

LIVING INTO THE FUTURE TOGETHER:  
RENEWING THE ECOLOGY OF THE ELCA (LIFT)

**CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTONS  
BASED ON THE LIFT REPORT'S AMENDED RECOMMENDATIONS**

9-20-11

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**CA11.03.07**

To commend with joy and gratitude the report of the task force on Living into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (LIFT) for study and action;

To thank the task force and all who contributed to its work for a vision of where God is leading this church;

To endorse the recommendations of the task force, as amended by the Church Council;

To express confidence that God is leading this church into God's future; and

To invite members, congregations, synods, regions, the churchwide organization, colleges and universities, institutions and agencies, networks, and global, ecumenical, and other partners into deep conversation, prayer, and discernment, as, together, this church commits itself to the following actions to implement the report and recommendations:

1. To make support for the work of congregations one of the highest priorities of this church. To request congregations, in collaboration with synods, to begin, develop, review or redefine their unique mission plans by the end of 2012, so that each congregation strengthens its capabilities and resources for witness and mission;
2. To support and strengthen synods so that they become catalysts for mission planning;
3. To request the Conference of Bishops, in consultation with synod leaders and the churchwide organization, to prepare a report and recommendations for the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council for consideration by the 2013 Churchwide Assembly that:
  - describes patterns of synodical life in the ELCA that effectively support vital congregations, mission growth and outreach;
  - proposes a pattern or a set of patterns that will allow synods to receive and distribute financial resources to support the whole ministry of this church;
  - builds on the Blue Ribbon Committee report of 2007 and includes recommendations for renewed, sustainable financial support for the mission and ministries of this church, including funding for theological education;
  - includes strategies for increased mission vitality that may include consideration of redrawing synod boundaries; and
  - recommends revision of the constitutional responsibilities of bishops and synods to emphasize synods as catalysts for mission in the changing context and culture.
4. To urge regions to expand their roles as centers for exploring the possibilities of cooperative mission and ministry;

5. To affirm the role of the churchwide organization to:
  - accompany congregations and synods;
  - build the capacity of this church for evangelical witness and service;
  - continue to build and strengthen mutual and interdependent relationships;
  - model and promote the vision of a multicultural, multi-ethnic church;
  - coordinate this church's global mission and its international development and relief work;
  - lead its theological reflection and deliberations on identity and mission;
  - lead, in collaboration with the Conference of Bishops, synod leaders, and the Church Council, in exploring opportunities to grow current support, including direct appeals, planned giving, and endowment management.
6. To encourage the development of leaders for this church through increased innovation and collaboration in leadership development, faith formation, and theological education;
7. To build and strengthen relationships with this church's global companions and ecumenical partners, focusing on accompaniment, mutual growth, capacity-building, and sustainability of relationships;
8. To support and utilize networking as an organizational principle and practice that embodies interdependence, values the abundant human resources found in the congregations, synods, the churchwide expression, and institutions of this church, and enhances increased collaboration and connections for missional purposes across this church;
9. To nurture a culture of faithful discernment that contributes to mutual respect and healthy decision-making in all assemblies, councils, committees, small groups, and meetings in congregations, synods, the churchwide expression, institutions, and agencies; and
10. To endorse the proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* concerning the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Conference of Bishops, program committees, and interrelationships and networks.

Action #10 included the following amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of the ELCA:

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| 12:31  | The assembly shall meet biennially in regular session through 2013, and triennially thereafter. 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. |
| 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 33 and not more than 45 other persons, elected by the Churchwide Assembly.                     |

19.02.01.1.1.

The members of the Church Council shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly. 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 33 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 synodical 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. Excluding the churchwide officers, there shall not be more than two members of the Church Council from a synod, nor shall more than two-thirds of the synods in a region have members on the Church Council at the same time. The Church Council shall have at least one member from each region. 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.

- 10.61.01. This synod may establish conferences, clusters, coalitions, area subdivisions, and networks as appropriate within its territory and in collaboration with other synods and partners 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 partners.

**CA11.04.14**

To authorize the Church Council, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and Communal Discernment Task Force, to establish a review process of current procedures for the development and adoption of social statements, following the consideration of the genetics social statement, *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility*, at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly; and

To bring no social statements other than *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility* to any Churchwide Assembly until completion of a review of the process for addressing social concerns based on a spirit of communal discernment. This review shall be completed and brought to the fall 2012 Church Council meeting, with a report to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly. During this review, the process for developing the criminal justice social statement and the justice for women social statement may continue, without alteration of the process already under way for the statement on criminal justice, which is to be completed and reported to the 2013 assembly.

**CA11.04.21**

To provide a means to continue the work assigned to the task force on Living into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (LIFT), the 2011 Churchwide Assembly directs that the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in collaboration with the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops, do the following:

1. To facilitate review of the constitutional responsibilities of synods in order that synods continue and increase their roles as catalysts for missional planning;
2. To facilitate a broad-based process addressing legislative decision-making in this church;
3. To initiate a process to expand the consultative role of the Conference of Bishops that allows the Church Council to refer issues to it and the Conference of Bishops to make recommendations to the Church Council;
4. To explore the use of social media and technology in order to allow greater participation of ELCA members in meetings of the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly;
5. To initiate collaborative work by congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, institutions of this church, and others to create and support diverse non-legislative forums and events that bring together leaders of this church to address missional issues, participate in theological study and reflection, foster leadership development, and enhance the interdependence of this church;
6. To request units of the churchwide organization to propose to the Church Council ways of receiving grassroots input on and disseminating information about their work through the use of emerging forms of communication, taking care to include those engaged in multicultural, ethnic-specific, justice for women ministries, youth and young adult networks, and various ministry partners; and
7. To request that annual reports related to this work be presented to the Church Council through 2013.