

Report to the 2018 ELCA Southeastern Synod Assembly

The Rev. Randy Jones

Secretary of the Southeastern Synod

- Since the January meeting I cleaned up the minutes of the meeting and got them to the synod offices.
- I updated the synod constitution with the new continuing resolution and submitted it to the synod offices.
- I was unable to attend the April special meeting so Deacon Michelle Angalet took minutes for that meeting.
- I participated in a conference call to plan the agenda for the May 2018 meeting.
- The Conference of Bishops approved the non-stipendiary call requested by the January 2018 Synod Council.

The following are the actions of the April 5-8, 2018 Church Council.

1. ELECTION OF MS. SONJA WOLFE TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly elected Ms. Carolyn D. Jewett, Milwaukee, Wis., to a six-year term on the Church Council in a lay female position nominated by the Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J). Ms. Jewett resigned her position on the council. In accordance with ELCA bylaw 13.41.05., Secretary Wm Chris Boerger declared a vacancy on the Church Council and invited the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council to nominate a lay female for possible election. The Synod Council nominated Ms. Sonja Wolfe, Kenosha, Wis., to serve the balance of Ms. Jewett's term.

Church Council action:

To elect Ms. Sonja Wolfe, Kenosha, Wis. (5J), to the Church Council for a term ending in 2022.

2. A PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING A GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL

As an outcome of the Church Council's retreat in April 2017, the council's Board Development Committee asked a sub-committee to propose a process for developing a governance policy manual for the council. The proposal was to take a two-part approach to consider the role of the Church Council and its governance, using an ad hoc committee to assist the council in this process.

Church Council action:

To approve the proposal for a process to develop an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America governance policy manual.

3. THE 2018-2019 OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

In November 2017, the Church Council received a draft of the 2018-2019 Operational Plan for the churchwide organization. The council's Planning and Evaluation Committee reviewed the final version. The plan frames the work of the churchwide organization during the two years around the goals and priorities identified through the Called Forward Together in Christ process and set out in

Future Directions 2025.

Church Council action:

To affirm the 2018-2019 Operational Plan of the churchwide organization.

4. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE ENTRANCE RITE FOR DEACONS The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA16.05.11] to create a roster of Ministers of Word and Service and to endorse the recommendations of the Word and Service Task Force. The task force recommended that the question of an entrance rite for this new roster be considered by a different group. The Entrance Rite Discernment Group drafted recommendations that ordination be the rite for entrance to the roster, that a stole and lapel cross be the symbols for this roster and that members of this roster not be considered among the laity of this church for representational purposes. Church Council action:

To receive with gratitude the report and proposed recommendations from the Entrance Rite Discernment Group; To refer the proposed recommendations to the Office of the Secretary for preliminary work on possible amendments to the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; To encourage the Entrance Rite Discernment Group to share the proposed recommendations throughout the church for further conversation; and To request the Entrance Rite Discernment Group present final recommendations to the November 2018 Church Council meeting.

5. ALLOCATION OF "WHERE NEEDED MOST" DOLLARS IN THE CAMPAIGN

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA has a five-year goal to raise \$198 million for several specific ministries of this church. In addition to designated gifts, funds could be earmarked for "where needed most." At its November 2017 meeting, the Church Council asked [CC17.11.28] that the churchwide organization prepare a plan for the process by which "where needed most" dollars in the campaign will be allocated. A staff oversight committee will review proposals and make decisions based on a policy that the money will only be used to fund the established, approved priorities of the campaign.

Church Council action:

To approve the policy and procedure for the allocation of "where needed most" dollars in Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA; and To report results to the Budget and Finance Committee as part of the regular campaign reporting.

6. CHURCH COUNCIL DESIGNATED FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,750,000

The Office of the Treasurer reported that unaudited figures for fiscal 2017 indicate that the churchwide organization received \$71.72 million in revenue and support, and total expenses related to the current operating fund were \$68.97 million. Net revenue over expenses was \$2.75 million. Church Council action:

To approve a Church Council Designated Fund in the amount of \$2,750,000 representing the excess revenue over expenses from fiscal year 2017 to be released to fund the post-retirement medical benefit obligations of the churchwide organization.

7. DESIGNATION OF CHURCHWIDE REPRESENTATIVES TO SYNOD ASSEMBLIES

Provision S7.23 of the Constitution for Synods states: The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of this church as may be designated from time to time by the Church Council 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. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth

A. Eaton provided the Church Council with a grid identifying potential representatives for each of the synod assemblies in 2018.

Church Council action:

To designate the persons identified in the “2018 Synod Assemblies by Synod” grid with voice but not vote in the meetings of the assigned Synod Assembly, including like privileges accorded to those additional persons whom the Synod Assembly or the Synod Council has designated.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS SOCIAL CRITERIA INVESTMENT SCREENS

In response to memorials from four synods regarding Justice for the Holy Land, the 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA16.06.31]: To direct the ELCA’s Corporate Social Responsibility review team to develop a human rights social criteria investment screen based on the social teachings of this church and, in the case of Israel and Palestine, specifically based on the concerns raised in the ELCA Middle East Strategy.... In November 2017, the Church Council adopted [CC17.11.26] a revised social message on “Human Rights” to support and inform the development of a human rights social criteria investment screen, while also striving to articulate this church’s positions on human rights in a single message. The council’s Program and Services Committee and the Conference of Bishops provided feedback on the proposed human rights social criteria investment screen.

Church Council action:

To approve the “Political and Civil Human Rights: Equal Access and Participation” social criteria investment screen; and To request that the secretary of this church inform the synods of this action.

9. APPROVAL OF THE REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

ELCA continuing resolution 14.41.E15. provides that the Church Council's Audit Committee "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." Church Council action:

To approve the report of the ELCA Audit Committee describing its review of the audited financial statements, management letter, and response of management for the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust's year ending December 31, 2017.

10. PRE-ASSEMBLY IDENTIFICATION PROCESS FOR THE ELECTION OF A SECRETARY In November 2015, the Church Council adopted [CC15.11.51] continuing resolution 19.31.B15. to allow for an identification process in advance of the election of the vice president by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. The assembly renumbered the continuing resolution as 19.01.A15. The 2019 Churchwide Assembly will elect a secretary, and the continuing resolution was amended to allow for a similar identification process in advance of that election.

Church Council action:

To approve the following amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. 19.01.A1518. In a year when the vice president or secretary shall be elected, the voting members of elected to serve at the Churchwide Assembly shall be invited to identify the names of up to three persons who might be considered for election as vice president or secretary. Names shall be submitted to the Office of the Secretary at least four months prior to the assembly. The Office of the Secretary shall contact those persons identified and request biographical information. At least 60 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members.

11. REVISED BYLAWS OF THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CHICAGO The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago proposed amendments to its constitution and bylaws. Church Council action:

To approve the revised constitution and bylaws of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Illinois.

12. TASK FORCE TO CONSIDER A FUTURE CAMPAIGN AND GENERATING REVENUE Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA was a five-year campaign that began in 2014 with the goal of raising \$198 million “to grow the resources of this church to support congregations, leadership, relief and development, and global mission.” The Church Council considered the implications of the campaign entering its final year.

Church Council action:

To create a task force composed of Church Council members, churchwide organization staff and liaison bishops to consider a future ELCA campaign and a strategic focus on generating additional revenue for this church; and To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint members to the task force.

13. DRAFT STATEMENT: A DECLARATION OF OUR INTER-RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT The 1989 Churchwide Assembly adopted [CA89.3.15] “Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” as a working document. The 1991 Churchwide Assembly adopted [CA91.3.7] its second part, “A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment: A Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” as the policy of this church. The declaration stated: Ecumenism ... should not be confused with the important but distinct responsibility for the church to enter into conversations and reach greater understanding with people of other faiths. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does engage, in a variety of ways, in this inter faith work and needs in the future a separate, official statement to describe its commitments and aspirations in this area. When that statement is prepared, special attention must be given to the distinctiveness of Judaism. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton appointed an ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force in 2016 for the purpose of developing an official statement to describe this church’s commitments and aspirations in its interfaith work. The task force produced a draft policy statement and was conducting a review and comment period during the first six months of 2018. The Rev. Patricia J. Lull, bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod and chair of the task force, and Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre,

assistant to the presiding bishop for ecumenical and interreligious relations, led the Church Council in a formal hearing on “A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment: A draft policy statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.” A final version of the policy statement will be prepared for the Church Council to consider in either November 2018 or April 2019 for possible transmission to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

14. DRAFT OF THE SOCIAL STATEMENT ON WOMEN AND JUSTICE

The 2009 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA09.06.31] to request that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America develop a social statement on the topic of justice for women in church and society. Ms. Leslie J. Swenson and the Rev. James H. Utt served as Church Council liaisons to the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ, which was developing the social statement for consideration by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. In November 2017, the task force issued a draft social statement for study by and response from ELCA members until Sept. 30, 2018. Ms. Swenson and Pastor Utt convened a formal hearing on the draft statement with the Church Council. Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for justice for women, and the Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics, served as recorders.

15. DISCUSSION ON GENDER IDENTITY AND EXISTING DEFINITIONS AND POLICIES The 2016 Churchwide Assembly referred [CA16.02.03q] a memorial from the Sierra Pacific Synod to the Church Council for a review of ELCA policy regarding gender identity. The assembly also referred [CA16.05.27] “Motion D: Resolution on Gender Identity” to the Church Council. In advance of the April 2018 meeting, council members completed a questionnaire about their familiarity with matters regarding gender identity. Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for justice for women, and the Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics, presented the results of that survey. Church Council members discussed current policies of this church regarding gender identity and what resources they would need to make informed policy decisions at their November 2018 meeting.

16. DISCUSSION ON FUTURE DIRECTIONS 2025 AND GOVERNANCE TOPICS

In November 2016, the Church Council adopted [CC16.11.42] Future Directions 2025, setting out the goals and priorities identified through the Called Forward Together in Christ process of facilitated conversation across the ELCA. The council’s Board Development Committee led the Church Council, liaison bishops of the Conference of Bishops and the Administrative Team in a discussion of the fifth goal: a well-governed, connected and sustainable church. The exchange built consensus around understandings of the Church Council serving as both legislative authority between churchwide assemblies and as the board of directors of the churchwide organization. Results of a survey of council members provided collective views on certain values of good governance. Participants discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Church Council, as well as some activities the council should not be involved with.

17. ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

In keeping with ELCA constitutional provision 14.15., the Church Council fills vacancies on the governing boards of separately incorporated ministries. The bylaws of certain organizations authorize

the Church Council to nominate or elect members of their boards. ELCA bylaws 8.21.03. and 8.21.04. outline the parameters for the election or nomination of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries. At its November 2017 meeting, the Church Council appointed [CC17.11.27] members to the Strategic Task Force Toward Authentic Diversity. Additional appointments were needed for the task force.

Church Council actions:

To elect to the board of directors of the Publishing House of the ELCA — 1517 Media — for a term ending in August 2019: Mr. Joel Peterson. To re-elect to the board of directors of The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago for a three-year term expiring in 2021: Ms. Rebecca R. Pallmeyer. To nominate to the advisory council of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary as part of Lenoir-Rhyne University for a term coterminous with his service as chair: The Rev. Lowell G. Almen. To nominate to the advisory council of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University for a term coterminous with her service as chair: Ms. Judy K. Leidy; and To nominate to the advisory council of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University for a three-year term expiring in 2021: Ms. Barbara J. Burgie and Mr. Roderick G.W. Chu. To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a three-year term expiring in 2021: Mr. Andrew N. Nuffer; To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a four-year term expiring in 2022: Ms. Elizabeth Lucht Jones; and To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a five-year term expiring in 2023: The Rev. Mary B. Froiland. To elect to the board of trustees of United Lutheran Seminary for a three-year term expiring in 2021: The Rev. R. Guy Erwin, Mr. David A. Russell and the Rev. Mark K. Tyler; and To authorize the Executive Committee to elect trustees to fill, until the November 2018 meeting of the Church Council, vacancies in the board of trustees of United Lutheran Seminary. To appoint the Rev. Logan T. Vang and Ms. Kelly Sherman-Conroy to the Strategic Task Force Toward Authentic Diversity; and To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to make additional appointments as necessary.

7. The following are the responses of the Church Council to Synod Resolutions and Churchwide Assembly Actions (April 5-8, 2018)

I. RESPONSES TO SYNOD RESOLUTIONS

A. The role of the church in combating antimicrobial resistance Southeastern Synod (9D) [2017] RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Council request that the ELCA Church Council work to engage with its ecumenical partners, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, to identify areas of mutual interest and future collaboration on this issue [combating antimicrobial resistance]; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Council request that the ELCA Church Council include information regarding the fight against antimicrobial resistance in existing churchwide efforts to eliminate health disparities (e.g., clean water initiatives, malaria prevention, etc.); and be it further RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Council request that the synod's Health Ministry Task Force work through the bishop's office to engage its partner synods, domestically and internationally, to promote awareness and share ideas concerning best practices to combat antimicrobial resistance. Executive Committee action [EC17.08.19e]

To receive the resolution from the Southeastern Synod on Combating Antimicrobial Resistance;

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further action; and To request the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2017)

The staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop consulted with colleagues in the Global Mission unit as that unit's staff has more expertise on antimicrobial resistance. The churchwide organization does not have specific programs addressing antimicrobial resistance. The program director for diakonia and the program director for health and sustainable development in Global Mission will look at other support that the churchwide organization provides more broadly for testing and capacity-building. Global Mission will take the lead on this response. Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop will offer consultation as needed with respect to engaging ecumenical partners on the issue. A further response to the Southeastern Synod resolution will be submitted by the April 2018 Church Council meeting.

Church Council action [CC17.11.33p]

To thank the Southeastern Synod for its resolution regarding "The Role of the Church in Combating Antimicrobial Resistance"; To receive the report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and to request a further response from the Global Mission unit by the April 2018 Church Council meeting; and To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Global Mission unit (April 2018)

Global Mission staff strongly agree with the Southeastern Synod that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a threat facing the public health of many today, that it will increasingly be a concern into the future, and that it is the vulnerable populations around the world who are and will continue to be disproportionately affected. Through the methodology of accompaniment, AMR is a topic of conversation that already arises with our companions and partners who work in health care at all levels (i.e., from community to hospital); Global Mission can continue to explore possibilities to be more intentional in bringing this to the agenda where appropriate, encouraging companions and ecumenical partners to work with their own health systems, institutions, and patients and communities toward following the best practice recommendations by the World Health Organization. In work currently supported by Global Mission, community-based primary healthcare programs frequently include promotion of infection prevention measures including sanitation and food safety. Health education programs and continuing education programs for doctors and other care providers often include educational components on the importance of avoiding over-prescription, the need for testing prior to prescribing medication, finishing the full course of treatment, and not sharing among family members or selling prescriptions. Support for health systems strengthening in some areas includes reinforcing quality assurance and accountability mechanisms to ensure that procedures are in place at the health facility/institutional level. Many ELCA companions engage in advocacy at local and national governmental levels to gain appropriate access to the tools needed to help prevent antimicrobial resistance (even though it may not be articulated specifically in those terms). Finally, the topic of AMR is also embedded within many programs focused on malaria and on HIV and AIDS. Within the activities of the ELCA churchwide organization, we will explore opportunities to include the topic of antibiotic resistance in future publications and/or conversations around the health care work of ELCA World Hunger-supported projects as part of the context around eliminating health disparities. During the World Antibiotic Awareness Week

in November, we will consider possibilities for engaging via social media (ELCA World Hunger social media account and/or blog) around the reasons for concern about antibiotic resistance. Global Mission staff will work with the ELCA Advocacy offices in Washington, D.C., and New York to identify advocacy possibilities around or connected to this topic. The Lutheran Office for World Community, at the Headquarters of the United Nations, provided information on a U.N. General Assembly resolution adopted in 2016 to share with the Southeastern Synod that may be useful for future work and/or conversations around this topic. The Lutheran Office for World Community also mentioned this resolution in one of its monthly advocacy reports through the Washington Office. Global Mission staff will also consider opportunities to pursue the topic of AMR within the context of care for creation and climate justice through broader ecumenical coalitions. Church Council action: To receive the report from the Global Mission unit on “The role of the church in combating antimicrobial resistance”; To commend the efforts of the Global Mission unit to engage our companions and partners on the topic of antimicrobial resistance and to explore the best practices for combating it; To encourage the churchwide organization to promote awareness around the reasons for concern about antibiotic resistance; To encourage the Global Mission and the Domestic Mission units to identify advocacy possibilities connected to this topic; and To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

B. “Find a Congregation” feature on the ELCA website

Addition background was provided in the memorandum regarding the November 2016 meeting of the Church Council: In November 2016, the Church Council voted [CC16.11.4600]: To receive the response from the Mission Advancement unit and to anticipate a report no later than the April 2018 Church Council meeting; and To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Mission Advancement unit (April 2018)

The recent launch of <http://directory.elca.org> includes detailed information about ELCA congregations as well as parochial reports currently found on the “Find a Congregation” feature of ELCA.org. We are actively working with Information Technology staff of the churchwide organization to remove the link to the parochial report (Form A) in the current “Find a Congregation” feature on ELCA.org. This update should satisfy the request made by the Lower Susquehanna Synod and is expected to be completed by the Church Council’s April 2018 meeting. An audit is being done by Mission Advancement to determine the information already being collected from congregations compared to the information being made available online. Once the audit is complete, we will create next steps to generate more information about congregations through “Find a Congregation” on ELCA.org. Church Council action: To receive the response from the Mission Advancement unit regarding the “Find a Congregation” feature on the ELCA website; To commend the Mission Advancement unit for its efforts to revise and update the information about congregations available through “Find a Congregation” on the ELCA website; and To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

II. RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS The reports of the Memorials Committees include the full texts of the synod memorials to the respective assemblies.

A. Motion B: Resolution for a Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA

Addition background was provided in the memorandum regarding the November 2017 meeting of the Church Council: In November 2017, the Church Council voted [CC17.11.27]: To receive the progress report from the Domestic Mission unit regarding the implementation of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA (Motion B); To appoint Bishop Abraham D. Allende [Northeastern Ohio Synod], the Rev. Rani Abdulmasih, Mr. C. Abel Arroyo Traverso, the Rev. Priscilla N. Paris-Austin, Mr. Joseph Castañeda Carrera, Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman, the Rev. Joan A. Conroy, Ms. Grace Kuttub El-Yateem, the Rev. Maria G. Sijera Grant, the Rev. Moses P.P. Penumaka, Ms. Jennifer Kirby, Ms. Maribel Lorenzana, Ms. Vickie L. Murph, the Rev. Surekha Nelavala, the Rev. Lorenzo (Larry) T. Thiele, Mr. Kevin O. Vandiver and the Rev. Lamont A. Wells to the task force assigned with providing benchmarks, accountability and support for attaining diversity goals in all expressions of this church toward becoming an authentic diverse church; and To request a progress report be submitted to the Church Council at its April 2018 meeting.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (April 2018) The Rev. Abraham D. Allende, bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod, and the Rev. Albert Starr Jr., director for ethnic specific and multicultural ministries, co-convened the first gathering of the Strategic Task Force Toward Authentic Diversity on March 14-15, 2018 at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill. The purpose of the meeting was to establish working relationships among task force members and to provide direction on the scope of work. The task force is comprised of a racial and ethnic diversity of persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English, with attention to gender balance, sexual orientation, regional and rostered/laity representation. It was noted that the current task force lacks participation from person(s) with disability. Task force members shared experiences of racial inequity and other barriers hindering this church in achieving racial parity — especially in places where resistance is high. Collectively, they expressed resilience and fruitful hope in moving forward. The Rev. Priscilla N. Paris-Austin, author of Motion B, presented the intent and background of the action. Her remarks named existing racial inequities within this church and the removal of the constitutional goal of achieving representation of 10 percent persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English within the first ten years of the ELCA's formation. The task force reviewed the scope of its assignment in increasing racial and ethnic diversity within the ELCA. The group acknowledged previous efforts toward multiculturalism and existing denominational resources that are underutilized. Ms. Judith Roberts, program director for racial justice, presented an overview of all the diversity and racial justice resolutions adopted at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly in addition to Motion B. Work currently underway through the Ethnic Specific, Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice team was also shared. In addition, the task force received a report from the 2016 Multicultural Leadership Summit. The task force will incorporate recommendations from the Multicultural Leadership Summit in its future reporting to the Churchwide Assembly. The task force divided into three working groups: Group 1 focused on a working definition of "authentic diversity"; Group 2 developed a process and timeline for the work; and Group 3 worked with support for the implementation of 2016 Churchwide Assembly actions. Each task force member will engage synod bishops and councils within her or his related region to introduce/raise awareness of the task force. Bishop Allende will inform the Conference of Bishops of the task force and its participants so that synod leaders will know to expect to be approached for conversation by task force members seeking to gain insight of the synod's past and present work around racial inclusivity, anti-racism and racial justice. A video conference with the task force is scheduled for April 19, 2018. The next in-person

task force meeting is set for July 23-24, 2018. The group will adopt a working definition of “authentic diversity,” suggest a method for assessing diversity initiatives, and develop a timeline for reporting to Church Council and pre-2019 Churchwide Assembly work. Church Council action: To receive the progress report from the Domestic Mission unit regarding the implementation of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA (Motion B); and To request the Domestic Mission unit to provide periodic reports to the Church Council on the work of the Strategic Task Force Toward Authentic Diversity leading up to a final report to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

B. Gun violence prevention

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.03I] To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Saint Paul Area and the Upper Susquehanna synods concerning legislation on background checks and gun violence; To reaffirm this church’s commitment to addressing the broad issues of violence in society through worship, education, service, advocacy and ongoing moral deliberation as called for in the 1994 social message on “Community Violence” and the 2013 Conference of Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Violence; To reaffirm that ELCA social policy does not reject gun ownership or the recreational activities associated with guns as morally wrong; To encourage bishops, pastors and Lutheran leaders to communicate with members of Congress and state legislators this church’s long-standing support for managing gun purchases, such as background checks for all gun sales including private sales; To urge bishops, pastors and Lutheran leaders to communicate to members of Congress and state legislators this church’s sense of urgency for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban (expired in 2004), including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013; and To refer to the Church Council, in consultation with staff of the churchwide organization, consideration of the request for establishing an ELCA task force to organize actions consistent with ELCA policy that addresses gun violence prevention.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

The Domestic Mission unit addresses gun violence in a manner consistent with ELCA Social Policy through the education and advocacy work of ELCA Advocacy in the Washington, D.C., office and state advocacy ministries. For example, on July 8, 2016, ELCA Advocacy invited its network to take action through an alert on Gun Violence urging Congress to take action on gun safety. This action was in response to a call from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton to ELCA ministries and members to be present in their communities in the wake of violence. Presiding Bishop Eaton will be working with the Public Policy Procedures Group (PPPG), which includes ELCA Advocacy staff and other colleagues, to determine the most effective timeline for communicating with members of Congress regarding “this church’s sense of urgency for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban, including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013.” This letter will also state “this church’s long-standing support for managing gun purchases, such as background checks for all gun sales including private sales.” Often when such a letter is sent, it is followed up with an ELCA Advocacy alert to its network to encourage others to write their own letters to members of Congress and state legislators. The hope is that this work can be completed before the end of the 2016-2017 legislative session. This letter may also be timed with the work of state advocacy ministries, such as Faith Action Network, the ELCA advocacy ministry in Washington state, in their work to pass gun safety legislation

(Extreme Risk Protection Order and Safe Gun Storage). The churchwide organization does not at this time have financial resources to devote to the work of a national task force “to organize actions consistent with ELCA policy that addresses gun violence prevention.”

Church Council action [CC16.11.46t]

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit; To decline to establish an ELCA task force addressing gun violence prevention; To commend the ongoing efforts of ELCA Advocacy in addressing gun violence in a manner congruent with this church’s social teaching documents; and To request a follow-up report be provided to the April 2018 Church Council meeting.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (April 2018)

On Thursday, March 16, 2018, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton sent a letter to all members of Congress that called for action on the reauthorization of an assault weapons ban and strengthening background checks. On March 22, 2018, ELCA Advocacy sent a follow-up Action Alert with the same requests, timed to coincide with the March for Our Lives on March 24, 2018, a national event supported by ELCA Conference of Bishops in the Statement in Solidarity with Our Children and Youth. ELCA State Public Policy offices worked on 2018 legislative priorities that focus on managing gun purchases, including:

- Faith Action Network in Washington State supports gun responsibility legislation that includes the Dangerous Access Prevention Act, Enhanced Assault Weapon Background Checks, and action to prohibit sale of bump stocks.
- Virginia Interfaith Center supports legislation that will require background checks for all firearm sales and prohibit straw sales, making it illegal to purchase a firearm on behalf of anyone not lawfully allowed to purchase it themselves. In addition, the Virginia Interfaith Center supports legislation to further limit access to firearms for individuals that are previously convicted of violent crimes.
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania is working on a 2018 priority for legislation that would make it more difficult for defendants in domestic abuse cases to gain access to firearms.
- Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry in New Jersey organized advocacy including phone calls to the governor's office that led to a ban on bump stocks signed by outgoing Gov. Chris Christie on January 15, 2018.

Church Council action:

To receive the report from the Domestic Mission unit on “Gun Violence Prevention”; and To request that the secretary of this church notify the synods of this action.

C. Deepening relationships with Historic Black Churches

Addition background was provided in the memorandum regarding the November 2016 meeting of the Church Council: In November 2016, the Church Council voted [CC16.11.46p]: To receive with gratitude the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding the relationship-building already underway to deepen relationships with Historic Black Churches; and To request a report to the April 2018 Church Council meeting on the development of a strategy to further this goal.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (April 2018)

The ELCA has continued to engage in a multi-faceted strategy for strengthening relations with the Historic Black Churches. This has included strengthening bilateral, coalition and conciliar work and witness, as well as partnerships among churchwide colleagues, synods and the African

Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA). A considerable amount has been accomplished within existing budget and capacity; a more expansive strategy will require further consideration of both.

Highlights for 2017 include:

- Paving the way for renewed dialogue with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. Following up on 2016 meetings, Bishop Eaton received Bishop John F. White, president of the AME Church's Council of Bishops, as a special guest at the 2017 Bishops' Academy in Charleston, S.C. High-level meetings to discuss new possibilities for dialogue and collaboration, ecumenical worship and fellowship on the occasion of Epiphany, and a shared visit to Mother Emanuel for prayer took place. Senior Bishop McKinley Young has since expressed interest in continued dialogue.
- Strengthening joint reception of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ)-ELCA 2010 Statement of Mission. At the national level, we have continued to cultivate our partnership with AMEZ bishops, including Senior Bishop George E. Battle Jr., as we live into our common commitments expressed in the 2010 Statement of Mission. Bishop W. Darin Moore spoke powerfully at the ELCA's 500th anniversary of the Reformation event in Washington, D.C., on truth-telling and racial justice. Further work has continued in the Carolinas with the leadership of Bishop Herman R. Yoos III [South Carolina Synod], Bishop Timothy M. Smith [North Carolina Synod] and synod ecumenical committees in partnership with Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, Racial Justice Ministries and ADLA. Local relationship-building and partnerships are being renewed or established through events and initiatives. These models are being shared through the Conference of Bishops.
- Continuing presence and participation in strategic coalitions and conferences. We have continued to participate in the ecumenical body Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), especially on the shared commitment to racial justice. At this table, we engage in common work with other Protestant and Historic Black Churches on questions related to the intersection between racism and the reconciliation of ministries. In 2017, the churches of CUIC publicly celebrated their mutual recognition of ministries and held a series of public events focused on racial justice in the greater Dallas area. In 2017, we also participated for the third year in the Conference of National Black Churches, as part of their cross-racial dialogue. This conference is the organization of the eight largest Historic Black Churches in the United States. The presiding bishop spoke, and Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations staff and Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries staff were present.
- Exploring new possibilities for strengthening historic black church relations. In 2017, the Rev. Lamont A. Wells, ADLA president, provided leadership in organizing the first-ever joint African Descent Lutheran Association and Union of Black Episcopalians Summit in Cherry Hill, N.J., on the theme "Like A Mighty Stream, Let Justice Roll: Absalom, Jehu, and Beyond." The summit provided an opportunity for these organizations to meet separately and together, and to celebrate the vital history and continued calling of black leadership in the Lutheran and Episcopal churches in the United States. It was an exciting opportunity for deepening relationships with one of our full communion partners. The presiding bishop, several synod bishops and various churchwide ministries staff members were present.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding "Deepening Relationships with Historic Black Churches"; To commend the work of building and strengthening relations given

the existing budget and capacity and to encourage the continued multi-faceted strategy of engagement; and To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

