day following its presentation to the assembly unless it has been presented in writing by the Church Council and sent with an official notice to the synods at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting shall be necessary for adoption.

22.30. CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

22.31. Continuing resolutions not in conflict with the constitution or bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Churchwide Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. Such continuing resolutions become effective immediately upon adoption. Matters related to the administrative functions of the churchwide organization shall be set forth in the continuing resolutions.



CONSTITUTION
FOR
SYNODS

Current as of August 2025

INTRODUCTION to the *Constitution for Synods*

The *Constitution for Synods*, like the other governing documents of this church, reflects the theology and polity of this church as it organizes itself to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, share the sacraments, reach out to the neighbor with good news, and share the love of God in the world. Each expression of this church—churchwide, synod, and congregation—is held together in a relationship of interdependence that encourages each to respond to its context. These documents also demonstrate our commitment to seeing ourselves with others as part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. As such, the *Constitution for Synods* is deeply rooted in Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the history of this church and its predecessors.

The *Constitution for Synods* originally was adopted by the Constituting Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and has been amended by subsequent churchwide assemblies. This edition includes amendments approved by the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly in 2025. It is consistent with the requirements of the governing documents of the ELCA's churchwide organization, and it provides organizational flexibility to recognize local context.

CODIFICATION EXPLANATION

The *Constitution for Synods*, like the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, is organized into chapters by general subject matter and codified as follows:

a. Constitutional provisions in the *Constitution for Synods* are codified with two sets of numbers, preceded by an "S": the chapter number followed by a period, and a two-digit sequence number also followed by a period.

   1. **Required constitutional provisions** adopted by the Churchwide Assembly are preceded by [†]. These provisions are required of all synods and must be used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner. No additions or deletions are permissible. In accordance with provision †S18.11., amendments to required provisions in the *Constitution for Synods* passed by the Churchwide Assembly are automatically incorporated into the constitutions of individual synods upon formal certification by the secretary of this church. For example, †S7.21. is a required constitutional provision in Chapter 7, the chapter on the Synod Assembly.

   2. **Recommended constitutional provisions** adopted by the Churchwide Assembly are not preceded by a [†]. As stated in †S18.12.,

      > Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended any non-required provision of the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.

   3. Other constitutional provisions, including modified versions of the recommended provisions, may be proposed and adopted by individual synods. Such provisions may not conflict with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the*

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and are adopted and become effective in accordance with †S18.13.

b. The *Constitution for Synods* contains some **required bylaws and recommended bylaws**. They are codified with three sets of numbers, each followed by a period: the chapter number (preceded by an "S"), the related constitutional provision number, and a two-digit bylaw number. For example, †S7.21.02. is a *required* bylaw related to Synod Assembly and S7.11.01. is a *recommended* bylaw related to Synod Assembly. Beyond the few required and recommended bylaws, synods may adopt additional bylaws related to each synod's organization, operation, and life.

   Bylaws are adopted and amended in accordance with Chapter 18 of the *Constitution for Synods*. Bylaws should be incorporated following the constitutional provisions to which they apply. They should not be organized in a separate section or document.

c. The *Constitution for Synods* does not contain any suggested **continuing resolutions.** When or if synods adopt continuing resolutions, they also are codified with three sets of numbers, except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter indicating sequence and a two-digit number indicating the year of its adoption. For example, the first continuing resolution adopted in 2025 related to the membership of the Synod Assembly would be numbered "S7.21.A25."

   Continuing resolutions are adopted and amended in accordance with Chapter 18 of the *Constitution for Synods*. They are intended to provide more detailed descriptions of operational patterns and practices within the synod. They should be incorporated following the constitutional provisions and/or bylaws to which they apply. They should not be organized in a separate section or document.

Each synod has discretion and may develop its own constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions (including bylaws and continuing resolutions related to required constitutional provisions) as long as they do not conflict with constitutional provisions in the *Constitution for Synods*, required synod bylaws, or the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. All amendments to synod constitutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

Note: In some chapters, you will see that certain numbers are missing from the numbering sequence. These omissions are intentional in order to provide options for future additions.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Alternatives are provided in some places within the *Constitution for Synods*. Alternatives are noted by brackets or blank lines. For example, constitutional provision †S8.51. allows synods to choose the length of terms for the vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The appropriate number of years should be filled in by each synod. In addition, †S8.51.c. provides that the treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or appointed by the Synod Council. Each synod should select one of the options.

- "Church" with a capital letter is used in references to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. In references to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the words "church" and "this church" in lower case letters are employed.

The Office of the Secretary is available for consultation about potential amendments to the *Constitution for Synods* and the review process for congregation constitutions. The important task of amending a constitution is challenging. It is, however, an essential endeavor that merits thoughtful work. In addressing the synod's constitutional responsibilities, may God grant you and your colleagues wisdom, discernment, and commitment to the unity of this church in faithful witness to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Secretary Sue E. Rothmeyer
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
August 2, 2025

CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS

Chapter 1.
NAME AND INCORPORATION

†S1.01. The name of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be *(name of synod)* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S1.02. For the purposes of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws, the *(name of synod)* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is hereafter designated as "this synod" or "the synod."

†S1.11. This synod shall be incorporated. Amendments to the articles of incorporation of this synod shall be submitted to the Church Council for ratification before filing.

S1.21. The seal of this synod is *(describe)*.

Chapter 2.
STATUS

†S2.01. This synod possesses the powers conferred upon it, and accepts the duties and responsibilities assigned to it, in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, which are recognized as having governing force in the life of this synod.

†S2.02. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

†S2.03. No provision of this constitution shall be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.

Chapter 3.
TERRITORY

†S3.01. The territory of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be: _____.

†S3.02. "Determined by the Churchwide Assembly," as stipulated by †S3.01., is understood to include the reported changes in synod relationship made by any congregation in a border area agreed under ELCA bylaws 10.01.01. and 10.01.03.

Chapter 4.
CONFESSION OF FAITH

†S4.01. This synod confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

†S4.02. This synod confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

†S4.03. This synod accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

†S4.04. This synod accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this synod.

†S4.05. This synod accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

†S4.06. This synod accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

†S4.07. This synod confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 5.
NATURE OF THE CHURCH

†S5.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this synod are to be carried out under his rule and authority.

†S5.02. This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.

†S5.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

†S5.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Chapter 6.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

†S6.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

†S6.02. To participate in God's mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:

a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

†S6.03. This synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:

a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.
d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.

†S6.03.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:

a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:

1) approving candidates for rostered ministry in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining rostered ministers on behalf of this church;
3) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.

b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.

c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.

d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.

†**S6.03.02.** In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

a. developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;

b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;

c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;

d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;

e. providing resources for congregational life;

f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.

†**S6.03.03.** In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;

b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;

c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
e. maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions;
i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

†S6.03.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
b. participating in churchwide programs;
c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;
d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

†S6.04. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

†S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

†S6.04.02. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be members of historically underrepresented groups, in addition to the

10 percent representation of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English in †S6.04. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

†S6.05. Each assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this synod or any synod units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.

†S6.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 7.
SYNOD ASSEMBLY

†S7.01. This synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall be its highest legislative authority. The powers of the Synod Assembly are limited only by the provisions in the Articles of Incorporation, this constitution and bylaws, the assembly's own resolutions, and the constitutions and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S7.11. A regular meeting of the Synod Assembly shall be held at least triennially.

S7.11.01. The time and place of the _____ Synod Assembly shall be determined by the Synod Council. The time and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced ___ months prior to the assembly.

S7.12. Special meetings of the Synod Assembly may be called by the bishop with the consent of the Synod Council, and shall be called by the bishop at the request of one-fifth of the voting members of the Synod Assembly.

a. The notice of each special meeting shall define the purpose for which it is to be held. The scope of actions to be taken at such a special meeting shall be limited to the subject matter(s) described in the notice.
b. If the special meeting of the Synod Assembly is required for the purpose of electing a successor bishop because of death, resignation, or inability to serve, the special meeting shall be called by the Synod Council after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S7.13. Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod.

S7.14. One-third of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

†S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

a. All rostered ministers under call on the roster of this synod shall be voting members of the Synod Assembly.
b. Lay voting members shall be elected by each congregation or its council as follows: A minimum of one lay member elected from each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected from each congregation with 175 or more baptized members, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.
c. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.

S7.21.01. Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until the opening of the next regular Synod Assembly.

†S7.21.02. If a special Synod Assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation or its council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next regular Synod Assembly.

S7.22. This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, provided that such processes not result in fewer than 60 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly being laypersons in contravention of †S7.21. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

†S7.23. The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of the churchwide organization as may be designated by the presiding bishop, shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly. Like privileges shall be accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council shall from time to time designate.

S7.24. Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until the opening of the next regular synod assembly, or unless replaced by the election of new members for a special synod assembly, or until they have been disqualified by termination of congregation membership.

†S7.25. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,* each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a

congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod.

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit persons currently serving as synod-authorized ministers and/or lay representatives of authorized worshiping communities and/or outreach ministries of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.

S7.27. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.

S7.28. Duly elected voting members of the Synod Council who are not otherwise voting members of the Synod Assembly under †S7.21. shall be granted the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.

†S7.31. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of the Synod Assembly.

S7.32. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly, unless otherwise ordered by the assembly.

S7.33. "*Ex officio*" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

Chapter 8.
OFFICERS

†S8.01. The officers of this synod shall be a bishop, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

S8.10. Bishop

†S8.11. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S8.11.01. When authorized by the Synod Council in order to address special circumstances, the synod bishop may be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this church. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.

†S8.12. As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall:

a. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church.
b. Have primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this synod and its congregations, providing pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ministers of Word and Sacrament, and its ministers of Word and Service.
c. Exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synod bishop of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ministry of Word

and Sacrament (and as provided in the bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America).

d. Ordain (or provide for the ordination of) approved candidates who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for service as ministers of Word and Service of this church.
e. Attest letters of call for persons called to serve congregations in the synod, letters of call for persons called by the Synod Council, and letters of call for persons on the rosters of this synod called by the Church Council.
f. Install (or provide for the installation of) rostered ministers whose calls the bishop has attested.
g. Exercise leadership in the mission of this church and in so doing:
    1) interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church;
    2) lead in fostering support for and commitment to the mission of this church within this synod;
    3) coordinate the use of the resources available to this synod as it seeks to promote the health of this church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod;
    4) submit a report to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly concerning the synod's life and work; and
    5) advise and counsel this synod's related institutions and organizations.
h. Practice leadership in strengthening the unity of the Church and in so doing:
    1) exercise oversight of the preaching, teaching, and administration of the sacraments within this synod in accord with the Confession of Faith of this church;
    2) be responsible for administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod;
    3) be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod;
    4) be a member of the Conference of Bishops and consult regularly with other synod bishops;
    5) foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches;
    6) cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod; and
    7) be *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly.
i. Oversee and administer the work of this synod and in so doing:
    1) serve as the president of the synod corporation and be the chief executive and administrative officer of this synod, who is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to sign deeds or other instruments and to affix the seal of this synod;
    2) preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the council's Executive Committee;

3) ensure that the constitution and bylaws of the synod and of the churchwide organization are duly observed within this synod, and that the actions of the synod in conformity therewith are carried into effect;
4) direct and guide the work of the other officers;
5) exercise supervision over the work of all synod staff members;
6) appoint all committees for which provision is not otherwise made;
7) be a member of all committees and any other organizational units of the synod, except as otherwise provided in this constitution;
8) provide for preparation and maintenance of synod rosters containing the names and addresses of all rostered ministers of this synod and a record of the calls under which they are serving or the date on which their retired or disability status took effect;
9) annually bring to the attention of the Synod Council the names of all rostered ministers on leave from call or engaged in approved graduate study in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church and pursuant to prior action of this synod through the Synod Council;
10) provide for prompt reporting to the secretary of this church of:
    a) additions to and subtractions from the rosters of this synod;
    b) the issuance of certificates of transfer for rostered ministers in good standing who have received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested, regular letter of call under the jurisdiction of another synod; and
    c) the entrance of the names of such persons for whom proper certificates of transfer have been received;
11) provide for preparation and maintenance of a roster of the congregations of this synod and the names of the laypersons who have been elected to represent them; and
12) appoint a statistician of the synod, who shall secure the reports of the congregations and make the reports available to the secretary of this church for collation, analysis, and distribution of the statistical summaries to this synod and the other synods of this church.

†S8.13. The synod bishop may appoint an attorney, admitted to the bar within the territory of the synod or the state where the synod is located, to be Synod Attorney. The appointment must be approved by the Synod Council and reported to the Synod Assembly and to the secretary of this church. The appointment continues until resignation or until a successor is appointed. The Synod Attorney provides legal advice and counsel to the synod officers and the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney is expected to be familiar with the governing documents and policies of the synod and, as necessary, to attend meetings of the Synod Council. The Synod Attorney serves without salary but may be retained and compensated for specific legal services requested by the synod.

S8.14. The synod bishop may have such assistants as this synod shall from time to time authorize.

†S8.15. The presiding bishop of this church, or the appointee of the presiding bishop, shall install into office, in accord with the policy and approved rite of this church, each newly elected synod bishop.

†S8.16. Conflicts of Interest

†S8.16.01. The following procedures shall govern matters of potential conflicts of interest for synod bishops:

a. Whenever a synod bishop determines that a matter of the kind described in †S8.16.01.b. may require the bishop's determination or action with respect to a related individual as defined in †S8.16.01.c., the synod bishop shall withdraw from personal involvement in such matter and shall so notify the presiding bishop. The presiding bishop shall then appoint another synod bishop from the same region to handle the matter to conclusion. In dealing with such matter, the appointed bishop shall exercise all of the functions and authority to the same extent as if the appointed bishop were the elected bishop of the withdrawing bishop's synod.

b. Matters include any proceedings under Chapter 20, proceedings under provisions 7.46. and 7.75. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (†S14.18. and †S14.43.), candidacy, reinstatement, and similar matters where determinations or actions by the synod bishop could change, limit, restrict, approve, authorize, or deny the related individual's ministry on one of the official rosters of this church.

c. A related individual is one who, with respect to the synod bishop, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

S8.20. Vice President

†S8.21. The vice president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice president shall be a layperson. The vice president shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The vice president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

S8.22. The vice president shall chair the Synod Council.

S8.30. Secretary

†S8.31. The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The secretary shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The secretary may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

†S8.32. The secretary shall:

a. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly and Synod Council, be responsible for distribution of such minutes, and perform such other duties as this synod may from time to time direct.

b. Be authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop.
c. In consultation with the bishop, classify and arrange all important papers and documents and deposit them in the archives of this synod.
d. Submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly.

S8.40. Treasurer

†S8.41. The treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

S8.42. The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:

a. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.
b. Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council.
c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church.
d. Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.
e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.

S8.50. General Provisions

†S8.51. The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be as follows:

a. The bishop of this synod shall be elected to a term of six years and may be re-elected.
b. The vice president and secretary of this synod shall be elected to a term of _____ years and may be re-elected. The officer shall serve until a successor takes office.
c. The treasurer of this synod shall be [elected][appointed][elected or appointed] to a term of _____ years and may be [re-elected] [reappointed] [re-elected or reappointed]. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.

†S8.52. The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of [*(name of month)*][the *(ordinal number)* month] following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.

†S8.53. Each officer shall be a voting member in a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of this synod at the time of election.

†S8.54. Should the bishop die, resign, or be unable to serve, the vice president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the bishop until an election of a new bishop can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop is able to serve again. Such arrangements may include the appointment by the Synod Council of an interim bishop, who during the vacancy or period of disability shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop. The term of the successor bishop, elected by the next Synod Assembly or a special meeting of the Synod Assembly called for the purpose of election, shall be six years with the subsequent election to take place at the Synod Assembly closest to the expiration of such a term and with the starting date of a successor term to be governed by constitutional provision S8.52.

S8.55. Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be _____ years. If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a _____ year term.

†S8.56. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall determine whether an officer is unable to serve; the officer may appeal the decision of the Executive Committee by requesting a hearing before the Synod Council. A meeting to determine the ability of an officer to serve shall be called upon the request of at least three members of the Executive Committee and prior written notice of the meeting shall be given to the officer in question at least 10 calendar days prior to the meeting.

†S8.57. The recall or dismissal of an officer and the vacating of office may be effected for willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church; for such physical or mental disability as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; or for such conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action as a rostered minister or as a member of a congregation of this church.

a. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of a synod bishop shall be instituted by written petition by:
    1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
    2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting;
    3) at least 10 synod bishops; or
    4) the presiding bishop of this church.

b. Proceedings for the recall or dismissal of an officer of a synod, other than the synod bishop, shall be instituted by written petition by:
   1) the Synod Council on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its elected members present and voting;
   2) the Synod Assembly on an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of its members present and voting; or
   3) the synod bishop.
c. The petition shall be filed with the chair of the Committee on Appeals (in care of the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) and shall set forth the specific charge or charges.
d. Upon the filing of a written petition, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council may temporarily suspend the officer from service in the synod without prejudice, but with continuation of compensation, including benefits, if the officer is a salaried employee of the synod.
e. In the case of alleged physical or mental incapacity of an officer of the synod, the procedures outlined in †S8.56. shall be followed, and such officer shall comply with the decision of the Synod Council. If such officer fails or refuses to comply, the Synod Council may proceed to petition for recall or dismissal as follows:
   1) the Synod Council will submit a written report of their findings and the basis of their decision to the Committee on Appeals.
   2) the Committee on Appeals, exclusive of any members who are disqualified, shall review the findings and decision of the Synod Council and by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting may adopt the findings and grant the petition.
f. If the synod officer is a minister of Word and Sacrament, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.22.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline. If the officer is a minister of Word and Service, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.23.01. and as defined under the process described in ELCA constitutional provisions 20.21. and 20.22. as grounds for discipline.
g. If the officer is a layperson, grounds for recall or dismissal include those set forth in ELCA bylaw 20.41.01. as grounds for discipline.
h. If the case of alleged willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions or of alleged conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action, the following procedures shall apply:
   1) the petition shall be referred to the Committee on Appeals, which shall function as the discipline hearing committee that shall conduct a hearing in accordance with the rules provided for in ELCA bylaw 20.22.14. except to the extent that those rules are in conflict with the provisions of this bylaw; and
   2) the members of the Committee on Appeals, other than those who are disqualified, may grant the petition by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.

i. Written notice of a decision by the Committee on Appeals that the charges have been sustained shall be given to the affected officer and to the Synod Council, and the office shall be vacated.

†S8.58. If the bishop is to be temporarily absent from the synod for an extended period not to exceed 90 days, the bishop, after consultation with the presiding bishop and with the consent of the Synod Council, may appoint as acting bishop for such period a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church. Except as limited by action of the Synod Council, an acting bishop shall possess all of the powers and authority of a regularly elected bishop other than authority to ordain or to authorize the ordination of properly approved candidates for ordination.

Chapter 9.
NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

†S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S9.02. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of _____ members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot.

S9.05. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.06. The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.07. If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

S9.08. In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes

cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

S9.09. The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the assembly.

†S9.10. When notified by the secretary of this church, on behalf of the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly, the Synod Assembly shall nominate two persons in the specified categories for possible election by the Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council.

S9.11. The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region.

†S9.12. Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synod officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council.

Chapter 10.
SYNOD COUNCIL

†S10.01. The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod and 10 to 24 other members, at least one young adult and with a goal of at least one youth, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.

a. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.

b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be _____ years.

†S10.02. The Synod Council shall be the board of directors of this synod and shall serve as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. It may make decisions that are not in conflict with actions taken by the Synod Assembly or that are not precluded by provisions of this constitution or the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S10.03. The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:

a. Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of this synod.

b. Recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.

c. Carry out the resolutions of the Synod Assembly.

d. Provide for an annual review of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, receive and act upon appropriate recommendations regarding those persons whose status is subject to reconsideration and action under the constitution and bylaws of

the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and make a report to the Synod Assembly of the Synod Council's actions in this regard.

e. Issue letters of call to rostered ministers as authorized by Chapter 7 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
f. Fill vacancies until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of this synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer of this synod.
g. Report its actions to the regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
h. Perform such other functions as are set forth in the bylaws of this synod, or as may be delegated to it by the Synod Assembly.

S10.04. Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council, shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption.

S10.05. Elected members of the Synod Council shall not receive compensation solely for their service as council members.

S10.06. No person related to a synod staff member shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Synod Council [or the following synod committees: _____]. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

S10.07. If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which she or he was elected, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.

S10.08. The composition of the Synod Council, the number of its members, and the manner of their selection, as well as the organization of the Synod Council, its additional duties and responsibilities, and the number of meetings to be held each year shall be as set forth in the bylaws.

S10.09. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council.

†S10.09.01. To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held through electronic means such as the Internet or by telephone, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 11.
COMMITTEES
(names of other organizational units)

†S11.01. There shall be an Executive Committee, a Consultation Committee, a Committee on Discipline, an Audit Committee, and such other committees as this synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees, or any other organizational units created by this synod, and the composition and organizational structure of such units, shall be as set forth in

this constitution or in the bylaws or continuing resolutions, and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S11.02. The Consultation Committee of this synod shall consist of at least six persons and not more than 12 persons, of whom half shall be rostered ministers and half shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election. The functions of the Consultation Committee are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and in Chapter 17 of this constitution. The size of the Consultation Committee, in accord with this provision, shall be defined in this synod's bylaws.

†S11.03. The Committee on Discipline of this synod shall consist of 12 persons, of whom six shall be rostered ministers and six shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election.

a. The functions of the Committee on Discipline of this synod are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*
b. The Synod Council shall fill vacancies on the Committee on Discipline for any unexpired term.

S11.04. A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop.

†S11.05. The Audit Committee of this synod shall consist of three to six persons, none of whom is a member of the synod staff. Up to half of the committee members may be Synod Council members. The Audit Committee members shall be elected by the Synod Council for a term of three years and be eligible for re-election to a second consecutive three-year term. The terms of the Audit Committee members shall be staggered. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the synod's accounting, financial reporting, internal control systems, and external audit processes as provided in †S15.31.

†S11.11. This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod.

Chapter 12.
CONFERENCES, CLUSTERS, COALITIONS, AREA SUBDIVISIONS, AND NETWORKS

†S12.01. This synod may establish conferences, clusters, coalitions, area subdivisions, and networks as appropriate within its territory and in collaboration with other synods and entities, as specified in the bylaws and continuing resolutions. The purpose of

such groupings shall be to foster interdependent relationships for missional purposes among congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other affiliates.

Chapter 13.
CONGREGATIONS

†S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the roster of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod that is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

a. **New congregations.** A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:
   1) Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of the constitution and bylaws of this church.
   2) Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church. Bylaws and continuing resolutions, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the constitution of this synod, or the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be adopted as described in Chapters 17 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations.*
   3) Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of this church as stated in *C6.01., *C6.02., and *C6.03. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

b. **Congregations from another church body.** If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the ELCA synod bishop or staff where the congregation is located. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with this church.

c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception of additional congregations into this church is based upon the judgment of the synod that the congregations satisfy the criteria of 9.21. and 9.25. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.
   1) Recognition and reception of congregations newly formed by this church is accomplished by action of the Synod Council.

2) Recognition and reception of transferring or independent congregations is accomplished by the action of the Synod Assembly upon the recommendation of the Synod Council.
   a. If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.
   b. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S13.02. It shall be the responsibility of each congregation of this synod to elect from among its voting members laypersons to serve as members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. Normatively, congregations should hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. The number of persons to be elected by each congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by this synod.

S13.11. When a rostered minister resigns, the Congregation Council shall receive the letter of resignation, report it to the congregation, and at once notify the bishop of this synod.

S13.12. A congregation under financial obligation to its former rostered minister shall make satisfactory settlement of the obligation before calling a successor.

†S13.20. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

†S13.21. A congregation considering development of an additional site to be used regularly for worship shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

†S13.22. Each congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the territory of this synod, except those which are in partnership with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish and maintain a relationship with this synod.

†S13.23. Provision 9.71. of the constitution of this church shall govern the relationship of this synod and a congregation of this synod regarding the property of the congregation. This synod may transfer or convey property to a congregation of the synod, subject to restrictions accepted by the congregation, including provision that if the Synod Council, in its sole and exclusive discretion, determines (1) that the property is not being used to serve the mission and ministry needs of this church, or (2) that the congregation has transferred,

encumbered, mortgaged, or in any way burdened or impaired any right, title, or interest in the property without the prior approval of the Synod Council, then title to the property shall revert to the synod, and the congregation, upon written demand, shall reconvey the property to the synod.

†S13.24. The Synod Council, itself or through trustees appointed by it, may take charge and control of the property of a congregation of this synod to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of this synod, if any of the following apply:

a. The congregation has disbanded, ceased to worship, or otherwise ceased to exist as a congregation.
b. The congregation has abandoned its property.
c. The remaining members of the congregation decide that it is no longer possible to function as a congregation or that they are unable to provide required governance.
d. The Synod Council determines that the membership of a congregation has become so scattered or so diminished in numbers that it cannot provide required governance or that it has become impractical for the congregation to fulfill the purposes for which it was organized.
e. The Synod Council determines that it is necessary for this synod to protect and preserve the congregation's property from waste and deterioration.

The congregation shall have the right to appeal any such decision to the next Synod Assembly.

S13.25. This synod may temporarily assume administration of a congregation upon its request or with its concurrence. Such synod administration shall continue only so long as necessary to complete the purposes for which it was requested by the congregation or until the congregation withdraws consent to continued administration.

S13.30. Discipline

†S13.31. Congregations and members of congregations are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The synod's involvement in and responsibility for such disciplinary processes shall be as set forth in that chapter.

S13.40. Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities and Outreach Ministries

S13.41. Worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod and acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

Chapter 14.
ROSTERED MINISTERS

S14.10. Ministers of Word and Sacrament

†S14.11. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
   1) preach the Word;
   2) administer the sacraments;
   3) conduct public worship;
   4) provide pastoral care;
   5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
   6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
   7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
   8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
   1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
   2) relate to all schools and organizations of the congregation;
   3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
   4) with the council, administer discipline;
   5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of this synod; and
   6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

S14.13. The pastor (a) shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

S14.14. Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a congregation nearer to their place of residence.

S14.15. Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

†S14.16. When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church:

a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective pastor.
b. For issuance of a letter of call to a pastor or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.41., a two-thirds vote shall be required of voting members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective pastor, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.

S14.17. No minister of Word and Sacrament shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the president of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

†S14.18. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregation shall be as follows:

a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
   1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
   2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
   3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
   4) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;
   5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
   6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
   7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
   8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
   9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
   1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or

2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. In the bishop's sole discretion, the bishop's committee may also present, as may be appropriate, either a report or report summary to the pastor and to the congregation together with the recommendations. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

†S14.19. Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the pastor, or if there is no duly called pastor, then by the interim pastor in consultation with the Congregation Council.

†S14.21. The records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members transferred or dismissed, members who have

become inactive, or members excluded from the congregation shall be kept accurately and permanently. They shall remain the property of each congregation. At the time of the closure of a congregation, such records shall be sent to the regional archives. The secretary of the congregation shall attest to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before:

a. installation in another call, or
b. approval of a request for change in roster status.

†S14.22. The pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

a. installation in another call, or
b. approval of a request for change in roster status.

†S14.23. During service to a congregation, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in the congregation of a regularly called pastor. The interim pastor may delegate the same in part to an interim supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of this synod. The interim pastor and any rostered minister who may assist shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Upon completion of service, the interim pastor shall certify to the bishop of this synod that the congregation records, for the period for which the interim pastor was responsible, are in order.

†S14.24. With the approval of the synod bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.18., a congregation may call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.18.

S14.25. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the pastors of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

S14.30. Ministers of Word and Service

†S14.31. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

S14.33. The minister of Word and Service shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister of Word and Service shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

S14.34. Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

†S14.41. When a congregation of this church desires to call a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Service of this church:
a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service.
b. For issuance of a letter of call to a minister of Word and Service or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.71., a two-thirds vote shall be required of members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective minister of Word and Service , the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.

S14.42. No minister of Word and Service shall accept a call without first conferring with the bishop of this synod. A minister of Word and Service shall respond with an answer of acceptance or declination to a letter of call within 30 days of receipt of such call. In exceptional circumstances with the approval of the bishop of this synod and the president of the Congregation Council of the congregation issuing the call, an additional 15 days may be granted to respond to a letter of call.

†S14.43. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and a congregation shall be as follows:
a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a minister of Word and Service, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;

2) resignation of the minister of Word and Service, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
3) inability to conduct the office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the minister of Word and Service;
5) suspension of the minister of Word and Service through discipline for more than three months;
6) resignation or removal of the minister of Word and Service from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.

b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the ministry of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
   1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
   2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the minister of Word and Service's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the minister of Word and Service to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the minister of Word and Service and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee address whether the minister of Word and Service's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance

arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the minister of Word and Service, if appropriate. If the minister of Word and Service and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the minister of Word and Service's call, the congregation may dismiss the minister of Word and Service only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for disciplinary action, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

†S14.44. Ministers of Word and Service shall respect the integrity of the ministry of congregations which they do not serve and shall not exercise ministerial functions therein unless invited to do so by the Congregation Council.

†S14.45. The minister of Word and Service shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former congregation before:

a. installation in another call, or
b. approval of a request for change in roster status.

†S14.46. With the approval of the synod bishop expressed in writing, which sets forth a clear statement of the purpose to be served by such a departure from the normal rule of permanency of the call as expressed in †S14.43., a congregation may call a minister of Word and Service for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop of this synod or a representative of the bishop shall meet with the minister of Word and Service and representatives of the congregation for a review of the call. Such call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of †S14.43.

S14.47. All ministers of Word and Service under a call shall attend meetings of the Synod Assembly, and the ministers of Word and Service of congregations shall also attend the meetings of the conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision to which the congregation belongs.

Chapter 15.
FINANCIAL MATTERS

†S15.01. The fiscal year of this synod shall be February 1 through January 31.

†S15.11. Since the congregations, synods, and churchwide organization are interdependent expressions that share in God's mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support of the whole church. The gifts and offerings of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are given to support all parts of this church; thus

the unity of this church should be evidenced in determining each part's share of the gifts and offerings. Therefore:

a. The mission of this church beyond the congregation is to be supported by such a proportionate share of each congregation's annual budget as each congregation determines. This synod shall develop guidelines for determining "proportionate share," and shall consult with congregational leaders to assist each congregation in making its determination.
b. This synod shall receive the proportionate share of the mission support from its congregations, and shall transmit that percentage or amount of each congregation's mission support as determined in consultation with the churchwide organization and approved by the Synod Assembly as part of its budget consideration.
c. Should the Synod Assembly not approve the proportionate share of mission support determined in consultation with the churchwide organization, a new consultation with the churchwide organization shall take place. The Synod Council is authorized to amend the budget adopted by the Synod Assembly to reflect the results of this consultation.

†S15.12. The annual budget of this synod shall reflect the entire range of its own activities and its commitment to supportive funding with other synods and the churchwide organization.

S15.13. On the basis of estimated income, the Synod Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Synod Council.

S15.14. Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16 percent of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to synod causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.

S15.21. No appeal to congregations of this or any other synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for the raising of funds shall be conducted by congregations or organizations related to or affiliated with this synod without the consent of the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council.

†S15.31. This synod shall arrange to have an annual audit of its financial records conducted by a certified public accountant firm recommended by the synod Audit Committee and approved by the Synod Council. The audited annual financial report shall be submitted by this synod to the churchwide Office of the Treasurer and to the congregations of this synod.

†S15.32. This synod shall maintain adequate, continuous insurance coverage in accordance with standards recommended by the churchwide organization. Insurance programs offered or endorsed by the churchwide organization shall be deemed to fulfill this obligation.

Chapter 16.
INDEMNIFICATION

†S16.01. Subject to the limitations and duties imposed by law, each person who is or was made or threatened to be made a party to any proceeding by reason of the present or former capacity of that person as a Synod Council member, officer, employee, or committee member of this synod shall be indemnified against all costs and expenses incurred by that person in connection with the proceeding. Indemnification of any person by reason of that person's capacity as a director, officer, employee, or committee member of any other organization, regardless of its form or relationship to this synod, is subject to the provisions of †S16.02.

a. The term "proceeding" means a threatened, pending, or completed lawsuit, whether civil or criminal, an administrative or investigative matter, arbitration, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, or any other similar legal or governmental action. Except as otherwise required by law, the term "proceeding" does not include (a) any action by this synod against the individual seeking indemnification, or (b) subject to †S16.04., a disciplinary hearing or related process described in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

b. The term "indemnification" includes reimbursement and advances of costs and expenses for judgments, penalties, fines, settlements, excise taxes, reasonable attorneys' fees, disbursements, and similar required expenditures.

†S16.02. Whenever a person who, while a Synod Council member, officer, committee member, or employee of this synod, is or was serving at the request of this synod as (or whose duties in that position involve or involved service in the capacity of) a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or agent of another organization, is or was made or threatened to be made a party to a proceeding by reason of such capacity, then such person shall be entitled to indemnification only if (a) the Synod Council has established a process for determining whether a person serving in the capacity described in this section shall be entitled to indemnification in any specific case, and (b) that process has been applied in making a specific determination that such person is entitled to indemnification.

†S16.03. This synod may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of itself or any person entitled to indemnification pursuant to this chapter against any liability asserted against and incurred by this synod or by such other person in or arising from a capacity described in †S16.01. or †S16.02.

†S16.04. When written charges against a rostered minister of this church are made in disciplinary proceedings under Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* by the synod bishop or when written charges against a congregation are made in disciplinary proceedings by the Synod Council or the synod bishop, and the discipline hearing committee determines that no discipline shall be imposed, then if such determination is not reversed or set aside on appeal, indemnification shall be made by the synod to the accused for reasonable attorney's fees and other reasonable expenses related to the defense of the charges. The determination of the reasonableness of such fees and expenses shall be made by the Synod Council.

Chapter 17.
CONSULTATION AND ADJUDICATION

†S17.01. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall be available to give counsel when disputes arise within this synod.

†S17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers, congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When a concern relates directly to the synod bishop, the synod vice president will lead the Executive Committee's efforts at resolving the matter. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, applicable procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of a rostered minister shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

†S17.03. When there is disagreement between or among congregations of this synod on a substantive issue that cannot be resolved by the parties, the council of an affected congregation may petition the synod bishop for a consultation after informing the other affected congregation(s) of its intent to do so. If this consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the issue(s), the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The decision of the Synod Council shall be final.

†S17.04. When conferences, clusters, coalitions, or area subdivisions of this synod have a disagreement on a substantive issue that they cannot resolve, the aggrieved party or parties may petition the synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council requesting a consultation after informing the other affected parties of their intent to do so. In this case the decision of the Executive Committee shall prevail, except that, upon the motion of a member of the Synod Council, the decision shall be referred to the Synod Council for final action.

†S17.10. Adjudication in a Congregation

†S17.11. When there is disagreement between or among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of the congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of the Congregation Council of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 18.
AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

†S18.10. Amendments to Constitution

†S18.11. Certain sections of this constitution incorporate and record therein required provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. If such provisions are amended by the Churchwide Assembly, corresponding amendments shall be introduced at once into this constitution by the secretary of this synod upon receipt of formal certification thereof from the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

†S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended any non-required provision of the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.

†S18.13. Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures:

a. Introduced with the support of at least _____ voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
b. The Synod Council may propose an amendment, with notice to be sent to the congregations of this synod at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such an amendment shall require for adoption a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at such a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

All such amendments shall become effective upon ratification by the Churchwide Assembly or by the Church Council.

†S18.20. Amendments to Bylaws

†S18.21. This synod may adopt bylaws not in conflict with this constitution or with the constitution and bylaws of the churchwide organization. This synod may amend its bylaws at any meeting of the Synod Assembly by a two-thirds vote of voting members of the assembly present and voting. Newly adopted bylaws and amendments to existing bylaws shall be reported to the secretary of this church.

†S18.30. Amendments to Continuing Resolutions

†S18.31. This synod may adopt continuing resolutions not in conflict with this constitution or its bylaws or the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the churchwide organization. Such continuing resolutions may be adopted or amended by a majority vote of the Synod Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Synod Council. Newly adopted continuing resolutions and amendments to existing continuing resolutions shall be reported to the secretary of this church.



MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR CONGREGATIONS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®

Current as of August 2025

INTRODUCTION to the *Model Constitution for Congregations*

The *Model Constitution for Congregations*, like the other governing documents of this church, reflects the theology and polity of this church as it organizes itself to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, share the sacraments, reach out to the neighbor with good news, and share the love of God in the world. Each expression of this church—churchwide, synod, and congregation—is held together in a relationship of interdependence that encourages each to respond to its context. These documents also demonstrate our commitment to seeing ourselves with others as part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. As such, the *Model Constitution for Congregations* is deeply rooted in Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the history of this church and its predecessors.

The *Model Constitution for Congregations* originally was adopted by the Constituting Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and has been amended by subsequent churchwide assemblies. This edition includes amendments approved by the seventeenth Churchwide Assembly in 2025. It is consistent with the requirements of the governing documents of the ELCA's churchwide organization, and it provides organizational flexibility to recognize local context.

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED PROVISIONS

Sections of this constitution marked by [*] are **required provisions** when a congregation amends its governing documents. These sections must be used without alteration or amendment of the text in any manner (*i.e.*, neither additions nor deletions are permissible). This requirement is based on provision 9.52. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, which requires that when a congregation of this church "wishes to amend any provision of its governing documents, the governing documents of that congregation shall be so amended to conform to 9.25.b." in the ELCA constitution. Provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* identified by [*] are those required under ELCA constitutional provision 9.25.b.

The other provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* (those that are not marked by [*]) are **recommended provisions**. These provisions provide suggested wording that congregations may find useful. They may be included, omitted, or altered at the discretion of the individual congregation.

REVIEW BY SYNOD

Each congregation of this church is to provide a copy of its governing documents, and any amendments thereto, to its synod. In accordance with ELCA bylaw 9.53.03. and Chapters 16, 17, and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, certain amendments to a congregation constitution only become effective when approved by the synod, while others need only be reported to the synod. (For a full explanation of the amendment and review process, please see the chapters referenced above in this paragraph.)

For those changes that require synod review, the synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them. No governing document amendment will be approved by a synod if it conflicts with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* or required provisions of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

Amendments that bring the congregation's constitution into conformity with the *Model Constitution for Congregations,* whether to match required or recommended provisions, go

into effect immediately upon approval by the congregation meeting, and are then reported to the synod.

In order to be sure that amendments meet constitutional requirements and avoid potential problems, congregations are strongly urged to submit all proposed amendments to a congregation's constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions to the synod for review before voting on them.

CODIFICATION EXPLANATION

The *Model Constitution for Congregations*, like the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and the *Constitution for Synods*, is organized into chapters by general subject matter and codified as follows:

a. Constitutional provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* are codified with two sets of numbers, preceded by a "C": the chapter number followed by a period, and a two-digit sequence number also followed by a period.

   1. **Required constitutional provisions**, as explained above, are preceded by [*]. For example, *C5.02. is a required constitutional provision in Chapter 5, the chapter on Powers of the Congregation.

   2. **Recommended constitutional provisions**, as explained above, are not preceded by [*]. For example, C5.05. is a recommended provision in Chapter 5, the chapter on Powers of the Congregation.

   3. **Other constitutional provisions**, including modified versions of the recommended provisions, may be proposed and adopted by individual congregations. Such provisions may not conflict with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and are adopted and become effective in accordance with Chapter 16 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

b. The *Model Constitution for Congregations* contains no required or recommended **bylaws**. If a congregation chooses to adopt bylaws, they should be codified with three sets of numbers, each followed by a period: the chapter number (preceded by a "C"), the related constitutional provision number, and a two-digit bylaw number. For example, a bylaw could be codified as C5.03.01.

   Bylaws are adopted and amended in accordance with Chapter 17 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. Congregations may adopt bylaws related to each congregation's organization, operation, and life. Bylaws should be incorporated following the constitutional provisions to which they apply. They should not be organized in a separate section or document.

c. The *Model Constitution for Congregations* does not contain any suggested **continuing resolutions**. If congregations adopt continuing resolutions, those also are codified with three sets of numbers, except that the third set is preceded by a capital letter indicating sequence and a two-digit number indicating the year of its adoption. For example, if a congregation adopted one or more continuing resolutions in 2025 related to the Powers of the Congregation, the first continuing resolution adopted could be numbered "C5.03.A25."

Continuing resolutions are adopted and amended in accordance with Chapter 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. They are intended to provide more detailed descriptions of operational patterns and practices within the congregation. They should be incorporated following the constitutional provisions and/or bylaws to which they apply. They should not be organized in a separate section or document.

Each congregation has discretion and may develop its own constitutional provisions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions (including bylaws and continuing resolutions related to required constitutional provisions) as long as they do not conflict with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* or required constitutional provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

Note: In some chapters, you will see that certain numbers are missing from the numbering sequence. These omissions are intentional in order to provide options for future additions.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Alternatives are provided in some places within the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. Alternatives are noted by brackets or blank lines. For example, constitutional provision *C9.01. offers the alternative of election of a call committee by the congregation or by the Congregation Council. Only one alternative should be chosen in each instance where brackets appear in the text. In other provisions, entire alternative provisions are provided. For example, in C11.02., options are provided separated by the word "or." Each congregation should select one of those options. Where a blank line appears, such as in C12.01., the appropriate word, phrase, or number determined by the individual congregation should be inserted.
- "Church" with a capital letter is used in references to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. In references to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the words "church" and "this church" in lower case letters are employed.

The important task of amending a constitution is challenging. It is, however, an essential endeavor that merits thoughtful work. Accordingly, each congregation should review its governing documents regularly, at least following each triennial Churchwide Assembly. Documents summarizing amendments to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* are posted on the Office of the Secretary page on ELCA.org shortly after each Churchwide Assembly. In addressing your constitutional responsibilities, may God grant you and your colleagues wisdom, discernment, and commitment to the unity of this church in faithful witness to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Secretary Sue E. Rothmeyer
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
August 2, 2025

MODEL CONSTITUTION
for
CONGREGATIONS
of the
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA®

***PREAMBLE**

We, baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission, do hereby adopt this constitution and solemnly pledge ourselves to be governed by its provisions. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1.
NAME AND INCORPORATION

C1.01. The name of this congregation shall be _____.

C1.02. For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws [and continuing resolutions], the congregation of ___*(insert full legal name)*___ is hereinafter designated as "this congregation."

C1.11. This congregation shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of _____.

Chapter 2.
CONFESSION OF FAITH

***C2.01.** This congregation confesses the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

***C2.02.** This congregation confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe.

a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both Law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed, beginning with the Word in creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.

* Required provision

***C2.03.** This congregation accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

***C2.04.** This congregation accepts the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this congregation.

***C2.05.** This congregation accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

***C2.06.** This congregation accepts the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise, the Small Catechism, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church.

***C2.07.** This congregation confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scripture and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world.

Chapter 3.
NATURE OF THE CHURCH

***C3.01.** All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this congregation are to be carried out under his rule and authority.

***C3.02.** This church confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.

***C3.03.** The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

***C3.04.** This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

***C3.05.** The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA or "this church") as used herein refers in general references to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization to which specific references may be made herein.

Chapter 4.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

***C4.01.** The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

***C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.

b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.

d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.

e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.

f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

***C4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.

b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.

c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.

d. Teach the Word of God.

e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.

f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.

g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

***C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Committees.]

***C4.05.** This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

***C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 5.
POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

***C5.01.** The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.

***C5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.

***C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by this congregation. This congregation is authorized to:

a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
c. call a minister of Word and Service;
d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
e. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18;
f. approve the annual budget;
g. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;
h. hold title to and use its property for any and all activities consistent with its purpose;
i. sell, mortgage, lease, transfer, or otherwise dispose of its property by any lawful means;
j. elect its [officers][,] [and] Congregation Council, [boards, and committees,] and require [them] [the members of the council] to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution[,] [and] bylaws[,] [and continuing resolutions]; and

k. terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as provided in Chapter 6.

***C5.04.** This congregation or the Congregation Council shall elect from among the voting members of the congregation laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the *(insert name of synod)* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

C5.05. This congregation shall have a mission endowment fund that will operate as specified in this congregation's [bylaws] [continuing resolutions]. The purpose of the mission endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation.

Chapter 6.
CHURCH AFFILIATION

***C6.01.** This congregation shall be an interdependent part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor, and of the *(insert name of synod)* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This congregation is subject to the discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C6.02.** This congregation accepts the Confession of Faith and agrees to the purposes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with them.

***C6.03.** This congregation acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:

a. This congregation agrees to be responsible for its life as a Christian community.
b. This congregation pledges its financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
c. This congregation agrees to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with its call procedures except in special circumstances and with the approval of the bishop of the synod. These special circumstances are limited either to calling a candidate approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or to contracting for pastoral services with a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion.
d. This congregation agrees to consider ministers of Word and Service for call to other staff positions in this congregation according to the procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
e. This congregation agrees to file this constitution and any subsequent changes to this constitution with the synod for review to ascertain that all of its provisions are in agreement with the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and with the constitution of the synod.

***C6.04.** Affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is terminated as follows:

a. This congregation takes action to dissolve.
b. This congregation ceases to exist.
c. This congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to the procedures for discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or in accordance with provision 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
d. The *(insert name of synod)* takes charge and control of the property of this congregation to hold, manage, and convey the same on behalf of the synod pursuant to †S13.24. of the synod constitution. This congregation shall have the right to appeal the decision to the next Synod Assembly.
e. This congregation follows the procedures outlined in *C6.05.

***C6.05.** This congregation may terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the following procedure:

a. A resolution indicating the intent to terminate its relationship must be adopted at two legally called and conducted special meetings of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at each meeting. The first such meeting may be held no sooner than 30 days after written notice of the meeting is received by the bishop of the synod, during which time this congregation shall consult with the bishop and the bishop's designees, if any. The times and manner of the consultation shall be determined by the bishop in consultation with the Congregation Council. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the first meeting.
b. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon at the first meeting, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to voting members of this congregation.
c. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the first meeting, the bishop of the synod and this congregation shall continue in consultation, as specified in paragraph a. above, during a period of at least 90 days after receipt by the bishop of the attestation and certification as specified in paragraph b. above.
d. If this congregation, after such consultation, is still considering termination of its relationship with this church, such action may be taken at a legally called and conducted special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present. Notice of the second meeting shall be sent to all voting members and to the bishop at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Unless the bishop and/or the bishop's designees are voting members of this congregation, they shall have voice but not vote at the second meeting.
e. Within 10 days after the resolution has been voted upon, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy of the resolution to the bishop, attesting that the second special meeting was legally called and conducted and certifying the outcome of the vote, and shall send copies of the resolution and certification to

the voting members of the congregation. If the resolution was adopted by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at the second meeting, the relationship between the congregation and this church shall be terminated subject to Synod Council approval as required by paragraphs f. and g. below.

f. Unless this notification to the bishop also certifies that this congregation has voted to affiliate with another Lutheran denomination, this congregation shall be deemed an independent or non-Lutheran church, in which case *C7.04. shall apply.

g. This congregation shall abide by these covenants by and among the three expressions of this church:
   1) Congregations seeking to terminate their relationship with this church which fail or refuse to comply with each of the foregoing provisions in *C6.05. shall be required to receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.
   2) Congregations which had been members of the Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to receive synod approval before terminating their membership in this church.
   3) Congregations established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be required, in addition to complying with the foregoing provisions in *C6.05., to satisfy all financial obligations to this church and receive Synod Council approval before terminating their membership in this church.

h. If this congregation fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's first meeting as specified in paragraph a. above or fails to achieve the required two-thirds vote of voting members present at this congregation's second meeting as specified in paragraph d. above, another attempt to consider termination of relationship with this church must follow all requirements of *C6.05. and may begin no sooner than six months after the meeting at which the two-thirds vote was not achieved.

***C6.06.** If this congregation considers relocation, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is taken.

***C6.07.** If this congregation considers developing an additional site to be used regularly for worship, it shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action.

Chapter 7.
PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

***C7.01.** If this congregation ceases to exist, title to undisposed property shall pass to the *(insert name of synod)* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

***C7.02.** If this congregation is removed from membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America according to its procedure for discipline or pursuant to 9.23. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation.

***C7.03.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to relate to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to relate to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the *(insert name of synod)* .

***C7.04.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to become independent or relate to a non-Lutheran church body and have followed the process for termination of relationship in *C6.05., title to property of this congregation shall continue to reside in this congregation only with the consent of the Synod Council. The Synod Council, after consultation with this congregation by the process established by the synod, may give approval to the request to become independent or to relate to a non-Lutheran church body, in which case title shall remain with the majority of this congregation. If the Synod Council fails to give such approval, title shall remain with those members who desire to continue as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. In neither case does title to this congregation's property transfer to the synod.

***C7.05.** Notwithstanding the provisions of *C7.02. and *C7.03. above, where this congregation has received property from the synod pursuant to a deed or other instrument containing restrictions under provision 9.71.a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, this congregation accepts such restrictions and:

a. Shall not transfer, encumber, mortgage, or in any way burden or impair any right, title, or interest in the property without prior approval of the Synod Council.
b. Shall—upon written demand by the Synod Council, pursuant to †S13.23. of the constitution of the *(insert name of synod)* —reconvey and transfer all right, title, and interest in the property to the synod.

Chapter 8.
MEMBERSHIP

***C8.01.** Members of this congregation shall be those baptized persons on the roll of this congregation at the time that this constitution is adopted and those who are admitted thereafter and who have declared and maintain their membership in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

***C8.02.** Members shall be classified as follows:

a. ***Baptized*** members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in this congregation, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.
b. ***Confirmed*** members are baptized persons who have been confirmed in this congregation, those who have been received by adult baptism or by transfer as confirmed members from other Lutheran congregations, or baptized persons received by affirmation of faith.

c. ***Voting*** members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of this congregation as well as the other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws. They shall not have voted as a seasonal member of another congregation of this church in the previous two calendar months.

d. ***Associate*** members are persons holding membership in other [ELCA] [Lutheran] [Christian] congregations who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation. These individuals have all the privileges and duties of membership except voting rights or other rights and privileges ascribed to voting members by the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

e. ***Seasonal*** members are voting members of other congregations of this church who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited voting rights in this congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:
   1) they shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;
   2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
   3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with this church;
   4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
   5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and
   6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members.

***C8.03.** All applications for confirmed membership shall be submitted to and shall require the approval of the Congregation Council.

***C8.04.** It shall be the privilege and duty of members of this congregation to:

a. make regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;

b. live a Christian life in accordance with the Word of God and the teachings of the Lutheran church; and

c. support the work of this congregation, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through

contributions of their time, abilities, and financial support as biblical stewards.

***C8.05.** Membership in this congregation shall be terminated by any of the following:

a. death;
b. resignation;
c. transfer or release;
d. disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter 20 of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
e. removal from the roll due to inactivity in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and its bylaws.

Such persons who have been removed from the roll of members shall remain persons for whom the Church has a continuing pastoral concern.

Chapter 9.
ROSTERED MINISTER

***C9.01.** Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.02.** This congregation may call as a pastor only:

a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

***C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
    1) preach the Word;
    2) administer the sacraments;
    3) conduct public worship;
    4) provide pastoral care;
    5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
    6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
    7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
    8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.
b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
    1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;

2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
4) with the council, administer discipline;
5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the *(insert name of synod)* ; and
6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

***C9.04.** The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

***C9.05.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and this congregation shall be as follows:

a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the pastor's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
   1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
   2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
   3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
   4) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the pastor;
   5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
   6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
   7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
   8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
   9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.

b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
   1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
   2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant. When the pastorate is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the pastor on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, this congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

***C9.06.** At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

***C9.07.** During the period of service, an interim pastor shall have the rights and duties in this congregation of a regularly called pastor and may delegate the same in part to a supply pastor with the consent of the bishop of the synod and this congregation or Congregation Council. The interim pastor and any rostered minister providing assistance shall refrain from exerting influence in the selection of a pastor. Unless previously agreed upon by the Synod Council, an interim pastor is not available for a regular call to the congregation served.

***C9.08.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former pastor before calling a successor. A pastor shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.

***C9.09.** When a pastor is called to serve in company with another pastor or pastors, the privileges and responsibilities of each pastor shall be specified in documents to

accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the pastors, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.11.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.05.a. and call a pastor for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the pastor and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.05.a.

***C9.12.** The pastor of this congregation:

a. shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;
b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

***C9.13.** The pastor(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

***C9.14.** The records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

***C9.15.** Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.

***C9.21.** Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

***C9.22.** This congregation may call as a deacon only:

a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop.

***C9.23.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;

b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;
d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

***C9.24.** The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

***C9.25.** The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Service and this congregation shall be as follows:

a. The call of this congregation, when accepted by a deacon, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment, which shall be terminated only by the deacon's death or, following consultation with the synod bishop, for any of the following reasons:
    1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
    2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
    3) inability to conduct the ministry of Word and Service effectively in this congregation in view of local conditions;
    4) inability to conduct the office effectively in view of disability or incapacity of the deacon;
    5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
    6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church;
    7) termination of the relationship between this church and this congregation;
    8) dissolution of this congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
    9) suspension of this congregation through discipline for more than six months.

b. When allegations of disability or incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office of minister of Word and Service under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
   1) the bishop, who has sole discretion, may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson, or
   2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of this congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered ministers and one layperson.

c. In case of alleged disability or incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant. When the position is declared vacant, the Synod Council shall list the deacon on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service with disability status. Upon resumption of the ability to conduct the office effectively, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of this congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to this congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by this congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, this congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.

f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

***C9.26.** This congregation shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to a former deacon before calling a successor. A deacon shall make satisfactory settlement of all financial obligations to this congregation before beginning

service in a call to another congregation or employment in another ministry setting.

***C9.27.** When a deacon is called to serve in company with another rostered minister or other rostered ministers, the privileges and responsibilities of each rostered minister shall be specified in documents to accompany the call and to be drafted in consultation involving the rostered ministers, the Congregation Council, and the bishop of the synod. As occasion requires, the documents may be revised through a similar consultation.

***C9.28.** With the approval of the bishop of the synod, this congregation may depart from *C9.25.a. and call a deacon for a specific term. Details of such calls shall be in writing setting forth the purpose and conditions involved. Prior to the completion of a term, the bishop or a designated representative of the bishop shall meet with the deacon and representatives of this congregation for a review of the call. Such a call may also be terminated before its expiration in accordance with the provisions of *C9.25.a.

***C9.29.** The deacon shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the deacon shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

***C9.31.** The deacon(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Chapter 10.
CONGREGATION MEETING

C10.01. This congregation shall have at least one regular meeting per year. The regular meeting(s) of the congregation shall be held at the time(s) specified in the bylaws. Consistent with the laws of the State of _____, the bylaws shall designate one regular meeting per year as the annual meeting of this congregation.

C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the [senior] pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president[1] of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of ___ percent of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all [voting] members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting.

C10.04. ___ percent of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.

C10.05. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall not be permitted.

C10.06. All actions approved by this congregation shall be by majority vote of those voting members present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution or by state law.

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[1] *If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.*

C10.07. *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of all meetings of this congregation.

C10.08. This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

C10.09. "*Ex officio*" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.

Chapter 11.
OFFICERS

C11.01. The officers of this congregation shall be a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

a. Duties of the officers shall be specified in the bylaws.
b. The officers shall be voting members of this congregation.
c. Officers of this congregation shall serve similar offices of the Congregation Council and shall be voting members of the Congregation Council.
d. If the Congregation Council elects its officers, the president, vice president, and secretary shall be selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council. [If the treasurer is not selected from the elected membership of the Congregation Council, the treasurer shall have voice but not vote at the meetings of the Congregation Council.]

C11.02. The [congregation][Congregation Council] shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of this congregation. The officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

or

The officers shall be elected by the [congregation] [Congregation Council] by written ballot and shall serve for one year. The term shall begin on ___(month and day) and end on ___(month and day).

or

The pastor shall be *ex officio* president of this congregation and the Congregation Council. The [congregation][Congregation Council] shall elect by written ballot the other officers of this congregation who shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

or

The pastor shall be *ex officio* president of this congregation and the Congregation Council. The [congregation][Congregation Council] shall elect by written ballot the other officers of this congregation who shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin on ___(month and day) and end on (month and day).

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

Chapter 12.
CONGREGATION COUNCIL

C12.01. The voting membership of the Congregation Council shall consist of the pastor(s)[, the deacon(s),] [the officers of this congregation,] and [__ members] [not more than __ nor fewer than __ members] of this congregation, at least one of whom shall be a youth and at least one of whom shall be a young adult. Any voting member of this congregation may be elected, subject only to the limitation on the length of continuous service permitted in that office. A member's place on the Congregation Council shall be declared vacant if the member a) ceases to be a voting member of this congregation or b) is absent from four successive regular meetings of the Congregation Council without cause. Consistent with the laws of the state in which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt procedures for the removal of a member of the Congregation Council in other circumstances.

C12.02. The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) [and deacon(s)] shall be elected by written ballot to serve for ___ years or until their successors are elected. Such members shall be eligible to serve no more than two full terms consecutively. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

or

The members of the Congregation Council except the pastor(s) [and deacon(s)] shall be elected at a legally called meeting of this congregation during the month of ____. Their term of office shall be for ____ years, with the term of office beginning on ____ (month and day) and ending on ____ (month and day). Newly elected Congregation Council members shall be installed at worship at a time appointed by the Congregation Council.

C12.03. Should a member's place on the Congregation Council be declared vacant, the Congregation Council shall elect, by majority vote, a successor until the next annual meeting.

C12.04. The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:

a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
d. To maintain supportive relationships with the rostered minister(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.

f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
h. To emphasize support of the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.

C12.05. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.

a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of [trustees] [directors] of this congregation and, as such, shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and managing its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of _____, except as otherwise provided herein.
b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this congregation.
c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to $ _____ for items not included in the budget.
d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than $ _____ in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.
e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support monies to the synod.
f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.

C12.06. The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution[,] [and] its bylaws[,][and the continuing resolutions] are carried out.

C12.07. The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.

C12.08. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect this congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.

C12.09. The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.

C12.11. The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president[2], and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.

C12.12. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the [senior] pastor or interim pastor, except when the [senior] pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the [senior] pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synod bishop.

C12.13. The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

Chapter 13.
CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C13.01. The officers of this congregation and the pastor shall constitute the ***Executive Committee***.

C13.02. A ***Nominating Committee*** of six voting members of this congregation, two of whom, if possible, shall be outgoing members of the Congregation Council, shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive re-election.

C13.03. An ***Audit Committee*** of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Term of office shall be three years, with one member elected each year. Members shall be eligible for re-election.

C13.04. ***Mutual Ministry Committee(s)*** (in the absence of a mutual ministry committee, the duties shall be fulfilled by the executive committee) shall be appointed jointly by the president [vice president[3]] and the rostered minister. Term of office shall be two years, with three members to be appointed each successive year.

C13.05. When a vacancy occurs in a position for which this congregation calls a rostered minister, a ***Call Committee*** of six voting members shall be elected by [this congregation] [the Congregation Council]. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly called rostered minister.

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[2] *If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.*

[3] *For use if the pastor is president of the congregation under two of the options in C11.02.*

C13.06. Other committees of this congregation may be formed, as the need arises, by decision of the Congregation Council.

C13.07. Duties of committees of this congregation shall be specified in the [bylaws][continuing resolutions].

C13.08. The [senior] pastor of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation. [The [president][4] [vice president] of this congregation shall be *ex officio* a member of all committees and boards of this congregation, except the Nominating Committee.]

Chapter 14.
ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THIS CONGREGATION

C14.01. All organizations within this congregation shall exist to aid it in ministering to the members of this congregation and to all persons who can be reached with the Gospel of Christ. As outgrowths and expressions of this congregation's life, the organizations are subject to its oversight and direction. This congregation at its meeting shall determine their policies, guide their activities, and receive reports concerning their membership, work, and finances.

C14.02. Special interest groups, other than those of the official organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be organized only after authorization has been given by the Congregation Council [and specified in a continuing resolution].

Chapter 15.
DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION

***C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15–17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary:

a. private counsel and admonition by the pastor,
b. censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses,
c. written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and
d. written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod.

If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by a. and b. hereof, those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

***C15.02.** The process for discipline of a member of this congregation shall be governed as prescribed by the chapter on discipline in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing*

[4] *If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider selecting the vice president.*

Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. If the counseling, censure, and admonitions pursuant to *C15.01. do not result in repentance and amendment of life, charges against the accused member(s) that are specific and in writing may be prepared by the Congregation Council, signed, and submitted to the vice president of the synod. The vice president shall select from the synod's Consultation Committee a panel of five members (three laypersons and two rostered ministers). A copy of the written charges shall be provided to the consultation panel and the accused member(s). The consultation panel, after requesting a written reply to the charges from the accused member(s), shall consider the matter and seek a resolution by means of investigation, consultation, mediation, or whatever other means may seem appropriate. The panel's efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution shall continue for no more than 45 days after the matter is submitted to it.

***C15.03.** If the consultation panel fails to resolve the matter, that panel shall refer the case in writing, including the written charges and the accused member's reply, to the Committee on Discipline of the synod for a hearing. A copy of the panel's written referral shall be delivered to the vice president of the synod, the Congregation Council, and the accused member(s) at the same time it is sent to the Committee on Discipline of the synod. The Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall then select six members from the Committee on Discipline to decide the case and shall appoint a member of the Synod Council to preside as nonvoting chair. Those six members, plus the nonvoting chair, comprise the discipline hearing panel for deciding the case. The Congregation Council and the accused member(s) are the parties to the case.

***C15.04.** The discipline hearing panel shall commence and conduct the disciplinary hearing in accordance with the provisions governing discipline of congregation members prescribed in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

***C15.05.** By the vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the discipline hearing panel who are present and voting, one of the following disciplinary sanctions can be imposed:

a. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership for a designated period of time;
b. suspension from the privileges of congregation membership until the pastor and Congregation Council receive evidence, satisfactory to them, of repentance and amendment of life;
c. termination of membership in this congregation; or
d. termination of membership in this congregation and exclusion from the church property and from all congregation activities.

***C15.06.** The written decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be sent to the vice president of the synod, the accused member(s), and the Congregation Council as required by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The decision of the discipline hearing panel shall be implemented by the Congregation Council and recorded in the minutes of the next council meeting.

***C15.07.** No member of this congregation shall be subject to discipline a second time for offenses that a discipline hearing panel has heard previously and decided pursuant to this chapter.

***C15.10. Adjudication**

***C15.11.** When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president [vice president] of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in *C9.05.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

Chapter 16.
AMENDMENTS

***C16.01.** Unless provision *C16.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least _____ voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal together with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C16.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under *C16.01., shall:

a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
b. be ratified unchanged at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

***C16.03.** Any amendments to this constitution that result from the processes provided in *C16.01. and *C16.02. shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod. The synod shall notify this congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them.

***C16.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of this congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of this congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has

submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, notice to this congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of at least two (2) voting members of this congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of this congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following the congregation's vote of approval.

Chapter 17.
BYLAWS

***C17.01.** This congregation may adopt bylaws. No bylaw may conflict with this constitution.

***C17.02.** Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any legally called meeting of this congregation with a quorum present by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

***C17.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify this congregation's members of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C17.04.** Adopted or amended bylaws shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 18.
CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

***C18.01.** This congregation in a legally called meeting or the Congregation Council may enact continuing resolutions. Such continuing resolutions may not conflict with the constitution or bylaws of this congregation.

***C18.02.** Continuing resolutions shall be enacted or amended by a majority vote of a meeting of this congregation or a two-thirds vote of all voting members of the Congregation Council.

***C18.03.** Adopted or amended continuing resolutions shall be sent by the secretary of this congregation to the synod.

Chapter 19.
INDEMNIFICATION

***C19.01.** Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this congregation is incorporated, this congregation may adopt provisions providing indemnification for each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Congregation Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any committee of this congregation, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened,

pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.

Chapter 20.
PARISH AUTHORIZATION

[Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish]*

***C20.01.** This congregation may unite with one or more other congregations recognized by the synod named in *C6.01. to form a parish. Except as provided in *C20.02. and *C20.03., a written agreement, developed in consultation with the synod and approved by the voting members of each congregation participating in the parish, shall specify the powers and responsibilities that have been delegated to the Parish Council. The Parish Agreement shall identify which congregation of the parish issues calls on behalf of the member congregations or shall establish a process for identifying which congregation issues calls on behalf of the member congregations.

***C20.02.** One congregation of a parish shall issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Sacrament or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregation meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.03.** One congregation of a parish may issue a call on behalf of the member congregations to a minister of Word and Service or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended by the synod bishop to serve the congregations of the parish. Such a call shall be approved prior to issuance by a two-thirds vote at a congregation meeting of each congregation forming the parish. If any congregation of the parish should fail to approve the call, the other congregations of the parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in *C9.05.d. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.05.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with a minister of Word and Service as provided in *C9.25.d. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

***C20.06.** Whenever a parish agreement is terminated, the call of any rostered minister serving that parish is terminated. Should any congregation that was formerly part of the parish agreement desire to issue a new call to that rostered minister, it may do so in accordance with the call process of this church.

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