
ELCA Style Guide

Version 1
February 15, 2010



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

ELCA Style Guide

Alphabetized Word List

The primary style manual for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is the current edition of *Associated Press Stylebook (AP Stylebook)*. The primary dictionary resource is the current edition of *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*. When alternate spellings are available in the dictionary, the first reference is used. For matters not treated here or in the *AP Stylebook*, consult the current edition of *Chicago Manual of Style*. Do not assume that an entry in this word list implies a difference with *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* or *AP Stylebook*.

Abba

Aramaic for “father”; do not italicize

acronyms

generally *avoid* acronyms; *always* spell out name in first full reference; if an acronym is to be used in later references, the acronym *first* must appear in parentheses () after the first full reference:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is a church body... .
The ELCA comprises

accommodate

note: this word has double “c” and “m”

A.D./B.C.; C.E./B.C.E./

see B.C./A.D.

adolescent

do not use; use boy, girl, young adult or youth instead

see these entries for further guidelines

adult

at age 18, everyone is either a man or a woman; any reference to adult women as “girls” or adult men as “boys” is unacceptable

see also boy; girl; man; woman; young adult; youth

advent/Advent

capitalize when referring to the Advent season; but lowercase for “the advent of our Lord”

affect, effect

most common usages: “affect” (verb) means “to influence”:

The sudden snowstorm affected their travel plans.

“effect” (noun) means “a result or consequence”:

The sudden snowstorm had no effect on their travel plans.

much less often, “effect” as a verb means “to bring about” or “to cause”:

The new mayor hoped to effect change in the economy.

affirmation of baptism/Affirmation of Baptism

lowercase when used as a general term:

After the hymn of the day comes the affirmation of baptism.

capitalize only when referring to the title of the liturgical rite:

Note how the laying on of hands is done in Affirmation of Baptism, *Book of Worship*, page 82.

see baptism

Africa/African

use only when referring to the entire continent; otherwise, refer to a particular country, culture or people

African American (adj.)

do not hyphenate (*exception* to *AP Stylebook*); the usage of the cultural-ethnic background of people who were transplanted to the Americas (by immigration or by slave trade) is preferable to categories of color. This usage affirms the rich ethnic traditions from which people have come rather than simply indicating skin color or a perceived skin color. Because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask them how they would like to be identified.

African Descent (adj.)

preferred use for people whose ancestors, however long ago, came from Africa:

We attended a meeting of the African Descent community.

age

- refer to people age 18 and older as either a man or a woman; at age 18, everyone is referred to as an adult
- *avoid* using the terms “boy” and “girl” for anyone older than 12
- “older adult” is *preferred* over “elderly” or “senior citizen”; but their use in generic phrases that do not refer to specific individuals is acceptable: “senior citizen’s discount,” “a home for the elderly”
- *always* use numerals; hyphenate ages used as adjectives:
A 5-year-old girl painted it.
or as a substitute for a noun:
The book was written for 3-year-olds.
- *avoid* using “teenager,” “adolescent” and “kids”

see also adult; boy; girl; man; woman; young adult; youth

AIDS

acronym for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; use all caps, no periods; use “people with AIDS,” or “people living with AIDS”; *avoid* using “AIDS victim”; when reference also includes family and friends, use “people affected by AIDS”
prefer “HIV and AIDS” *not* “HIV/AIDS”
see also HIV

Alaska Native

preferred over “Native Alaskan”; indigenous people of Alaska; because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask them how they would like to be identified

Alcoholics Anonymous

“A.A.” is acceptable after first reference

Aleut

one of numerous Alaska Native people; indigenous people of the Aleutian Islands off the southwest coast of Alaska
see also Alaska Native

Allah

Arabic for “God”

alleluia/Alleluia!

capitalize only when used as an interjection

a lot

two words

all right

two words

All Saints Day

no apostrophe

almighty God

note capitalization treatment

all ready, already

“all ready” is used as an adjective and means “completely ready”:

The disciples were all ready to follow Jesus anywhere.

“already” is an adverb of time and means “before then”:

The disciples already were called by Jesus.

all together, altogether

“all together” is an adjective and means “gathered in one place”:

The Old and New Testaments were printed all together in one volume.

“altogether” is an adverb meaning “wholly” or “completely”:

The stories were altogether true.

or “in all”:

There were four stories altogether.

or “on the whole”; “in the main”:

Altogether, the story seemed probable.

altar

the table or stand used for sacred purposes in worship; *note* spelling in this usage is *not* “alter”

a.m., p.m.

lowercase, with periods

ambo

single reading stand for the proclamation of the readings and preaching; often used instead of “lectern” in liturgical settings

America

do not use when “United States” is meant

American(s)

popular usage, even outside the United States, often refers to citizens of the United States as

“Americans”; however, U.S. citizens are not the only Americans; strictly speaking, they are also not the only North Americans; *preferred* usage is to be as clear as possible in the reference, as “people of the United States” or “citizens of [country]”; *exception*: usages such as “Black American”

American Indian

preferred term for the indigenous people of North America, except for those identified as Alaska Native people; refer to a specific nation when possible:

He is a Hopi commissioner.

because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask them how they would like to be identified

amid

not “amidst”

among

not “amongst”

among, between

in general, “among” introduces more than two items:

Jesus distributed the bread among the men, women and children gathered at the Mount.

and “between” introduces only two items:

I am between a rock and a hard place.

see AP Stylebook entry for more information

and/or

avoid this device or shortcut, as it damages the clarity of a sentence and often leads to confusion or ambiguity; instead offer more explanation as to the options involved in the reference

annunciation/Annunciation

capitalize only when referring to the festival on March 25 that commemorates the announcement of the incarnation to Mary: “The Annunciation of Our Lord”

anti-

in general, hyphenate after this prefix, although there are many exceptions

see AP Stylebook entry for more information

see also prefix

Antichrist/anti-Christ

“Antichrist” (proper name) refers to the individual who, according to the Bible, will challenge Christ; “anti-Christ” (adjective) refers to someone or something opposed to Christ

anti-racism

hyphenate

anti-Semitic/anti-Semitism

note capitalization

anyone, any one; everyone, every one; someone, some one

when the stress is on “any,” “every,” or “some” and when the person/people is/are thought of in general terms, write as one word:

Everyone who is baptized ...

when the focus is on each person and the emphasis is on individuality, write as two words:

Every one of the baptized ...

apocalypse/Apocalypse

capitalize only when referring to the book of Revelation or the Apocalypse of John

Apocrypha

Jewish intertestamental writings; the books that are in the Septuagint or Vulgate versions of the Bible, but not included in the Jewish and Protestant canon

apocryphal/Apocryphal

lowercase when referring to a story that may not be true; capitalize only when referring to the Apocrypha

apologist/Apologist(s)

capitalize only when referring to someone who was of this group of second-century Christian theologians, such as Justin Martyr

Apology, the

italicize when referring to the work by Justin Martyr or Plato; do not italicize when referring to “the Apology to the Augsburg Confession”

apostle/Apostle(s)

“the apostle Paul,” “this apostle”; but “Apostle Paul”

Apostles' Creed, the

capitalize, with an apostrophe; but lowercase "creed" when using the short form in subsequent references: "the creed"

apostolic/Apostolic

"apostolic church," "apostolic council," "apostolic greetings," "apostolic succession"; but "the Apostolic Fathers"

appraise, apprise

"appraise" is to evaluate:

Let me appraise the situation in the assembly plenary.

"apprise" is to inform:

I will apprise the secretary of the mood of the plenary.

article/Article

capitalize when referring to individual articles of the creeds: "the Third Article"; but "this article"

as, like

use "as" as a conjunction to introduce clauses:

Jane plays cello as a musician should.

use "like" as a preposition for comparing nouns and pronouns, which requires a direct object:

Jane plays like a musician.

ascension/Ascension

lowercase "Christ's ascension"; capitalize only when referring to the Thursday, 40 days after Easter, that commemorates Christ's ascent into heaven: "Ascension Day"

Ash Wednesday

capitalize

Asian

use for people from countries in Asia; *do not use* "Asiatic" or "Oriental" when referring to people; whenever possible, make references to the specific country:

Filipinos are the people from the Philippines.

Asian American (adj.)

do not hyphenate (*exception to AP Stylebook*); U.S. citizens of Asian descent

assembly/Assembly

capitalize when referring to a specific assembly, including the date:

We met at the 1995 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

lowercase when not referring to a specific assembly, or upon subsequent reference:

The churchwide assembly meets every two years. During an assembly ...

"assembly" is also used when referring to the worshiping congregation with its ministers:

The assembly rose to sing the hymn.

see also churchwide assembly; synod assembly

assisting minister

lowercase

assumption/Assumption

capitalize only when referring to the August 15 festival on the Roman Catholic calendar: "The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary"

Athanasian Creed, the

capitalize; but lowercase "creed" when using the short form in subsequent references: "the creed"

atonement

lowercase

Augsburg Confession

do not italicize or enclose in quotation marks

a while, awhile

when used with "for," write as two words:

She will travel for a while.

but

She will travel awhile.

Baal/baals

reference to any of numerous Canaanite and Phoenician local deities; singular, without article, usually capitalize:

The people went out to worship Baal.

plural form is lowercase: "baals" or "baalim"

baby Jesus

lowercase "baby"

baptism/Baptism

baptism is the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism; capitalize when referring to the Christian sacrament or rite: "Holy Baptism," "Sacrament of Holy Baptism"; lowercase when used as a general term: "baptism by fire,"

"remembering my baptism," "Jesus' baptism":

Many Christians practice infant baptism.

baptismal, baptismal candle, baptismal garment

any such adjectival usage of “baptismal” is lowercase

baptismal font

prefer simply “font”

baptized, the

lowercase

B.C./A.D.; B.C.E./C.E.

B.C. is abbreviation for “before Christ,” and should come after the year; A.D. is abbreviation for *anno Domini*, “in the year of our Lord,” and should come before the year; B.C.E. is abbreviation for “before the common era”; C.E. is abbreviation for “common era”; *prefer* usage of B.C./A.D.; however B.C.E./C.E. are acceptable to use especially in an inter-religious situation where this usage is more hospitable than B.C. and A.D.; *do not use* small caps

Beatitudes, the/beatitude(s)

capitalize only when referring to Matthew 5:1-12 and Luke 6:20-26; but “Jesus’ beatitudes”

between

see among, between

biannual, biennial

“biannual” means twice a year:

The committee meets biannually.

prefer “semiannual”

“biennial” means every two years:

The ELCA churchwide assembly meets biennially.

Bible/Holy Bible, the

in general, capitalize; but lowercase when used as a nonreligious term:

My dictionary is my bible.

see also books of the Bible

Bible, version of

the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible is the *preferred* version to be used for all biblical references; if it is necessary, in a particular context, to quote from another version of the Bible, reasoning for this deviation from the standard should be provided when the document is submitted to Communication Services for editorial

review as well as an indication of which version is being used

see biblical text references

see also Appendix 1 for appropriate credit lines for various versions of the Bible

biblical (adj.)

lowercase

biblical quotations

if a biblical quotation consists of only one verse, it can be credited by simply putting the abbreviation for the version of the Bible used in small caps after the reference; if the resource contains numerous biblical references, a credit line should be added on the copyright page of the resource crediting the appropriate version used

see also New Revised Standard Version, the

see Appendix 1 for appropriate credit lines

biblical text references

- complete chapters referenced within a body of copy may use chapter number only: Matthew 5; at other times (for example, when listing a Bible basis), list the complete reference: Matthew 5:1-48
- arabic numbers (*not* Roman numerals) are used for numbered books: 2 Thessalonians; if a sentence starts with a book name, spell out the number:
Second Thessalonians begins with
- if a reference to the Bible translation follows a verse reference, it is placed in small caps without a comma: Matthew 13:34 KJV
- examples of biblical references in running text:
It is then we remember the words, “There is the Lamb of God” (John 1:29 TEV).
But Paul and Silas did not give up hope, singing and praying even in prison (verse 25). [or v. 25]
- example of reference made outside of running text, such as set off at the beginning of a document, as a key Bible verse:
And I will be with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:20
- examples of punctuation within the citation for biblical text references:
Matthew 13:34
Matthew 13:34-35 [use a hyphen]
Matthew 13:34, 48, 56 [spaces between nonconsecutive verses]

Matthew 5; 8 [semicolon to separate whole, nonconsecutive chapters]
Matthew 13:34; 14:7 [semicolon and space to separate chapters that have verse references]
Matthew 5–7 [en dash to separate whole, consecutive chapters]
see en and em dash
Acts 2:4; Matthew 13:34 [semicolon and space to separate citations from different books of the Bible]
Matthew 13:34—14:7 [em dash for a passage that encompasses parts of two chapters]
see en and em dash
Matthew 4:8—5:48 [when reference ends with the end of a chapter, cite ending verse number to avoid a citation like Matthew 4:8—5]

see also books of the Bible

biennial

see biannual, biennial

bisexual

no hyphen

bishop

- in first reference, lowercase:
Closing remarks were given by the Rev. Janice Schulz, bishop of the ELCA Central States Synod.
thereafter “Bishop Schulz”
- when the title comes before the name, capitalize title: “Bishop Janice Schulz”
- *do not use* both “the Rev.” and the title before the person’s name: *not* “the Rev. Bishop Joseph Anderson”
- the title of the chief executive officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is “presiding bishop” and the name of the office is “Office of the Presiding Bishop”
- district presidents in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod do not use the title “bishop”
- for questions about titles of leaders of other denominations, consult with staff of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs or Office of the Secretary

Black (adj.)

capitalize when referring to a group of people: “Black Americans,” “historic Black churches”;

similar style is used with other group designations: “White Americans”
avoid using as a noun

blind

use “people who are blind,” “people who are visually impaired,” “blind people”; *do not use* “the blind”
see also disability

blog

short for “Web log”; Internet communication with regular updates (“posts”) typically displayed in reverse chronological order and maintained by one person; if a blog has a title, the title should be set in italics

body and blood of Christ

elements of the Sacrament of Holy Communion

body of Christ, the

refers to the church universal

book

do not capitalize when referring to a book of the Bible:

This story is in the book of Daniel.
delete “book” if this removal is not disruptive to the meaning:

This story is in Daniel.

books of the Bible

to avoid confusion for the reader, *always* spell out names of the books of the Bible in running text
see AP Stylebook “Bible” for approved standard names

boy

use only for males under age 12
see adult; man; young adult; youth

brandmark

one word; the official, unifying graphic identity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America includes three elements: the emblem, the name of this church and the tagline; the brandmark does not always include the tagline but it must *always* include the name and the emblem; brandmark resources can be found at www.elca.org/godsworkeourhands; consult www.elca.org/trademark for approved usage of the brandmark
see also emblem; tagline

Burma

prefer “Myanmar”

cabinet

capitalize when writing “ELCA Cabinet of Executives” or “Cabinet of Executives”; lowercase when referring to it subsequently: “the cabinet”

calendar, the

list of church seasons, Sundays, festivals, lesser festivals, commemorations and occasions; lowercase

cancer

see disease

canon, canonical (adj.)

lowercase

catechetical

lowercase

catechism/Catechism

lowercase except when used as part of a title: “the Small Catechism,” “the Large Catechism”

catechumen

youth or adult preparing for baptism and first communion

catechumenate

process through which youth or adults prepare for baptism and first communion

catholic/Catholic

lowercase when referring to the universal church:

I believe in ... the holy, catholic church.

but capitalize when it refers to the “Roman Catholic Church”

Catholic Reformation

see Counter-Reformation

C.E./B.C.E.

see B.C./A.D.

centuries

reference to a particular century in a sentence should be lowercase and spelled out for numbers less than 10: “the second century,” “the 19th century”

note that the reference should be hyphenated if

used as an adjective: “20th-century music”

note that the -th or -st may be superscripted or not

see also dates; decades

chair

may also use “chairperson,” “convener,” “presider,” “moderator,” “coordinator” or “leader” *avoid*, if possible, using “chairman” or “chairwoman”

chalice and paten

prefer “cup and plate” for simplicity or clarification

Chanukah

preferred spelling is “Hanukkah”

chaplain

on first reference, “Chaplain Randall Whitmore, U.S. Army” is acceptable, with “Chaplain Whitmore” on second reference; rank ought not to be used as a title, but if included, write: “Lieutenant Randall Whitmore, chaplain in the U.S. Army”

chapter

in parentheses or notes, may use “chap. 2,” “chaps. 2–4”; otherwise, write out in running text

Chicano

avoid; use “Latino” instead

see Latino

chosen people

lowercase

chrism

oil used for anointing at baptism

Christ child

“child” may be capitalized when used alone in referring to Jesus if the meaning is otherwise unclear

Christendom

capitalize

Christian

capitalize

Christian church

note that “church” is lowercase

Christianity

capitalize

Christlike

capitalize

Christmas cycle, the

note capitalization treatment

Christmas Day

capitalize

Christmas Eve

capitalize

Christmas season, the

note capitalization treatment

Christ the King

festival of the church year

church/Church

lowercase in instances such as: “the early church,” “the Lutheran church,” “the church (building),” “church founders,” “church school”; *do not use* “church” when you mean “congregation:

Our congregation has many young members.

not “Our church has many young members.”
capitalize only when referring to a specific church: “St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church”; or to the corporate title of a church body: “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” “Roman Catholic Church”;

in references to or as an alternative for “ELCA,” use “this church”; usage of “our church” is also possible when used in a fundraising reference; when referring to the catholic (universal) church, “church” should be lowercased unless quoting an original source

see catholic/Catholic

church bodies

lowercase

church body units

see titles and in-house designations of ELCA units

Church Council

use in reference to ELCA Church Council only; if the context clearly indicates that the ELCA Church Council is meant, lowercase “council” may be used upon subsequent references *see also* Congregation Council

churchwide (adj.)

always use as an adjective modifying another word; *never* use as a noun standing alone *see also* churchwide office

churchwide assembly/Churchwide Assembly

capitalize when referring to a specific assembly, including the year:

I attended the 2009 Churchwide Assembly.

lowercase when not referring to a specific assembly or upon subsequent reference:

Important decisions are made during the churchwide assembly. During the assembly... .

churchwide office

lowercase; *always* use in singular form, *not* “churchwide offices”

churchwide organization

lowercase; one of the three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; this is the correct terminology for reference to the administrative offices of this church:

I work for the churchwide organization.

I work at the Lutheran Center.

do not use “I work at churchwide.”

church year

lowercase

city of David

note capitalization treatment

civilized/uncivilized

avoid; use “traditional” or “cultural” instead: “traditional people,” “cultural practices”

clergy

as distinct from laity; use also “clergyperson,” “pastor,” “members of the clergy,” “ordained minister”

avoid “clergyman,” “clergywoman,” “clergyperson”

clergy titles

- in running text, on first reference, use “the Rev. Jane M. Doe” (note use of the full name of the person); on subsequent reference, use “Pastor Doe”
- in correspondence, use “The Rev. Jane M. Doe” in the address, and “Dear Pastor Doe” in the salutation
- lowercase “pastor” when used after the person’s name:
The Rev. Jane M. Doe, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, presided at worship Sunday.
- former ELCA bishops are referred to as simply “the Rev. Jane Doe”; they are not bishops for life
- *never* use “the Rev. Dr.” unless the doctorate is an earned degree
- using titles other than “pastor” for clergy of other denominations may be appropriate and preferred; consult with staff of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations and Office of the Secretary if you have a question about the title of someone of another denomination

see AP Stylebook, “religious titles,” for usage
see also bishop

co-

hyphenate between this prefix and the word that follows when indicating occupation or status: “co-pastor,” “co-signer”; otherwise, do not hyphenate “coequal,” “coexist,” “cooperate,” “coordinate”

colon, semicolon

see AP Stylebook, “Punctuation”

comma

- with dates: in full dates, a comma follows the year:
On November 8, 1998, the Committee on the Rightful Place of Commas will meet.
when only the month and year are listed, they appear without a comma, as in “November 1998” (*not* “November, 1998”)
- with Junior, Senior, II, III: no comma is used between the surname of the individual and these designations:
Benjamin V. Washington Jr., executive assistant to the bishop, met with us.
Joseph J. Olson III, executive assistant to the bishop, was absent.

- with states and countries: a comma follows the name of a state in city-state or city in city-country references in text:

The meeting was held in Columbus, Ohio, at Trinity Lutheran Seminary. They visited Geneva, Switzerland, while on their vacation in Europe.

see also AP Stylebook, “comma”

comma in a series

see serial punctuation

commandment/Commandment(s)

lowercase when referring to any general commandment:

That commandment is hard to keep. but capitalize when referring to the Ten Commandments as a whole or to a specific one: “the First Commandment,” “the Commandments”

Commandment, the Great

as found in Matthew 22:37

Commission, the Great

as found in Matthew 28:19-20 or Mark 16:15

communion/Communion

lowercase when used as a general term: “the communion of saints,” “my first communion”; capitalize when referring to the Christian sacrament of receiving the body and blood of Christ: “Holy Communion,” “Sacrament of Holy Communion”

complement, compliment

“complement” refers to something that completes or perfects another thing:

A dessert plate is a nice complement to a formal place setting.

“compliment” is an approving remark:

She paid me a nice compliment about my new suit.

compline

see night prayer

compose, comprise

“compose” means “to put together or create” or “to be made up of”:

Mozart was known to compose as early as age five.

The task force was composed of both clergy and lay people.

“comprise” means “to include”:

Before he died at 35, Mozart’s compositions would comprise over 40 symphonies.

confession/Confession

lowercase any creedal usage: “confessions of faith”; but capitalize when used as a short form for a specific document: “the Augsburg Confession,” “the Westminster Confession” or “Lutheran Confessions”; also capitalize when used as a title in a liturgical setting: “Confession and Forgiveness”

confirmation

confirmation is the program that leads to Affirmation of Baptism; lowercase when used as a general term:

I look forward to my confirmation.

see also Affirmation of Baptism

congregation

one of the three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

congregation-based organizing/ congregation-based community organizing

hyphenate; “faith-based community organizing” is also acceptable

Congregation Council

capitalize; this is the correct name for the governing bodies of ELCA congregations, according to the ELCA constitution; *do not use* “church council” or “Congregational Council”

congregational (adj.)

note the “-al” ending when this lowercase term is used as an adjective:

The congregational vote was recorded in the minutes.

consecration

lowercase; but capitalize when used in the title of the rite:

Consecration of Deaconesses and Diaconal Ministers

contractions

avoid the use of contractions in official documents of this church

copyright

the ELCA (not the unit) holds the copyright to any work produced by churchwide staff in the line of their job responsibilities; separately incorporated units of the ELCA may hold the copyright in their name:

Copyright © 20XX Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Copyright © 20XX Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

council

capitalize when writing “ELCA Church Council”; lowercase when referring to it subsequently: “the council”; follow a similar pattern for “Synod Council” and “Congregation Council”

Counter-Reformation

reform movement in the Roman Catholic Church following the Protestant Reformation; also called the Catholic Reformation

courtesy titles (Mr., Mrs., Ms.)

be consistent; either use courtesy titles for everyone or do not use at all; use “Mrs.” only if requested;

prefer “Ms.” for all females

covenant/Covenant

prefer “books of the Old Testament”; lowercase when used as a theological concept: “Mosaic covenant”; but capitalize as a synonym for books of the Old Testament: “Old Covenant”

creation

lowercase

creator/Creator

capitalize when used as a synonym for God or part of a title in direct address: “our Creator”; otherwise lowercase: “God, creator of the universe”

credit lines, copyright language

see Appendix 1 for appropriate credit lines to use when citing common resources

creed/Creed

capitalize only when used as part of a title: “the Apostles’ Creed,” “the Nicene or Athanasian Creeds” or when the meaning is otherwise unclear; lowercase when referring to any generic creed:

“Do unto others ...” has become his creed.

cross

lowercase

cross-cultural

hyphenate

Crucified, the

note capitalization treatment

Crucified One

capitalize

crucifixion

lowercase is *preferred*; capitalize only when the context does not make understanding clear

crusades/Crusades

capitalize when referring to the Crusades of the Middle Ages; lowercase elsewhere

dash, hyphen

note: usage described here is *preferred* ELCA Style (*exception* to *AP Stylebook*)

there are two types of dashes: an em dash (—), and an en dash (–), both so called because their width is the space taken up by the letter m or n in the days of typesetting; compare their lengths to the hyphen (-);

note: neither em nor en dashes should be surrounded by word spaces

exception: this “word space” rule does not apply to ad copy, news releases or Web material

Specific usage:

- **em dash**: — (key stroke: Alt/Control/Number pad hyphen or minus sign)
 - indicate sudden breaks and abrupt changes
 - provide amplifying, explanatory and digressive elements

I was startled when the dog—the one over there—barked suddenly.
- **en dash**: – (key stroke: Control/Number pad hyphen or minus sign)
 - connect continuing or inclusive numbers (dates, times or reference numbers):
1968–72
May–June 1967
pp. 38–45
10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

but *do not use* a dash in these instances:
from 1968 to 1972

from May to June 1967

between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

- replace a hyphen in a compound adjective when one of the elements of the adjective is an open compound or when two or more of the elements are hyphenated compounds

Pulitzer Prize–winning poet

New York–London flight

post–Civil War period

quasi-public–quasi-judicial body

- **hyphen**: -

- separate numbers that are not inclusive such as telephone numbers or Social Security numbers
- use for compound words and word division
- use to avoid ambiguity when a double modifier comes before a noun: “well-known author,” “small-business owners”; *exception* a hyphen is *not* used in a double modifier when the first word is an –ly adverb: “quickly run meeting,” “neatly decorated yard”

exceptions: see biblical references

dates

- *always* use figures without the ending -st, -nd, -rd, or -th when writing dates: “January 1, 2009” *not* “January 1st, 2009”
- when the month and year are used alone, spell out the month and do not separate with a comma: “November 1998”
- when using a full date (month, date, year), *prefer* spelling out the month; *exception*: in informal documents, such as news copy, where space is an issue, the month may be abbreviated: “Nov. 2, 1998”
- when used with a specific date in informal text, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.: “Nov. 2,” “April 14,” “July 23”
- when using a full date (month, date, year) in the middle of a sentence, a comma follows the year:

We will meet November 2, 1998, at the hall.
- when using inclusive dates, may drop the century in the second reference: “1920–25,” “2009–10”
- when using inclusive dates with B.C. and A.D., use full year: “330–300 B.C.,” “A.D. 1900–1905”

note: B.C. follows the date; A.D. precedes it
see also centuries; decades

Day of Atonement

note capitalization treatment

day of judgment

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear, or when it means the same as the Day of the Lord

Day of the Lord

note capitalization treatment

Dead Sea Scrolls

Qumran literature

deaf/Deaf

use “people who are deaf,” “hearing impaired,” “deaf people”; *do not use* “the deaf” or “hard of hearing”; “Deaf” is capitalized when referring to a culture of people;

note that the same practice for capitalization does *not* hold for “blind”

see also disability

decades

decades may be either spelled out or expressed in numbers preceded by apostrophes:

He lectured during the eighties and nineties.

She composed during the '80s and '90s.

note that if the first two numerals are omitted, only one apostrophe is used and is put before the numerals as in the example above. *Never* use an apostrophe before “s” in '90s when referring to years: “the '90s,” *not* “the '90's” or “1990's”

see also centuries; dates

decimals

for amounts less than 1, use the numeral zero before the decimal point: “0.3”

definitely abled

used most commonly, but not exclusively, within Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) contexts; approved by LYO in 1997 for: 1) naming the Definitely Abled Advisory Committee (DAC) and the Definitely Abled Youth Leadership Event (DAYLE), and 2) offering a new usage for the wider church and the world

delegate

use only when referring to Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention; use “voting member” in the context of a churchwide assembly or a synod assembly

Deutero-Isaiah

capitalize and hyphenate if used
prefer “2 Isaiah”

developing nation

see Third World nation

devil

lowercase

dialogue

in a liturgy, brief phrases or sentences used responsively between leader and assembly; especially, the three-part dialogue that begins the Great Thanksgiving:

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

see also Great Thanksgiving, the

diaspora/Diaspora

capitalize when referring to the dispersion of the Jews after the Babylonian exile; otherwise, lowercase

different from

use instead of “different than”

differently abled

see definitely abled

disability

general term for a permanent or semipermanent condition that may interfere with a person’s capability to do something independently; all references should reflect that the person is more important than the condition; refer to “people with disabilities” *not* “the disabled”; refer to the specific condition whenever possible: “people who are deaf,” *not* “the deaf”; “people who are blind,” *not* “the blind”

disciples, the

lowercase: “the 12 disciples”; but capitalize “the Twelve”
see also apostles

Disaster Appeal

do not use; prefer “ELCA Disaster Response”
see also Appendix 3 for ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response style sheet

disease

refer to “people with cancer” or “people living with cancer,” “people living with Alzheimer’s disease”; *avoid* using “victim” unless the condition results from uncontrollable, external influences, like “accident victim”; all references should reflect that the person is more important than the condition

divine/Divine

capitalize when used as a synonym for God: “the Divine”; but lowercase otherwise: “divine grace”

Down syndrome

not Down’s syndrome

down, up (travel)

see up and down (travel)

doxology/Doxology

an ascription of praise to the Trinity; capitalize only when used as a title of a particular piece of music: “Common Doxology”

each other, one another

if referring to only two people:

They look at each other.

if more than two people:

They look at one another.

use either one for an indefinite number:

We will help each other.

We will help one another.

Easter cycle, the

note capitalization treatment

Easter Day

capitalize

Easter Vigil

Holy Saturday night celebration of the resurrection; first celebration of Easter

effect

see affect/effect

either ... or, neither ... nor

not “neither ... or” or “either ... nor”

ELCA Campus Ministry

singular, *not* “... Ministries,” for the name of the program; but the ministries on campuses may be referred to as “campus ministries,” using lowercase and plural form

ELCA Disaster Response

see Appendix 2 for ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response style sheet

ELCA Outdoor Ministry

singular, *not* “... Ministries,” for the name of the program; but the camps, retreats and conference centers may be referred to as “outdoor ministries,” using lowercase and plural form

ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal

capitalize as shown; use for internal communication only, when referring in a broad sense to the fund-raising arm which includes both ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response (International and Domestic)
see also Appendix 3 for ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response style sheet

ELCA Youth Gathering

may use “the Gathering” (capitalized) on subsequent reference

do not use “National Gathering” or simply “Youth Gathering”

ELCA Youth Ministry

singular, *not* “... Ministries” for the name of the program; lowercase if referring to “youth ministry” in other contexts

elderly

prefer “older adult”; use the word “elderly” sparingly; usage may be appropriate in generic phrases that do not refer to specific individuals: “a home for the elderly,” “elder hostel,” “elder care”

ellipsis

three dots used to indicate, in quoted copy, that some material was purposely left out;

- in general, treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, constructed with three periods and two spaces:
“Therefore we are to ... gladly act according to his commandments.”
- if the quoted material before the ellipsis makes a complete sentence, place a period at the end of that text before the space and the ellipsis:
“I am the Lord your God. ... I the Lord your God am a jealous God.”
- if the quoted material before the ellipsis does not make a complete sentence, retain any punctuation which may follow the last word before the material being left out:
“Our Father in heaven, ... now and forever. Amen.”

e-letter

an electronic communication sent on a one-time basis; references to an e-letter should be set in roman type
see also e-newsletter; e-note

e-mail

hyphenate; capitalize only if it occurs at the beginning of a sentence;

- italicize e-mail addresses in running copy rather than underlining since some addresses now include an underscore as part of the actual address
- when the e-mail address breaks at the end of a line of copy, do not add any punctuation, such as a hyphen, lest that mark be taken as part of the address:
I check this e-mail box daily (*Sam.Doe@yahoo.com*), so please use that address.
- *exception: do not use* this style for material to be posted to the Web that is to remain an active link; use roman type and underline
- *avoid*, if possible, listing e-mail addresses at the end of the sentence; but if there is no way to rewrite, add ending punctuation:
Please contact me at this e-mail address: *samantha_doe@yahoo.com*.
do not add a space between the e-mail address and the ending punctuation

emblem

part of the brandmark of the ELCA; graphic representation of the ELCA mission statement (Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered and sent for the sake of the

world) by means of a four-color-quadrant orb with a black cross dividing the quadrants
see also brandmark

Emmanuel

translates from Hebrew as “God-with-us”; may be used instead of “Immanuel”

en and em dashes

see dash

end time(s)

lowercase

e-newsletter

an electronic communication sent to a specific audience on a regular basis (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly); title of the e-newsletter should be set in italics
see also e-letter; e-note

e-note

a short electronic communication sent on a one-time basis; references to e-notes should be set in roman type
see also e-letter; e-newsletter

ensure, insure

“ensure” is to make certain or guarantee; “insure” is to protect with insurance

entitled

to enable to seek or claim something:

She is entitled to her opinion.

do not use in relation to a title; use “titled” instead:

The book was titled *Curious George*.

epiphany/Epiphany

capitalize when referring to the festival on January 6: “the Epiphany of Our Lord,” “Epiphany season,” “time after Epiphany”; but

The travelers on the road to Emmaus experienced an epiphany when Christ revealed himself to them.

Episcopal Church (USA), The

exception to AP Stylebook; a full communion partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; *note* that there are no periods in the initials and “The” is part of the incorporated name and must be capitalized; may use “The Episcopal Church” on subsequent reference

Episcopal (adj.)/Episcopalian (n.)

capitalize unless referring in general to a body governed by bishops

She is an Episcopal priest. (adj.)

Joseph is an Episcopalian. (n.)

but

The episcopal gathering met in closed session.

epistle/Epistle

lowercase for general usage as in: “the epistle,” “this epistle,” “Paul’s epistles”; but capitalize when referring to the title of a book or a specific section: “the Epistle to the Romans,” “the Epistles”; in liturgical reference, use “second reading”

eschaton

the end times; last days

Eskimo

do not use

see Alaska Native

eternal Father

note capitalization treatment

etc.

avoid usage if it is possible to be more specific

eternal Lord

note capitalization treatment

ethnic, national and racial group references

- *avoid* using the term “minority” when referring to ethnic, national or racial groups;
- usage of the cultural-ethnic background of people is preferable to categories of color; this affirms the rich ethnic traditions from which people have come rather than simply indicating skin color or a perceived skin color;
- take care when using terms that identify people by their skin color, ethnicity or nation of origin; each group of people has its own history, culture and heritage; because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask them how they would like to be identified *see* individual racial group entries for guidelines

eucharist/Eucharist

the celebration of the word of God and the meal of bread and wine; capitalize only when referring to the title of the specific rite in a publication, often accompanied by a source citation; “communion” or “Holy Communion” is often *preferred*

eucharistic

lowercase

evangelical/Evangelical

lowercase is *preferred*; capitalize when it refers to a specific group or party

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

church body organized in three expressions: congregations, synods and the churchwide organization; acronym is ELCA; *see also* churchwide organization; congregation; synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

acronym is ELCJHL

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

italicize per title style; do not preface with the article “the”:

We are exploring *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* in adult education class.

spell out in first reference; italicized acronym *ELW* may be used upon second reference; it is permissible to set the acronym in roman type preceding hymn numbers in publications that contain lists of hymns or refer to both liturgical pages and hymn numbers:

ELW 347

ELW, p. 252

evangelist

lowercase when referring to a writer of a Gospel: “the evangelist Mark”; but capitalize in the title of a festival: “Mark, Evangelist”

evening prayer/Evening Prayer

preferred term for “vespers”; capitalize only when referring to the title for the specific service, especially if followed by page number or book title

everyone, every one

see anyone, any one; everyone, every one; someone, some one

exile, the

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

exodus, the

capitalize only when referring to the book of Exodus or when the meaning is otherwise unclear

extension (phone)

precede with a comma and a space, and use the abbreviation “ext.”:

Call us at 773-380-0000, ext. 234, to receive a copy.

note the use of hyphens in the phone number, *not* parentheses, periods or a slash

fair trade

lowercase, no hyphen; but hyphenate when used as a combined adjective: “fair-trade coffee”

faith-based community organizing

hyphenate; “congregation-based organizing” or “congregation-based community organizing” are also permissible

fall, the

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

fall from grace

lowercase

farther, further

“farther” describes greater physical distance:

He was farther along the woodland trail than I.

“further” refers to time or greater degree:

Further research will need to be done.

Father

capitalize when it refers to the first person of the Trinity

Father’s Day

capitalize and use apostrophe appropriately

feast day

general term for festivals, lesser festivals or commemorations; lowercase

festival

generally lowercase: “festival of Transfiguration”

fewer, less

“fewer” applies to countable items: “fewer people,” “fewer products”;

“less” applies to bulk or mass measurements or abstract concepts: “less grain,” “less heat,” “less happiness”

final judgment

lowercase; *note* British spelling has a second “e” (“judgement”)

first fruits

lowercase

flier, Flyer

“flier” is an airline pilot or a printed circular; use capitalized “Flyer” only as part of a proper name for some train and bus lines:

Amtrak’s Philadelphia Flyer leaves Chicago at noon daily.

flood, the

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

follow up, follow-up

“follow up” (two words) is a verb:

He said we could follow up at the next meeting.

hyphenate in noun and adjective usages:

The follow-up took all afternoon.

He promised to do a follow-up session at the next meeting.

font

basin or pool holding water for baptism; may use “baptismal font” for clarity

foreigner

avoid; use “international guest/student” or “visitor” instead

full communion

do not hyphenate:

The Episcopal Church (USA) is in full communion with the ELCA.

The United Methodist Church is one of the ELCA's full communion partners.

The correct names of the ELCA's six full communion partners are:

- The Episcopal Church (USA)
- Moravian Church in America
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- Reformed Church in America
- United Church of Christ
- United Methodist Church

see also specific church body entries

full time

if used as a noun, it is two words:

She works full time.

as an adjective, it should be hyphenated:

The company has 99 full-time employees.

fundamentalism (n.)

fundamentalist (n., adj.)

furlough

avoid; use "home leave" instead

further

see farther, further

Garden of Eden

note capitalization treatment; but "the garden"

Garden of Gethsemane

note capitalization treatment; but "the garden"

gay (n., adj.)

preferred usage for male same-gender sexual orientation;

see also homosexual

gays and lesbians

or "gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community"; upon second reference "GLBT community" may be used

gentile (n., adj.)

lowercase unless capitalized in original quoted source

girl

use only for females under age 12

see adult; woman; young adult; youth

global mission, Global Mission program unit

note that this is *not* used as a plural noun, "global missions"

god/God

capitalize only when referring to the Judeo-Christian God; lowercase when it refers to pagan or mythological figures

see gods and goddesses

God Almighty

capitalize

God Incarnate

capitalize

godlike

lowercase, no hyphen

godliness/godly

lowercase

God Most High

capitalize

gods and goddesses

lowercase when referring to false gods, mythological gods and pagan gods:

Chemosh was the national god of the Moabites.

Diana was the Roman goddess of the moon.

Godspeed

capitalize

God-with-us

the translation for "Emmanuel" or "Immanuel"

golden rule

lowercase

Good Friday

capitalize

Good News

capitalize only when referring to any or all of the four Gospels in the New Testament

good/Good Samaritan

lowercase “good” when referring to the man in the biblical parable: “the good Samaritan”; capitalize “Good” only when referring to a type of person or used as metaphor:

She’s a Good Samaritan.

They passed a Good Samaritan law.

Good Shepherd

capitalize when referring to Jesus Christ

gospel/Gospel

lowercase when used as a general term meaning “good news” or “story” of Jesus Christ; when referring to the law and the gospel; when referring to the third reading in the service: “gospel acclamation,” “gospel responses”; capitalize when used as a specific reference to any or all of the four New Testament Gospels: “the four Gospels,” “the Holy Gospel,” “the Gospel of Matthew”; when used as a title of a document: “Gospel of Thomas,” “Synoptic Gospels,” “the Fourth Gospel (John)”; when referring to a section of the Bible: “the Gospels”

grass roots

when used as noun, two words; in adjectival usage, hyphenate: “grass-roots movement”

Great Commandment, the

as found in Matthew 22:37

Great Commission, the

as found in Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15

Great Thanksgiving, the

in the communion service, the body of actions and words beginning with the three-part dialog and concluding with the Lord’s Prayer
see also dialogue

Hades

capitalize

hallelujah/Hallelujah!

capitalize when used as an interjection

handicap

do not use to describe a disability; do not refer to people with disabilities as “the handicapped” or “handicapped people”
see disability

Hanukkah

this is the *preferred* spelling

Head of the church, the

capitalize “Head” when the phrase refers to Christ

heaven

lowercase

Hebrew

the Semitic language of the ancient Hebrews, or any of various later forms of the language; a member of or a descendent from one of a group of northern Semitic peoples, including the Israelites

hell

lowercase

high church/low church

avoid using; instead describe the service and what happened during it

high priest

lowercase

high priesthood (n.)

lowercase

high priestly prayer

lowercase; as found in John 17

higher power

lowercase

Hispanic

refers to people of Spanish-speaking heritage; “Latino” is the *preferred* term; use a more specific identification when possible, such as Cuban, Puerto Rican or Mexican American
see also ethnic, national and racial group references

historic, historical

an important or famous event is “historic”: “historic battle,” “historic speech”; any event of, or relating to, history is “historical”: “historical novel,” “historical data”; both words are preceded by “a,” *not* “an”

historical-critical method

hyphenate

HIV

acronym for human immunodeficiency virus:
“person who is HIV-positive”; use all caps, no
periods; *prefer* “HIV and AIDS” *not* “HIV/AIDS”
note: HIV-positive people do not necessarily also
have AIDS
see also AIDS

Holy Baptism

see baptism

Holy Bible

capitalize

holy city

lowercase when referring to a city that is the
center of religious worship and traditions: “the
holy city of Mecca”

Holy Communion

see communion

Holy Eucharist

see eucharist

holy family

lowercase

holy Father

capitalize “holy” only when referring to the title of
the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church

Holy Ghost

“Holy Spirit” is *preferred* in contemporary usage

Holy Land

capitalize when referring to historical or current
Israel

Holy One

capitalize

Holy Scripture

prefer “Bible”

holy Son

note capitalization treatment

Holy Spirit

capitalize when referring to the third person of the
Trinity

Holy Trinity, the

note capitalization treatment

holy water

lowercase

Holy Week

the time from the Sunday of the Passion (Palm
Sunday) until the beginning of the Maundy
Thursday liturgy

Holy Writ

arcane; *avoid* using this term

homosexual

pertaining to sexual attraction to members of the
same gender (adj.); a person who is attracted to
members of the same gender (n); appropriate in
medical contexts; for other contexts “gay” or
“lesbian” is *preferred*
see also gay; lesbian

hopefully

means “in a hopeful manner”:

I waited hopefully for a cab.

do not use to mean “it is hoped,” “let us hope” or
“we hope”; use those phrases instead:

We hope to finish the draft by early April.

not “Hopefully, we will finish the draft by... .”

hosanna/Hosanna!

capitalize when used as interjection

house church

lowercase

house of God

note capitalization treatment

HTML

acronym for hypertext markup language, the
coding language (a set of tags and rules) used to
create documents for use on the Internet

humankind

preferred over “mankind” unless quoting from an
original source

hymn text, text of a hymn

use instead of “lyrics”

hymn titles

in lists of hymns and when hymn titles are written out in a worship folder, quotation marks are *not* necessary:

ELW 558 Lord God We Praise You

ELW 572 Now It Is Evening

for capitalization, follow original source

hyphen

see dash, hyphen

see also AP Stylebook, “Punctuation”

illegal aliens

do not use; *preferred* reference is to “undocumented people” or “refugees”

imago Dei

italicize; translates from Latin as “image of God”

Immanuel

translates from Hebrew as “God-with-us”; may be used instead of “Emmanuel”

impact (n.)

principal usage should be as a noun:

The impact of the budget cut was a reduction of services.

avoid usage as a verb; use “affect” instead

in, into, in to

“in” indicates location:

Elvis is in the building.

“into” indicates motion:

Elvis walked into the building.

“in” can also be part of a phrasal verb:

Elvis broke in to the building.

incarnate

lowercase “incarnate” when it is used as an adjective: “incarnate Word”; but capitalize it when used as a name for Jesus: “Word Incarnate”

Incarnate Word of God

capitalize when used as a name for Jesus

incarnation

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

Indian

use only for a person from India

see American Indian for proper usage when reference is to indigenous people of North America

in-house designations of ELCA units

see titles and in-house designations of ELCA units

initials, treatment of

when part of a name, use periods and no spaces: “C.S. Lewis”

installation

lowercase; but capitalize when used in the title of the rite: “Rite of Installation”

insure

see ensure, insure

inter

in general, do not hyphenate after this prefix; *exception*: “Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations”

see prefix

interface (n.)

do not use as a verb

Internet

capitalize; a decentralized, worldwide network of computers that can communicate with each other; the World Wide Web (WWW) is a subset of the Internet, not a synonym for it; may use “the Net” for subsequent references

interunit

do not hyphenate

intranet

a private network for use within a company; lowercase

Inuit

one of numerous Alaska Native people; indigenous people of southwestern Alaska

see also Alaska Native

Inupiat

one of numerous Alaska Native people; indigenous people of southern Alaska and the Seward Peninsula; many ELCA members in Alaskan congregations are Inupiat

see also Alaska Native

Islam

the name of the religion; “Muslim” refers to a person who adheres to Islamic practices

Israelite

a descendent of the Old Testament man named Israel, who was later renamed Jacob; a native or inhabitant of the ancient Northern Kingdom of Israel

its, it’s

“its” is a possessive pronoun:

The ELCA has changed its landmark.

“it’s” is the contraction of “it is”:

It’s going to rain.

Jesus’

possessive form for “Jesus”

Jew

a name applied to the first people living in Judah when the Israelites were divided into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah; after the Babylonian Captivity, all descendants of Abraham were called Jews; because the Jews were God’s chosen people, Paul sometimes spoke of a true Jew as being anyone who pleases God
note: it is inaccurate to use as a blanket term for those who doubted or persecuted Jesus

Jewish people

use when referring to the contemporary situation; *avoid* using “the Jews”

judges/Judges

capitalize only when referring to the book in the Bible

judgment day

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear; *note* British spelling has a second “e” (“judgement”)

junior, senior

no comma between the last name of the individual and the abbreviation “Jr.” “Sr.” or a generation indicator such as “III”:

Martin Luther King Jr.

John F. Kennedy Sr.

John Anderson III

King of kings

note capitalization treatment

kingdom of God

note capitalization treatment

kingdom of heaven

lowercase

Koran/Qur’an

Muslim holy book; *preferred* spelling is “Quran” except when another form is preferred by an organization or in a specific title or name

laity

preferred; use instead of “laymen,” “laywomen,” “layperson”; also acceptable: “laypeople”

Lamb of God

note capitalization treatment

Large Catechism

do not italicize unless referring to the title of a specific publication

last judgment

lowercase; *note* British spelling has a second “e” (“judgement”)

Last Supper

capitalize

Latino (m. or collective); Latina (f.)

preferred over “Hispanic”; use a more specific identification when possible, such as Cuban, Puerto Rican or Mexican American; because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask them how they would like to be identified

law/Law

lowercase in “God’s law,” “law and gospel”; but capitalize in “the Law of Moses” (meaning the first five books of the Old Testament); *always* capitalize when referring to Torah: “the Law”

lay, lie

see AP Stylebook, “lay, lie”

layman/laywoman/layperson

“laity” is *preferred*

lay reader

lowercase

lead/led

note past tense of “lead” is “led”:

The decision by the group led to a new way of operating.

lectern

“ambo” is often *preferred* in liturgical usage

lectionary/Lectionary

book containing the full texts of Scripture readings for proclamation in the liturgy; capitalize only when used within a title: “the Revised Common Lectionary”

Lent/Lenten

capitalize

lesbian (n., adj.)

preferred usage for female same-gender sexual orientation

see also homosexual

less

see fewer, less

lesser festivals

days on the calendar celebrating the life of Christ and other people or events:

The commemoration of Stephen, the first martyr, on Dec. 26 is a lesser festival.

lesson

“reading” is *preferred*

letter/Letter

capitalize when referring to the title of a biblical book or specific section: “Letter to the Romans”; but “the letter Paul sent to Rome,” “this letter”

lie, lay

see AP Stylebook, “lay, lie”

Light of lights

capitalize “Light” when referring to Christ

Light of the world

capitalize “Light” when referring to Christ

like

see as, like

lists in running text

There are three types:

1. The list starts as the beginning of a sentence and is followed by a set of phrases that each complete the sentence. Use a colon; bullets, numbers or symbols; lowercase the word following the bullet unless it’s a proper noun; end each bullet with a semicolon and insert the word “and” before the final bullet. End the last bullet with a period. Example:

This corporation:

- provides moral and spiritual guidance;
- creates and supports community-based educational programs; and
- offers a forum for participants to apply their expertise in ways that will help the church.

2. The list is like a “grocery” list. Use a colon; bullets, numbers or symbols; lowercase/capitalize as needed, but no period is necessary. Example:

Include the following information:

- name
- address
- day and night phone numbers
- spouse’s name
- Social Security number

3. The list contains bullet items that are complete sentences. Use a colon; bullets, numbers or symbols; capitalize the beginning of each bulleted sentence and end each with a period.

Example:

With your own illustrations, show how:

- Listening is active.
- Attitude is important.
- Silence is golden.

note: some of the bulleted lists in this style guide do not follow these rules, because of this guide’s style of citing examples

liturgy

the words and actions that form the worship of the Christian assembly

living God

note capitalization treatment

living Lord

note capitalization treatment

living Word

note capitalization treatment

login, log in/on/out/off

use as one word (“login”) for the noun:

My login doesn’t work.

use as two words (“log in,” “log out”) for the verb:

You will need to log in first.

Don’t forget to log out before you leave.

logo

do not use in reference to ELCA branding; use

“brandmark” instead

see brandmark

Logos

capitalize when referring to Christ

loose, lose

“loose” (n.) means “unrestrained”:

The wild horse got loose from its handlers at the rodeo.

“lose” (v.) means “to be unable to find or maintain” or “to be deprived of”:

Too many people will lose their houses in the mortgage fiasco.

Lord

capitalize

LORD

in small caps, indicates the English translation of the Hebrew letters YHWH; use small caps only if they are used in the original source

Lord of lords

note capitalization treatment

Lord’s day

Sunday

lordship of God

note capitalization treatment

Lord’s Prayer

capitalize

Lord’s Supper

used as a synonym for communion

lose

see loose, lose

lovingkindness

use as one word, no hyphen (an *exception* to *Merriam-Webster’s* and *NRSV*)

low church, high church

avoid using; instead describe the service and what happened during it

Lutheran Book of Worship

italicize per title style; do not preface with the article “the”:

We are exploring *Lutheran Book of Worship* in adult education class.

spell out in first reference; italicized acronym is *LBW*; it is permissible to set the acronym in roman type preceding hymn numbers in publications that contain lists of hymns or refer to both liturgical pages and hymn numbers:

LBW 347

LBW, p. 252

Lutheran Center, the

the building that houses the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; should *not* be referred to as “the ELCA”

Lutheran church

note capitalization treatment; “Church” only as part of a corporate title: “Faith Lutheran Church”

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, The

use an em dash when spelling out the denominational name; but when abbreviating, *do not use* any dash: “LCMS”; *note*: if reference is to the legally or formally incorporated body, “The” should be included as part of the name and should be capitalized

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

note that the name is *not* “... Services”; may use the acronym LIRS upon second reference

Lutheran social ministry organizations

when referring to a group of them, capitalize only “Lutheran”

Lutheran World Federation: A Communion of Churches, The

commonly referred to as “The Lutheran World Federation”; may use the acronym LWF upon

second reference; *note* that “The” is part of the name and should be included in legal or formal references

Lutheran World Relief

not “the Lutheran World Relief”; may use the acronym LWR upon second reference

lyrics

prefer “hymn text,” “text of a hymn”

magi

use instead of “wise men”

major prophets/Major Prophets

capitalize when referring to the section of the Bible which includes Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel:

The next portion of Scripture that we will study is the Major Prophets.

lowercase when referring to a person:

Isaiah was one of the five major prophets.

man

use for any adult male

see also adult; boy; young adult; youth

man of sorrows

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

mass/Mass, the

capitalize when referring to the religious ceremony:

Father Burns celebrated the Mass at 8:00 a.m. yesterday.

but lowercase when referring to a musical setting of the Mass:

J.S. Bach wrote a mass setting in B minor.

matins

see morning prayer

Maundy Thursday

capitalize

means of grace

in Lutheran usage, the word of God and the sacraments through which God’s grace comes to people

messages, ELCA

messages of the ELCA:

- are built on its social policy;
- draw attention to certain priority concerns that arise from its mission in the world and encourage discussion and action;
- address the contemporary situation in light of the prophetic and compassionate traditions of the Bible;
- are adopted by the ELCA Church Council; and
- express the convictions of the leaders of the church

messages of the ELCA appear in copy in quotation marks, *not* italics; they include:

“Message on AIDS”

“Message on Changing Europe”

“Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation”

“Message on Community Violence”

“Message on End of Life Decisions”

“Message on Homelessness”

“Message on Immigration”

“Message on Israeli/Palestinian Conflict”

“Message on Sexuality”

“Message on Suicide Prevention”

“Message on Terrorism”

messiah/Messiah

capitalize only when used as a name for Christ or referring to an eschatological figure in Judaism or Christianity:

The Messiah was born in Bethlehem.

but

He had a messiah complex.

messianic

lowercase

messianic age

lowercase

Methodist Church

see United Methodist Church

Mexican American

do not hyphenate (*exception* to *AP Stylebook*);

U.S. citizens of Mexican descent

see also Latino

Middle East, Mideast, Near East

“Middle East” is *preferred*; “Mideast” is also acceptable

midrash/Midrash

“midrashim” (plural); Hebrew term for “explanation” or “exposition”; capitalize when referring to a collection of writings; otherwise, lowercase

microfinancing

note that this term is *not* hyphenated

microlending

note that this term is *not* hyphenated

microloan

note that this term is *not* hyphenated

millennium (n.)

millennia (plural)

minister

collectively, “clergy” is the proper term; *avoid* implying that only men are clergy; in reference to “minister” as a pastor, use “ordained minister,” in contrast to the various forms of rostered lay service, specifically: “associates in ministry,” “deaconesses” and “diaconal ministers”
see also clergy titles

minority

avoid using when referring to racial groups

minor prophets/Minor Prophets

capitalize when referring to the section of the Bible:

The twelve books in the Minor Prophets section of the Bible are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

lowercase when referring to a person:

Amos was one of the minor prophets.

missio Dei

italicize; translates from Latin as “sending of God”

missionaries

if possible, refer to the specific job instead: “teachers in China,” “translators in Ethiopia”; or use “mission personnel”

mission-support (adj.)

hyphenate when used as an adjective to modify a noun:

Mission-support dollars enable the ELCA to do its work.

mission support (n.)

note that when this term is used as a noun, there is no hyphen

Mission support is vital to the ELCA.

mission to

avoid; use “mission with” instead

The ELCA is in mission with companion churches throughout the world.

modern-day (adj.)

hyphenate when used as an adjective to modify a noun: “modern-day usage,” “modern-day Germany”

Mohammed

do not use; use “Muhammad” instead

month

- when using a full date (month, date, year), *prefer* spelling out the month; *exception*: in informal documents such as news copy, where space is an issue, the month may be abbreviated: “Nov. 2, 1998”
- when used with a specific date in informal text, abbreviate only the months Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.: “Nov. 2,” “April 14,” “July 23”
- when the month and year are used alone, spell out and do not separate with a comma: “November 1998”

Moravian Church in America

the Southern and Northern Provinces, Eastern West Indies Province and the Alaska Province of the Moravian Church in America are full communion partners with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

more than, over

“more than” is used with figures:

There were more than 10 banners at the installation.

“over” is used in spatial relationships:

The banners hung over the center of the sanctuary.

morning prayer/Morning Prayer

preferred term for “matins”; capitalize only when referring to the title for the service of Morning

Prayer, especially if followed by page number or book title

Moses'

possessive form for "Moses"

Moslem

do not use; use "Muslim" instead

Most High

note capitalization

Most High God

note capitalization

Mother's Day

note capitalization and apostrophe treatment

Mr., Mrs., Ms.

see courtesy titles

Muhammad

preferred; *do not use* "Mohammed"

multicultural

do not hyphenate

Muslim

do not use "Moslem"; Muslim refers to people who adhere to the religion called Islam

myself

use only when reflexive:

I gave myself a pat on the back.

not "The speakers will be Rachel and myself."

national groups

see ethnic, national and racial group references

Native American

prefer "American Indian"; or if possible use the name of the nation:

He is a Hopi commissioner.

James Shepherd, Laguna, spoke at the Indigenous Institute.

because members of some ethnic groups use different terms when referring to themselves, if possible ask how they would like to be identified

nativity/Nativity

capitalize in liturgical contexts:

the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

otherwise lowercase:

There were probably donkeys at the nativity of Christ.

neither ... nor, either ... or

do not use "neither ... or" or "either ... nor"

Net

capitalize when referring to the Internet; may be used as a second and subsequent reference for the Internet

new Adam

note capitalization treatment

new covenant

avoid this term except in the words of institution within the Great Thanksgiving in a liturgy; rewrite for clarity of meaning;

prefer "New Testament"

New Jerusalem

capitalize

New Revised Standard Version, the

preferred version of the Bible for use in ELCA; abbreviated in second and subsequent references as "NRSV"; if it is necessary, in a particular context, to quote from another version of the Bible, reasoning for this deviation from the standard should be provided when the document is submitted to Communication Services for editorial review as well as an indication of which version is being used

see also Appendix 1 for appropriate credit lines for various versions of the Bible

New Testament

capitalize

Nicene Creed, the

capitalize; but lowercase "creed" when using the short form in subsequent references: "the creed"

night prayer/Night Prayer

preferred term for "compline"; daily prayer service for use at the end of the day, just prior to retiring for the night; capitalize only when referring to the title for the service of Night Prayer, especially if followed by page number or book title

Ninety-five Theses

note capitalization treatment when used as a title:

Read Luther's *Ninety-five Theses* for our next class session.

but lowercase when used as a general term:

He nailed ninety-five theses to the door.

non

in general, do not hyphenate after this prefix

see prefix

non-Christian

hyphenate this and similar cases when the word after the prefix "non-" is a proper noun

nonrestrictive and restrictive clauses

see that, which

nonsexist language

- *avoid* using terms that unnecessarily specify someone's gender, such as "chairman" or "prophetess"; in most cases, "chair" or "prophet" can be used instead
- *avoid* sexism by using nongender-specific language such as "humanity" or "humankind" instead of "mankind," except when directly quoting from an original source

numbers

- *never* begin a sentence with a numeral; spell out a number at the beginning of a sentence
- spell out the first nine cardinal and ordinal numbers when used in text:
He walked nine miles.
There were eight applicants.
She was the sixth spelling bee contestant.
The game ended in the fifth inning.
- use figures for numbers above nine:
The table was set for 10.
There were 50 in the audience.
They own 63 horses.
- these "spell out" and "use figures" rules above do not apply to ages, figures in headlines, figures containing decimals, statistics, results of voting, percentages, sums of money, times of day, days of month, latitude and longitude, degrees of temperature, dimension, measurements and proportion, numbers that are part of titles, or sports points
- spell out large numbers:
They planned to raise \$2 million.

- with four digits, use a comma in the number, as in "2,000," except in reference to a year: "A.D. 2000"
- *do not use* "firstly" or "secondly"; use "first" and "second"
- use numbers for both percent (one word) and percentages:
2 percent
3.75 percent
0.6 percent
10 percentage points

offering

lowercase

offertory (adj.)

prefer "offering"; "offering prayer"

Office of the Presiding Bishop

the official title of the office of the president and chief executive officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

old Adam

note capitalization treatment

old covenant/Old Covenant

avoid using the capitalized form, which is a synonym for Old Testament; *prefer* "Old Testament"

Old Testament

capitalize; in liturgical reference, use "first reading"

older adult

preferred term

one another

see each other, one another

One in Three

the Trinity

online

one word; do not hyphenate

ordination

lowercase; but capitalize when used in the title of the rite: "Rite of Ordination"

Oriental

do not use
see Asian

original sin

lowercase

orthodox(y)/Orthodox

capitalize only when referring to the Eastern Christian groups: “Russian Orthodox,” “Greek Orthodox,” “Orthodox churches”; or “Orthodox Jews”; but “Lutheran orthodoxy”

outreach to

avoid; use “outreach among” instead

Pacific Islanders

use to refer to people from Pacific Island countries; whenever possible, make references to a specific ethnic heritage: “Tongan,” “Fijian,” “Tahitian,” “Marshallese,” “Trukese”

page

abbreviated “p.” for one page: “p. 439”; “pp.” for a run of pages: “pp. 67–71”

Palm Sunday

in liturgical usage *prefer* “Sunday of the Passion”

parable

lowercase even when used to refer to a particular parable: “parable of the good Samaritan,” “parable of the sower”

Paraclete

translates from Greek as “advocate,” “intercessor”; refers to the Holy Spirit

parousia

Greek word referring to the second coming of Christ (an *exception* to *Merriam-Webster’s*, which capitalizes it); do not italicize

paschal

lowercase as an adjective: “paschal candle,” “paschal mystery,” “paschal lamb,” “paschal full moon”; typically needs definition or explanatory phrase when used

paschal lamb/Paschal Lamb

capitalize when used as a substitute name for Jesus:

The Paschal Lamb was sacrificed for our sins.

but

Jesus is the paschal lamb.

Paschal Triduum

prefer “the Three Days”

Passion, the

capitalize when referring to a day: “Sunday of the Passion”; a portion of Scripture: “the Passion narrative”; or the suffering of Jesus: “the Passion of Christ”

Passion Week

capitalize

Passover Feast

capitalize

pastor

see clergy titles

Pastoral Epistles

prefer Pastoral Letters

Pauline Epistles

prefer Pauline Letters

Pentateuch

capitalize

pentateuchal

lowercase

Pentecost

capitalize

pentecostal/Pentecostals

capitalize only when referring to a specific religious group

people living in poverty

use instead of “the poor”

percent

one word; spell out the word in running text rather than using the percent sign (%): use figures: “4 percent,” “0.6 percent”
see also AP Stylebook, “percent”

person/people

plural form of person is “people” *not* “persons”:

People who wish to receive consideration should speak to the registrar.

exception: use “persons” only for the voting

category: “persons of color or language other than English”; or in reference to the triune God: “God in three persons”

petition/Petition

capitalize when referring to individual petitions of the Lord’s Prayer: “the Third Petition”; but “this petition”

Ph.D./M.Div./D.Min.

use periods and no spaces between characters

Pharisees

capitalize

phone/fax numbers and extensions (treatment of)

use hyphens to separate the numbers, *not* parentheses, periods or slash:

773-380-0000, ext. 234

dialing “1-” to obtain long distance service is common knowledge and is no longer required when citing a phone number:

800-638-3522

not 1-800-638-3522

pietism/Pietism

capitalize only when referring to a movement in the 17th and 18th centuries

pietists/Pietists

see pietism

p.m., a.m.

lowercase, with periods

poor, the

use “people living in poverty”

position titles

see titles of ELCA churchwide staff

possessives

see AP Stylebook, “Possessives”

postal codes

see state names

prayer at the close of the day

see night prayer

precious blood

lowercase

prefix

- in general, do not hyphenate when the word after the prefix starts with a consonant (*exception:* “Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations”);
- however, hyphenation should be used:
 - when the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel; *exception:* words like “cooperate,” “coordinate,” “coexist,” “coequal”
 - if the word that follows the prefix is capitalized: “sub-Saharan”
 - if the prefix is doubled: “sub-subparagraph”

see AP Stylebook, specific listings for commonly used prefixes

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

a full communion partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; *note* the periods in the initials when the full name of the church body is used; acronym is “PC(USA)” with no periods;

presiding bishop

the title of the president and chief executive officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; when the title comes before the name, capitalize title:

Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America held a news conference.

lowercase when the office is identified after the name:

According to the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the ELCA,

presiding minister

lowercase

priesthood of all believers

lowercase

Prince of Peace

capitalize; refers to Christ

principal, principle

as a noun, “principal” means “head of a school”; or “leading performer”:

The understudy replaced the principal due to illness

or “capital sum”:

Please add the interest to the principal.

as an adjective, it means “main” or “chief”:

The principal idea as stated by our principal pastor was excellent.

“principle” is *always* a noun and *never* an adjective; it denotes “concept,” “primary source” or “correct conduct”:

Gravity is a principle of physics.

A man of principle never cheats.

prodigal son

lowercase

program unit

lowercase when used with the name of a unit of the ELCA churchwide office:

The Global Mission program unit is responsible for calling mission personnel to work with companion churches.

see also titles and in-house designations of ELCA churchwide units, offices and sections

promised land

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

Promised One, the

capitalize; refers to Jesus

proof-text (adj.)

hyphenate

proof texting (v.)

note this is one word

proof texts (n.)

note this is two words

propers, the

lowercase

prophecy (n.)

the inspired words of a prophet; a prediction of a future event

prophecy, prophesied (v.)

to say something by, or as if by, divine inspiration; to predict

Prophet, Priest and King

capitalize when used together in a series referring to Christ

prophets

avoid; use “prophet”; terms such as “female prophet” and “women prophets” are acceptable when gender is relevant

prophets/Prophets

capitalize when referring to the section of the Bible:

The Prophets are the 17 books of the Bible beginning with Isaiah and ending with Malachi.

lowercase when referring to a person:

Isaiah was one of the prophets.

see also major prophets; minor prophets

Protestantism

capitalize

providence/Providence

lowercase when referring to divine guidance; capitalize when referring to God

psalmist

lowercase

psalm/Psalm

capitalize only when referring to the book in the Bible: “the book of Psalms”; or a specific passage: “Psalm 8:3-6”;

lowercase when used as a general term: “this psalm,” “some psalms”:

My favorite psalm is Psalm 23.

psalter/Psalter

capitalize only when used as a synonym for the book of Psalms

quotation marks and punctuation

periods and commas *always* go inside the quotation marks; colons and semicolons *always* go outside quotation marks unless the punctuation applies to quoted material; question marks or exclamation marks go inside the quotation mark only if the quoted material is the question or exclamation

Quran

preferred spelling for the Muslim holy book rather than “Koran” or “Qur’an”; use another form only if preferred by a specific organization or when quoting a specific title or name

racial groups

see ethnic, national and racial group references

reading

the Scripture texts appointed for public reading in the liturgy; *preferred* over “lesson”

real presence

lowercase

redemption

lowercase

Reformation, the

also “Counter-Reformation”

Reformed church

refers to Calvinist traditions; capitalize “church” only when referring to a specific church: “Wheaton Christian Reformed Church”; or to the corporate title of a church body: “Reformed Church in America”

Reformed Church in America

a full communion partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; acronym is RCA

reformer

lowercase even when it refers to a leader in the Protestant Reformation

region

capitalize when used as the name of a portion of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: “Region 7”; for subsequent usage lowercase: “the region”; use Arabic numbers for regional identification (*not* Roman numerals)

restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses

see that, which

resurrection

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear

Rev., the

always use the abbreviated form, *not* “Reverend”
see clergy titles

Revised Common Lectionary

do not italicize unless referring to a specific publication; may use acronym RCL for second and subsequent references

righteous

lowercase

righteous God

note capitalization treatment

Righteous One

capitalize when it refers to Christ

risen Lord

note capitalization treatment

Risen One

capitalize when it refers to Christ

Rite of Holy Baptism

see baptism

Roman Catholic Church, the

capitalize “church” only when referring to a specific church or to the corporate title of a church body: “St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church,” “the Roman Catholic Church”; but “a Roman Catholic church,” “the Catholic church”

rosary

lowercase

rosters

the ELCA has both clergy and lay rosters; individuals in lay rosters are one of three types:

associates in ministry

deaconesses

diaconal ministers

note these titles are lowercase when in running text

see also clergy titles

Russian Orthodox Church, the

capitalize “church” only when referring to a specific church or to the corporate title of a church body: “Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church,”

“the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia”;
but “a Russian Orthodox church”

Russian Orthodoxy

capitalize

sabbath/Sabbath

usually lowercase; capitalize when referring to
Saturday or Sunday as a day of the week;
lowercase when referring to a time of rest

sacrament/Sacrament

capitalize when used in a title: “the Sacrament of
Holy Communion”; otherwise lowercase:

The Lutheran church has two sacraments:
baptism and communion.

Communion is a sacrament.

The gift of word and sacrament is from
God.

sacramental (adj.)

lowercase

Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the

capitalize when used as a title

Sacrament of Holy Communion, the

capitalize when used as a title

saint

abbreviate as “St.” for names of saints, cities and
other places: “St. John,” “St. Paul, Minn.” “St.
Lawrence Seaway”

exception: “Saint Paul Area Synod”

same-gender (adj.)

do not use “same-sex”:

This law protects same-gender couples.

Sanctus

capitalize

Satan

capitalize

Satanic

capitalize

savior/Savior

capitalize only when referring to Jesus; may also
be spelled “Saviour” in the name of a congregation

scholastic movement

lowercase

scholasticism

lowercase: “Protestant scholasticism,” “Thomistic
scholasticism”

scholastics, the

lowercase

scribes

lowercase

scriptural

lowercase

scripture(s)/Scripture(s)

capitalize when meaning the Bible or any portion
of it:

The pastor quoted various portions of
Scripture in his sermon.

lowercase when referring to the sacred writings of
a religious group: “the Hindu scriptures”

Scripture reference

see “biblical text references” for specific examples
of citations

seasons of the year

lowercase “spring,” “summer,” “fall,” “winter”
and associated words such as “springtime,”
“autumn”

seat of judgment

lowercase; *note* British spelling has a second “e”
 (“judgement”)

second coming, the

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise
unclear

Second Vatican Council

also referred to as Vatican II; use “Second Vatican
Council” in first usage; “Vatican II” in second and
subsequent references

seder

lowercase

See

capitalize when referring to a specific see (religious jurisdiction): “the See of Constantinople,” “the Holy See”

semicolon

see AP Stylebook, “Punctuation”

senior

see junior, senior

senior citizen

prefer “older adult”; use the term “senior citizen” sparingly; usage may be appropriate in generic phrases that do not refer to specific individuals: “senior citizen’s discount”

serial punctuation

do not use a comma before the conjunction in a simple series (e.g., a, b and c):

They bought apples, bananas and cherries.

however, if a serial comma would help with clarity, insert it:

We had juice, cereal, and ham and eggs.

if any of the series terms themselves have a comma in them, use semicolons to separate:

She was accompanied by her daughter, Jane, from Des Moines; her cousin, Alice, from Chicago; and her aunt Bernice, from Minneapolis.

Sermon on the Mount

note capitalization treatment

serpent, the

lowercase

Servant Songs, the

Isaiah 42:1-7; Isaiah 49:1-6; Isaiah 50:4-9; Isaiah 52:13—53:12

seven deadly sins

lowercase

sevenfold

lowercase

simul justus et peccator

translates from Latin as “at once justified and sinner”

Small Catechism

do not italicize unless referring to a specific publication

social messages, ELCA

see messages, ELCA

social policy resolutions

actions, other than social statements, of the churchwide assembly or Church Council on matters of social concern

social statements, ELCA

italicize titles of statements; the proper titles of the ELCA social statements and their dates of adoption by the churchwide assembly are:

- *Abortion* (1991)
- *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (1991)
- *Death Penalty* (1991)
- *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice* (1993)
- *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* (1993)
- *For Peace in God’s World* (1995)
- *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (1999)
- *Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor* (2003)
- *Our Calling in Education* (2007)
- *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009)

someone, some one

see anyone, any one; everyone, every one; someone, some one

son/Son

capitalize only when referring to the second person of the Trinity

Son of God

note capitalization treatment

spirit/Spirit

capitalize when referring to the third person of the Trinity

Stand With Africa

note: the “w” in “With” is capitalized

stanza

used in reference to hymnody:

Stanza 4 will be sung by the choir.
use the term “verse” only in the context of parts of Scripture
see also verse

state names

- in running copy, spell out state names when used alone in a sentence:
I grew up in Minnesota.
note: State names may be abbreviated when a city is also mentioned:
I grew up in Small Town, Minn.
- a comma follows the name of a state in city-state references and follows the name of a country in city-country references in text:
The meeting was held in Columbus, Ohio, at Trinity Lutheran Seminary.
The tour included Hamburg, Germany, among other European cities.
- if using an abbreviation, *do not use* postal codes (e.g., MN) in running text; the U.S. Postal Service’s abbreviations for the 50 states are designed to aid sorting of mail by machine; they should *not* be used in copy unless within the context of an address
see Appendix 3 for a list of state abbreviations and postal codes

stationary, stationery

“stationary” means “fixed in place”:
The great stone font is stationary.
“stationery” refers to paper used in correspondence:
We ordered stationery with the new ELCA landmark on it.

stations of the cross

lowercase

sub

in general, do not hyphenate after this prefix
see prefix

subcommittee

do not hyphenate

suffering servant/Suffering Servant

capitalize only when used as a title for Christ

Sunday school

note capitalization treatment

Sunday of the Passion

Palm Sunday; beginning of Holy Week

Sundays of the church year

in naming the Sundays of the church year, follow the style of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, pp. 18–53

supreme being/Supreme Being

capitalize only when referring to God

synod (n.)

one of the three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; in first reference be sure to include “ELCA” in the name; capitalize when used with the name: “ELCA Upstate New York Synod”; second reference: “the synod”; there are no official abbreviations for names of synods, so the name should *always* be spelled out; be sure to reference the correct geographic designations in the names of the synods:

Northwest Minnesota Synod

but

Northwestern Ohio Synod

see Appendix 4 for a complete listing of ELCA synods

synod assembly/Synod Assembly

capitalize when referring to a specific assembly, including the date:

The resolution was passed at the 2009 Synod Assembly.

lowercase when not referring to a specific assembly, or upon subsequent reference:

Important decisions were made at the synod assembly. During the assembly

Synod Council

the governing body of a synod of the ELCA; capitalized similar to “Church Council”; lowercase “council” when used alone

synodical (adj.)

the correct form when this term is used strictly as an adjective:

The e-mail was sent out to all synodical bishops.

note: synods have a “Synod Council,” *not* a “synodical council”

synodwide

lowercase; do not hyphenate

Synoptic Gospels

capitalize

Synoptics, the

capitalize

tagline

one word; part of the brandmark of the ELCA; the official, registered tagline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is:

God's work. Our hands.

it should *never* appear as a headline or stand alone; it should *always* be capitalized and punctuated as illustrated above, whether in conjunction with the brandmark or in copy, in order to preserve its integrity and assist in brand identification; brandmark resources can be found at www.elca.org/godsworkeourhands; consult www.elca.org/trademark for approved usage of the brandmark

see also brandmark

teenager

do not use

see boy; girl; young adult; youth

temple/Temple

capitalize only when naming a specific temple: "the Temple of Solomon," "the Second Temple"

temptation, the

lowercase

Ten Commandments

capitalize; *do not use* "10 Commandments"

tenebrae/Tenebrae

capitalize only when part of a formal title

text of a hymn, hymn text

use instead of "lyrics"

thankoffering

one word; lowercase

that, which

- "that" is a defining word, telling what is under consideration (restrictive):

Pencils that are sharp write better.

note: there are no commas around a "that" clause

- "which" adds a fact or information about the matter receiving attention (nonrestrictive):

Pencils, which need to be sharpened often, are better for homework.

note: a "which" clause normally is set off by commas

- if the phrase for which you want to choose "that" or "which" can be left out of the sentence without changing the meaning, use "which"; if leaving the phrase out changes the meaning of the sentence, use "that"
see also AP Stylebook, "essential phrases/nonessential phrases"

Third World nation

avoid; instead use the specific name of the hemisphere or area being referred to

note: in contemporary usage, "Third World" carries "economic" implications, meaning nonindustrialized or economically poor by Western economic standards; *never* use "developing" as a modifier for a church or a group of people; terms such as "underdeveloped" or "developed" oversimplify a nation's status based on economic or material terms; in this usage, nations are measured by purely Western standards, and other dimensions of human community and values are overlooked

Three Days, the

begins with the Maundy Thursday evening liturgy and ends with Easter Day evening prayer; Easter Day is the last day of the Paschal Triduum and the first day of the Easter season

Three in One

Trinity; refers to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

time

- use numbers except for noon and midnight
- lowercase "a.m." and "p.m.":
We meet at 2 p.m.
- *avoid* redundancies: write
We will meet at 7 p.m. today.
not "We will meet tonight at 7:00 p.m."

time of the church, the

the nonfestival part of the church year, including the time after Pentecost and often the time after Epiphany; also referred to as Ordinary Time

timeline

one word when the meaning is schedule of events or equivalent of timetable:

The timeline for development of the health-care social statement listed the dates of meetings at which drafts would be presented.

time line

two words when the meaning is time chart as in a table listing important events for successive years or groups of years within a particular period:

The time line of major religious events in past millennia highlighted the importance of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in the 16th century.

time zones

see AP Stylebook, “time zones”

titles of articles, songs, poems, essays, short stories, TV shows, movies and preliminary documents en route to a final social statement

use roman type, set off by quotation marks

titles of books, works of art, plays, periodicals and final social statements

place these titles in italics without quotation marks
see “social statements” for a list of ELCA social statements and their dates of adoption

titles of ELCA churchwide staff

when the title comes before the name, capitalize title: “Executive for ... Jane Doe”; when the office is identified after the name, lowercase: “Jane Doe, executive for ...”

titles and in-house designations of ELCA churchwide units, offices and sections

when referring to a specific portion of the churchwide office, be sure to include “ELCA”:

The staff of the ELCA Church in Society program unit are on retreat today.

proper titles and designations are as follows:

Program Units

Church in Society (CS)

Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EO)

Global Mission (GM)

Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM)

Multicultural Ministries (MM)

Publishing House of the ELCA (Augsburg Fortress, Publishers) (AF)

Vocation and Education (VE)

Women of the ELCA (WO)

Service Units

Communication Services (CO)

Development Services (DS)

ELCA Board of Pensions (BOP)

ELCA Foundation (FO)

The Lutheran magazine (LU)

Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA (MF)

Offices

Office of the Presiding Bishop (OB)

Office of the Secretary (OS)

Office of the Treasurer (OT)

Sections of Offices

Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations (ER)

ELCA Archives (AR)

Human Resources (HR)

Information Technology (IT)

Lutheran Center Library (part of OS)

Management Services (MS)

Research and Evaluation (RE)

Synodical Relations (SR)

Worship and Liturgical Resources (WP)

Torah

the five books of Moses, which constitute the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

Tower of Babel

capitalize

toward

do not use “towards”

trademark

avoid using trademark names as a general reference to a particular type of product; if, however, a trademark name is to be used, the following two criteria must be met:

- the trademarked word must be in caps
GORTEX

AND

- the trademarked word must be used as an adjective
GORTEX fabric

use of this particular trademark could be avoided by saying:

Our waterproof outfits protected us from the elements.

transfiguration

capitalize only when the meaning is otherwise unclear or when referring to the festival on the last Sunday before Lent: “the Transfiguration of Our Lord” or “Transfiguration”

traveled, traveling

preferred spelling is with one “l”

tribe/Tribe

usually lowercase: “the tribe of Judah,” “tribes of Israel”; but capitalize when used with an American Indian name: “Dakota Tribe”

tribes, tribal

avoid in general usage; many Africans are very sensitive about being identified along tribal lines; the word “tribe” also carries connotations of primitiveness; *avoid* “tribal” as well unless used by the people themselves; identify a person by nationality or, in some circumstances, by ethnic group or language instead
note: for American Indians, “tribe” is acceptable, but “nation” is *preferred*

triduum, the

translates from Latin as “three days”; lowercase; but capitalize in “Paschal Triduum”
see Three Days, the

trinitarian/Trinitarian

capitalize only when referring to the Trinitarian Controversy

Trinity

capitalize

Trinity season

prefer “time after Pentecost”

triune God

note capitalization treatment

tune names

in hymnody, to indicate a tune name, use small caps and appropriate capitalization, no quotation marks:

ADESTE FIDELES

EIN FESTE BURG

Twelve, the

refers to the twelve disciples; capitalize

twelve days of Christmas, the

note capitalization treatment

Twelve Step program

note capitalization treatment

Twelve Steps

the twelve stages of recovery that are used by Alcoholics Anonymous and similar support groups; capitalize

unchurched

use as an adjective only:

Unchurched people make up 40 percent of the U.S. population.

not “The unchurched make up”

do not equate unchurched people with non-Christians; the term “unchurched” describes people who are not active in or members of a congregation; they may or may not be baptized

under way

two words; *preferred* usage would be to say that something “began” or it “started”

unique

already means “one of a kind”; writing “very unique” or “quite unique” is redundant

United Church of Christ

a full communion partner of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; acronym is UCC

United Methodist Church

a full communion partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; acronym is UMC

United States

preferred over U.S. or US when referring to the country

units, titles of ELCA

see titles and in-house designations of ELCA units

up and down (travel)

avoid “up and down” language that might unintentionally introduce a hierarchy:

I flew to Brazil.

not “I flew down to Brazil.”

Upper Room, the

note capitalization treatment

URL

acronym for niform resource locator, an Internet address

- in running text, use italic, no underscore:
Go to *www.elca.org* for more information.
- when the URL stands alone, use roman type, no underscore:
www.elca.org
- when used in an electronic resource, the URL needs to remain an active link and so should appear as underscored roman type
- *avoid*, if possible, listing a URL at the end of the sentence; but if there is no way to rewrite, add ending punctuation; do not add a space between the URL and the ending punctuation
- do not include “http://” if the URL begins with “www”
- when the URL breaks at the end of a line of copy, do not add any punctuation, such as a hyphen, lest that hyphen be taken as part of the URL; try to break the URL in a logical place: between words, after existing punctuation, and the like:
The Web site *www.elca.org/what-we-believe/social-issues/faith-science-and-technology.aspx* contains more information.

U.S.

abbreviation for United States; *preferred* use is as an adjective: “U.S. Senate”; use periods with no space between letters

USA

abbreviation for United States of America; no periods, no spaces

vacation Bible school

only the word Bible is capitalized; abbreviated VBS after first reference

Vatican II

use “Second Vatican Council” on first reference, “Vatican II” for second and subsequent references

verse

refers to a portion of Scripture; “v.” and “vv.” are the abbreviations for “verse” and “verses”; the abbreviation is followed by a space and the verse number(s): “v. 2,” “vv. 4–8”; use “stanza” when referring to hymnody
see also stanza

vespers

see evening prayer

Veterans’ Day

capitalize and use apostrophe appropriately

victim

see disease

vigil/Vigil

capitalize when meaning is Easter Vigil or Pentecost Vigil; lowercase all other uses

Vigil of Easter

see Easter Vigil

virgin birth

lowercase

Virgin Mary

capitalize

Virgin, the

capitalize

visitation/Visitation

capitalize only when referring to the commemoration on May 31; but *preferred* name for that commemoration is

Visit of Mary to Elizabeth

voting member

use in the context of a churchwide assembly or synod assembly; *do not use* “delegate” in this context; however, in referring to the Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering, “delegate” is the proper term

-ward, -wards

prefer the variant without the -s, whether the word is used as an adjective: “homeward journey”; as an adverb: “homeward bound,” “doing things backward”; or as a preposition: “toward the sea”

Web/web

short for World Wide Web (hence “www” in many URLs); capitalize when it stands alone:

I found the information on the Web at this Web site on that Web page.

but as suggested in *AP Stylebook*, use lowercase when it is joined to another noun: “webcam,” “webcast,” “webmaster”
see AP Stylebook, “Web,” for general cautions in using the Internet

Web addresses

prefer “URL”

well-being (n.)

hyphenate:

Doctors watch over the well-being of their patients.

which, that

see that, which

White (adj.)

exception to AP Stylebook: capitalize when referring to a group of people:

White Americans

similar style is used with other group designations:

Black Americans

avoid using as a noun

who, whom

see AP Stylebook, “who, whom”

who’s, whose

“who’s” is the contraction for “who is” or “who has”:

Who’s coming for lunch?

Who’s done their homework?

“whose” is a possessive:

Whose child is coming for lunch?

Wise Men, the

preferred term is “magi”

woman

use for any adult female

see also adult; girl; young adult; youth

Women of the ELCA

the proper name for the women’s organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; *do not use* “WELCA” or “W/ELCA”

see Appendix 5 for Women of the ELCA style sheet

word/Word

capitalize only as a synonym for Christ:

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

but “God’s word to Moses,” “word of God,” “the word of the Lord”

word and sacrament(s)

lowercase:

The gift of word and sacrament is from God.

Word Incarnate

capitalize when referring to Jesus; but “the incarnate Word”

works-righteousness

hyphenate

World Hunger

use “ELCA World Hunger”

World Wide Web (WWW)

a subset of the Internet, but not a synonym for it

worldwide

one word without hyphen, except in reference to the World Wide Web

worshiped, worshiping

preferred spelling is with one “p”: “the worshiping congregation”; example of proper usage:

Last Sunday 324 people worshiped with us.

not

Last Sunday we worshiped 324 people.

writings/Writings

capitalize only as a division of Jewish scriptures: “Law, Prophets, Writings”

Yahweh

preferred usage, also “YHWH”; *preferred* over “Jehovah”

avoid “Jahweh”

year

see centuries; dates; decades

young adult

a person between the ages of 18 and 30

see also adult; boy; girl; man; woman; youth

your, you're

“your” is the possessive:

Your desk is so neat.

“you're” is the contraction of “you are”:

You're going to clean your desk.

youth

refers to individual/s ages 12–18; for those under age 12 use “boy” for males and “girl” for females; “young man” or “young woman” are also possible terms; at age 18 everyone is a “man,” “woman,” or “young adult”

see also adult; boy; girl; man; woman; young adult

zealot/Zelot

capitalize when referring to the fanatical first-century group of individuals who wanted to overthrow the Romans; otherwise, lowercase

Appendix 1

Credit Lines/Copyright Information for Key Resources

Versions of the Bible:

The following Bible translation copyright acknowledgment lines may be used without further permission if stated conditions in italics are met. Permission must be requested if conditions are exceeded. (NOTE: “<” means that the total word count quoted from that source is less than the indicated amount of words; “≤” means the total word count is equal to or less than the amount indicated.) *The NRSV is the preferred version of the Bible for use in the ELCA.* If it is necessary, in a particular context, to quote from another version of the Bible, reasoning for this deviation from the standard should be provided when the document is submitted to Communication Services for editorial review as well as an indication of which version is being used.

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The Message

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New American Bible

≤ 2500 words

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New American Standard Bible

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New Century Version

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New English Bible

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New King James Version

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Churches of Christ in the United States of America.
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note: The NRSV is the preferred version for usage in
the ELCA

New Testament in Modern English (Phillips)

≤ 15 verses

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English*, copyright © 1958 by J. B. Phillips. Used
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Revised English Bible

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Revised Standard Version Bible

< 500 verses; no entire book; < 50% of our content

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Division of Christian Education of the National
Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used
by permission.

Tanakh

no entire book; < 50% of our content

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Today's English Version (TEV)

see Good News for Modern Man listing

Other Commonly Quoted References:

Eerdman's Bible Dictionary

< 400 words

The Eerdman's Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987)

Revised Common Lectionary

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Worship Resources:

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

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Lutheran Book of Worship

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Libro de Liturgia y Cántico

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Appendix 2

ELCA Disaster Response and ELCA World Hunger Style Sheet

ELCA Disaster Response

- ELCA Disaster Response refers to both ELCA International Disaster Response and ELCA Domestic Disaster Response
- the “ELCA Disaster Response” brandmark is used for both ELCA International Disaster Response and ELCA Domestic Disaster Response
- *note:* for designated disasters, 100 percent of donations designated for a specific disaster are used for that disaster's immediate relief and long-term recovery efforts; should a response become fully funded, additional designated gifts will be applied to similar international or domestic response efforts; for a listing of disasters accepting designated donations, visit www.elca.org/giving
- key messages include: “In it for the long haul,” “prepared to care,” “bringing help and hope” and “immediate relief and long-term recovery”

ELCA Domestic Disaster Response (DDR) and Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR)

- **ELCA Domestic Disaster Response** is the ELCA’s program and fund responding to major natural and human-caused disasters in the United States and the Caribbean
- when communicating with an ELCA-specific audience or soliciting funds from ELCA members, refer to ELCA Domestic Disaster Response. Remember, “domestic” means more than “United States,” as it includes the Caribbean.
- **Lutheran Disaster Response** is a collaborative ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
- LDR is the recipient of ELCA Domestic Disaster Response funds and is the operational organization for domestic recovery efforts

ELCA World Hunger

- when referring to ELCA World Hunger, use the official name, “ELCA World Hunger” and rarely, if ever, “World Hunger”
- “ELCA World Hunger” is the umbrella term for interunit churchwide, synodical, and congregational programs, events and activities—both program (which is housed in Church in Society) and appeal (which is housed in Development Services)
- the “ELCA World Hunger” brandmark is used for both ELCA World Hunger program and appeal
- when ELCA World Hunger is referenced in a publication where the acronym “ELCA” needs to be defined, do not say, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America World Hunger.” Instead, use construction similar to:
ELCA World Hunger is the hunger-fighting ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- use “ELCA World Hunger Appeal” and “ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal” for rare, internal communication when referring to the fund-raising arm (Development Services) of ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response; this usage is also appropriate when referring to a staff position or title
- similarly, use “ELCA World Hunger program” for rare, internal communication when referring to the programmatic arm (Church in Society) of ELCA World Hunger; this usage is also appropriate when referring to a staff position or title
- key message: ELCA World Hunger addresses the root causes of hunger and poverty through a program of relief, development, education, advocacy and lifestyle stewardship
never use “the” before “ELCA World Hunger”

Sample relationship language

ELCA World Hunger	works internationally through	LWR, LWF and companion churches to support/enable...
	works domestically through	hunger grant recipients to support/enable...
	OR supports/enables [name of partner or project]	
ELCA Disaster Response	supports partners in OR supports members of Action by Churches Together (ACT)	
	supports Lutheran Disaster Response	and local affiliate [name of Social Ministry Organization]

Appendix 3

State Abbreviations and Postal Codes

<u>State/Territory Name</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Postal Code</u>
Alabama	Ala.	AL
Alaska	Alaska	AK
Arizona	Ariz.	AZ
Arkansas	Ark.	AR
California	Calif.	CA
Colorado	Colo.	CO
Connecticut	Conn.	CT
Delaware	Del.	DE
District of Columbia	D.C.	DC
Florida	Fla.	FL
Guam	Guam	GU
Georgia	Ga.	GA
Hawaii	Hawaii	HI
Idaho	Idaho	ID
Iowa	Iowa	IA
Illinois	Ill.	IL
Indiana	Ind.	IN
Kansas	Kan.	KS
Kentucky	Ky.	KY
Louisiana	La.	LA
Maine	Maine	ME
Maryland	Md.	MD
Massachusetts	Mass.	MA
Michigan	Mich.	MI
Minnesota	Minn.	MN
Mississippi	Miss.	MS
Missouri	Mo.	MO
Montana	Mont.	MT

<u>State/Territory Name</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Postal Code</u>
Nebraska	Neb.	NE
Nevada	Nev.	NV
New Hampshire	N.H.	NH
New Jersey	N.J.	NJ
New Mexico	N.M.	NM
New York	N.Y.	NY
North Carolina	N.C.	NC
North Dakota	N.D.	ND
Ohio	Ohio	OH
Oklahoma	Okla.	OK
Oregon	Ore.	OR
Pennsylvania	Pa.	PA
Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	PR
Rhode Island	R.I.	RI
South Carolina	S.C.	SC
South Dakota	S.D.	SD
Tennessee	Tenn.	TN
Texas	Texas	TX
Utah	Utah	UT
Vermont	Vt.	VT
Virgin Islands (US)	Virgin Islands	VI
Virginia	Va.	VA
Washington	Wash.	WA
Wisconsin	Wis.	WI
West Virginia	W.Va.	WV
Wyoming	Wyo.	WY

Appendix 4

ELCA Synod Names

Alaska Synod
Allegheny Synod
Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod
Caribbean Synod
Central States Synod
Central/Southern Illinois Synod
Delaware-Maryland Synod
East-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Eastern North Dakota Synod
Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod
Florida-Bahamas Synod
Grand Canyon Synod
Greater Milwaukee Synod
Indiana-Kentucky Synod
La Crosse Area Synod
Lower Susquehanna Synod
Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Metropolitan New York Synod
Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod
Minneapolis Area Synod
Montana Synod
Nebraska Synod
New England Synod
New Jersey Synod
North Carolina Synod
North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Northeastern Iowa Synod
Northeastern Minnesota Synod
Northeastern Ohio Synod
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Northern Great Lakes Synod
Northern Illinois Synod

Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Northwest Washington Synod
Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Northwestern Ohio Synod
Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Oregon Synod
Pacifica Synod
Rocky Mountain Synod
Saint Paul Area Synod
Sierra Pacific Synod
Slovak Zion Synod
South Carolina Synod
South Dakota Synod
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Southeast Michigan Synod
Southeastern Iowa Synod
Southeastern Minnesota Synod
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Southeastern Synod
Southern Ohio Synod
Southwest California Synod
Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Southwestern Texas Synod
Southwestern Washington Synod
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Upper Susquehanna Synod
Upstate New York Synod
Virginia Synod
West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod
Western Iowa Synod
Western North Dakota Synod

Appendix 5

Women of the ELCA Style Sheet

Many common words with specific meanings are used within Women of the ELCA. Here are some definitions and style standards.

Café: Stirring the Spirit Within

the monthly online magazine for young women

churchwide executive board

this group of 17 board members and 4 officers (elected by the triennial convention for a three-year term) serve as the board of directors and as the interim legislative authority between triennial conventions

circle

a group within a congregational unit—usually for the purpose of such program activities as Bible study, fellowship and personal growth—which meets regularly and supports the purpose of the organization

cluster

a grouping of congregational, intercongregational and special units within the territory of a synodical women’s organization; also known as a “conference” in some areas
note: do not use “district”

conference

a grouping of congregational, intercongregational and special units within the territory of a synodical women’s organization; also known as a “cluster” in some areas
note: do not use “district”

congregational unit

a member of Women of the ELCA; a community of women coming together for study, support and action in local and other settings of Women of the ELCA; also referred to as a unit
note: the member of Women of the ELCA is the unit, not the individual participants

delegate

the organization sends delegates to the triennial convention, not voting members

Lutheran Woman Today magazine

please use “magazine” when describing this publication

note the proper name is “Woman,” not “Women”

memorial

a statement of facts presented to a legislative body that is the basis for a petition or request for action; the way in which one organization formally makes a request of another, brought to a synodical women’s organization convention by a unit or to a triennial convention by a synodical women’s organization

participant

woman who takes part in carrying out the mission of and supports the ministries of Women of the ELCA; not all women in an ELCA congregation are automatically participants in Women of the ELCA; only those who take part in carrying out the mission of the organization and support the ministries of Women of the ELCA are participants

special unit

a member of Women of the ELCA; women who come together in special settings as authorized by the executive board, who are not affiliated with a congregation (such as on a college campus or in a retirement center)

synodical women’s organization (SWO)

legislative and programmatic expression of Women of the ELCA that assists congregational, intercongregational and special units within its territory to fulfill the purpose of Women of the ELCA; there is a SWO in each synod of the ELCA

triennial convention

the convention of Women of the ELCA; the highest legislative authority of the organization; meets every three years
note: this is different from a “triennial gathering”

Web site

the official Web site of the Women of the ELCA is www.womenoftheelca.org

note exception: Women of the ELCA style does not italicize URLs in running text

Women of the ELCA

this is the shortened form for “Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” the legal name of the women’s organization of the ELCA; always spell out Women of the ELCA; *never* use WELCA or Welca; Women of the ELCA is never preceded by “the”