



July 28 – August 2
PHOENIX, ARIZONA



Report of the Memorials Committee

Consideration of Synod Memorials

The proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure (2025 *Bulletin of Reports*, Section I) define memorials as “proposals for action involving broad policy issues submitted by Synod Assemblies to the churchwide organization.” To assist the Churchwide Assembly in its task of responding to these proposals, the Memorials Committee reviews all memorials and proposes recommendations for assembly action.

The process for consideration of memorials outlined in this report is intended to assist the assembly in responding to a large number of memorials and will facilitate the scheduling of discussion. It also will make it possible to distribute substitute motions to assembly members prior to debate.

The Memorials Committee may recommend that the 2025 Churchwide Assembly:

- vote separately on the proposed responses to certain synod memorials, allowing the co-chairs to determine the order in which the recommendations are considered; and
- vote on the recommended responses to the remaining synod memorials as a group (*en bloc*). Note that some memorials are included in this *en bloc* action because the subject matter will come to the floor of the assembly for discussion elsewhere on the agenda.

Recommendation of the Memorials Committee

To approve *en bloc*, with the exception of those memorials considered separately, the following responses to 2023, 2024, and 2025 synod memorials printed in the Report of the Memorials Committee (2025 *Bulletin of Reports*, Section VII, pages as listed):

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WHEREAS, the Office of Corporate Social Responsibility's "Boycott Policy: Policies and Procedures" identifies issues and criteria as well as appropriate procedures for decisions related to boycotts; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Indiana-Kentucky Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly as follows:

- To instruct the Church Council to review its investments and their alignment with the screening and boycott policies of the ELCA in light of Bishop Eaton's rejection of the false public claims on X;
- To instruct the Church Council to report a summary of findings and proposed solutions, made available by video via the ELCA's social media channels as well as by written report, with links to both to be emailed to all ELCA email list subscribers no later than March 1, 2026.

Background

"Corporate Social Responsibility in the ELCA uses the tools of screening of investments, shareholder advocacy and community investing to work with corporations, calling them to ensure that people are treated fairly and with dignity and to create sustainable communities" ([Corporate Social Responsibility Overview](#)).

ELCA Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) develops screens as part of the ELCA's strategy of exercising shareholder rights on issues of social concern. Social Criteria Investment Screens draw from the ELCA's strong foundation of social teaching, and include screens on topics such as human rights, military weapons, and the environment. They assist ELCA-related institutions in describing the area of concern and focusing on the most egregious problems. These screens do not constitute binding mandates or determine individual companies to be excluded—it is up to financial actors to determine portfolios, guided by ELCA social teaching as delineated in the screens (see: [ELCA Social Criteria Investment Screen Policies and Procedures](#)).

In a process that is separate from screens and investing, the ELCA also has a boycott policy which defines a boycott as "A collective effort to abstain from the purchase or use of products or services provided by a targeted firm, government, or other agency. The purpose of a boycott is to persuade the targeted entity to cease certain practices judged to be unjust, and/or to perform certain practices deemed to be just" (see: [ELCA Boycott Policy Policies and Procedures](#)). Boycotts refer to a corporation's products or services rather than equity in that corporation. The policy goes on to ask the ELCA to consider certain ethical questions, institutional/procedural questions, and pastoral questions prior to determining a boycott. ELCA CSR reviews active boycotts annually at its January review team meeting and creates a report for synod bishops. To initiate a boycott by the ELCA, the director for advocacy would call an inter-unit meeting to address the questions in the boycott policy and determine whether a boycott is warranted.

Recommended for assembly action

To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Review of ELCA Investments and Procurement" from the Indiana-Kentucky Synod;

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

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

Category B14: Consideration of Recommendation 1 of the CRLC

1. Pacifica Synod (2C) [2025]

RESOLVED, that the Pacifica Synod Assembly adopt this memorial and submit it to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and request it to consider and debate the full text of Recommendation 1 of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as part of its agenda; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Pacifica Synod Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly and request that the Churchwide Assembly adopt the CRLC's Recommendation 1 in full, including its call for the establishment of mutual accountability measures, compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA, and, if these measures are not implemented by 2028, the convening of a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the church's governing documents.

Recommendation 1

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church recommends that the ELCA Church Council immediately begin identifying and acting upon mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the

denomination. These measures and incentives shall be guided by the recommendations outlined in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit and the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity.

To ensure timely action, all constitution and bylaw amendments needed for the development and implementation of these accountability measures and compliance incentives must be developed and advanced in time for consideration by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly. If by that time such measures and incentives have not been adequately identified or enacted, we recommend the ELCA Church Council call for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to evaluate and enact necessary constitutional revisions that will enable and advance the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism work.

2. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2025]

WHEREAS, the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) established the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) with the charge to "reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism"; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC undertook an extensive process of discernment, consultation, and listening across the ELCA, resulting in a final report in early 2025 that included Recommendation 1: Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC's Recommendation 1 states:

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church recommends that the ELCA Church Council immediately begin identifying and acting upon mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination. These measures and incentives shall be guided by the recommendations outlined in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit and the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity.

To ensure timely action, all constitution and bylaw amendments needed for the development and implementation of these accountability measures and compliance incentives must be developed and advanced in time for consideration by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly. If by that time such measures and incentives have not been adequately identified or enacted, we recommend the ELCA Church Council call for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to evaluate and enact necessary constitutional revisions that will enable and advance the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism work;

and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the ELCA received the recommendation with appreciation and took action to encourage internal processes and reports, but did not adopt the full substance of Recommendation 1—including the mechanisms for mutual accountability, compliance incentives, or the provision for calling a special Churchwide Assembly in 2028 if progress stalls; and

WHEREAS, the failure to act on the full scope of Recommendation 1 limits the authority of the Churchwide Assembly to directly consider and vote on a proposal that speaks to the heart of the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism, and undermines the urgency and structural accountability called for by the CRLC; and

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly is the highest legislative authority of this church and must be able to deliberate on recommendations that concern the spiritual and institutional integrity of the ELCA in the face of systemic racism and exclusion; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod Assembly adopt this memorial and submit it to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, urging it to consider and debate the full text of Recommendation 1 of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as part of its agenda; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to adopt the CRLC's Recommendation 1 in full, including its call for the establishment of mutual accountability measures, compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA, and, if these measures are not implemented by 2028, the convening of a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the church's governing documents; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod express its deep commitment to structural change in service of becoming an anti-racist church, and that the work of dismantling racism shall be pursued not only as a moral and spiritual imperative, but as a matter of ecclesial governance, institutional design, and gospel faithfulness.

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

WHEREAS, the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) established the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) with the charge to "reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism"; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC undertook an extensive process of discernment, consultation, and listening across the ELCA, resulting in a final report in early 2025 that included Recommendation 1: Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC's Recommendation 1 states:

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church recommends that the ELCA Church Council immediately begin identifying and acting upon mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination. These measures and incentives shall be guided by the

recommendations outlined in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit and the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity.

To ensure timely action, all constitution and bylaw amendments needed for the development and implementation of these accountability measures and compliance incentives must be developed and advanced in time for consideration by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly. If by that time such measures and incentives have not been adequately identified or enacted, we recommend the ELCA Church Council call for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to evaluate and enact necessary constitutional revisions that will enable and advance the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism work;

and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the ELCA received the recommendation with appreciation and took action to encourage internal processes and reports, but did not adopt the full substance of Recommendation 1—including the mechanisms for mutual accountability, compliance incentives, or the provision for calling a special Churchwide Assembly in 2028 if progress stalls; and

WHEREAS, the failure to act on the full scope of Recommendation 1 limits the authority of the Churchwide Assembly to directly consider and vote on a proposal that speaks to the heart of the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism, and undermines the urgency and structural accountability called for by the CRLC; and

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly is the highest legislative authority of this church and must be able to deliberate on recommendations that concern the spiritual and institutional integrity of the ELCA in the face of systemic racism and exclusion; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly adopt this memorial and submit it to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, urging it to consider and debate the full text of Recommendation 1 of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as part of its agenda; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to adopt the CRLC's Recommendation 1 in full, including its call for the establishment of mutual accountability measures, compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA, and, if these measures are not implemented by 2028, the convening of a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the church's governing documents; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod express its deep commitment to structural change in service of becoming an anti-racist church, and that the work of dismantling racism shall be pursued not only as a moral and spiritual imperative, but as a matter of ecclesial governance, institutional design, and gospel faithfulness.

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

WHEREAS, the 2022 Churchwide Assembly (CWA) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) established the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) with the charge to "reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism"; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC undertook an extensive process of discernment, consultation, and listening across the ELCA, resulting in a final report in early 2025 that included Recommendation 1: Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism; and

WHEREAS, the CRLC's Recommendation 1 states:

"The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church recommends that the ELCA Church Council immediately begin identifying and acting upon mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination. These measures and incentives shall be guided by the recommendations outlined in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit and the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity."

"To ensure timely action, all constitution and bylaw amendments needed for the development and implementation of these accountability measures and compliance incentives must be developed and advanced in time for consideration by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly. If by that time such measures and incentives have not been adequately identified or enacted, we recommend the ELCA Church Council call for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to evaluate and enact necessary constitutional revisions that will enable and advance the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism work."

WHEREAS, the ELCA Church Council received the recommendation with appreciation and took action to encourage internal processes and reports, but did not adopt the full substance of Recommendation 1—including the mechanisms for mutual accountability, compliance incentives, or the provision for calling a special Churchwide Assembly in 2028 if progress stalls; and

WHEREAS, the failure to act on the full scope of Recommendation 1 limits the authority of the CWA to directly consider and vote on a proposal that speaks to the heart of the ELCA's commitment to anti-racism, and undermines the urgency and structural accountability called for by the CRLC; and

WHEREAS, the CWA is the highest legislative authority of this church and must be able to deliberate on recommendations that concern the spiritual and institutional integrity of the ELCA in the face of systemic racism and exclusion; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorializes the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to consider and debate the full text of Recommendation 1 of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) as part of its agenda; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorializes the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the CRLC's Recommendation 1 in full, including its call for the establishment of mutual

accountability measures, compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA, and, if these measures are not implemented by 2028, the convening of a special Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the church's governing documents; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly expresses its deep commitment to structural change in service of becoming an anti-racist church and that the work of dismantling racism shall be pursued not only as a moral and spiritual imperative, but as a matter of ecclesial governance, institutional design, and faithfulness to the Gospel.

Background

This memorial seeks to have the Churchwide Assembly reconsider the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church's (CRLC) Recommendation 1 in full, in place of the Church Council's response to the CRLC's recommendation.

The 2022 Churchwide Assembly passed the following resolution:

“To direct the Church Council to establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church comprised of leaders of diverse representation from all three expressions that, working in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, shall reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism, and will present its findings and recommendations to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in preparation for a possible reconstituting convention to be called under the rules for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly.” [CA22.01.06]

The Church Council then selected members of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church in Spring 2023. The CRLC submitted its final report and recommendations to the Church Council in April 2025 [EN][SP]. The Report of the CRLC included 13 recommendations, including Recommendation 1. Similar to the process for forwarding social statements to the assembly, the work of the commission needed to be presented to the Church Council for consideration and possible action. The Church Council reviewed the CRLC's recommendations and, with prayerful consideration, discussed the report and took actions appropriate to the CRLC's recommendations.

Many of the CRLC's recommendations called upon the Church Council to establish task forces, direct development of various resources, adopt continuing resolutions, establish policy measures, and recommend certain constitutional amendments to the Churchwide Assembly.

In its review of Recommendation 1, the Church Council dealt with each of the two paragraphs separately.

Regarding paragraph 1, the Church Council found the recommendation vague and wanted to add specific language to put into place recommendations outlined in the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity (STAD). Recommendations from the Report on the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit were included in the governing documents by continuing resolution. In addition, the Church Council used the DEIA Audit to set forth the defined term, “historically underrepresented groups.” A proposed bylaw amendment will be before the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to increase future Churchwide Assembly voting membership by allowing each synod to send one additional member who is a member of a historically underrepresented group. In addition, the churchwide organization staff is tasked with developing handbooks and employee manuals to assist with all expressions of this church in achieving DEIA goals.

The intent of the Church Council's response to Recommendation 1 was to strengthen the work already done by the STAD Advisory Team and to renew the team's purpose and vision for the recommended work. Further, in order that the STAD Advisory Team's work is received by and acted upon by the Church Council, the Church Council recommendation requires regular reporting on behalf of the STAD Advisory Team. The intent was to deepen the work of the CRLC, building on their recommendations with increased specific actions to be undertaken. The original Recommendation 1 lacked specificity, which the Church Council felt would delay the process unnecessarily.

Regarding paragraph 2, the Church Council was concerned by the request that the Church Council would determine whether or not it had complied with Recommendation 1. Also, there was question about the CRLC's unspecified term “mutual accountability measures.” The Church Council agreed that including a call in its own action for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly was redundant as the council already has the constitutional authority to do so (see ELCA Constitution 12.31.), should it determine that a special meeting is needed. By its action, the Church Council attempted to address issues of concern raised by the CRLC toward an end of greater mutual accountability within existing ELCA polity.

Recommended for assembly action

To receive with gratitude the memorials on “Consideration of Recommendation 1 of the CRLC” from the Pacifica Synod, Metropolitan New York Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod;

To acknowledge the importance of accountability in addressing racism within all structures of the ELCA;

To affirm the work of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity Advisory Team and request that the Church Council continue to work with the team to clarify the nature of mutual accountability as referenced in Recommendation 1 of the CRLC Report; and

To direct the Church Council to add a timeline to its actions taken in response to CRLC Recommendation 1 and to provide progress updates to this church with a final report by Fall 2027, including possible constitutional changes.

Category B15: Consideration of Full Report of CRLC

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

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, urging it to consider and debate the full text of the unedited report and recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as part of its agenda.

Background

This memorial seeks to have the Churchwide Assembly consider and debate the full text of the unedited report and recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) [\[EN\]](#)[\[SP\]](#), in place of the Church Council’s responses to the CRLC’s recommendations.

The 2022 Churchwide Assembly passed the following resolution:

“To direct the Church Council to establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church comprised of leaders of diverse representation from all three expressions that, working in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, shall reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism, and will present its findings and recommendations to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in preparation for a possible reconstituting convention to be called under the rules for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly.” [CA22.01.06]

The Church Council then selected members of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church in Spring 2023. The CRLC performed its work from mid-2023 until the final report and recommendations were submitted to the Church Council in April 2025. Similar to the process for forwarding social statements to the assembly, the work of the commission needed to be presented to the Church Council for consideration and possible action. The Church Council reviewed the CRLC’s recommendations and, with prayerful consideration, discussed the report and took actions appropriate to the CRLC’s recommendations.

Many of the CRLC’s recommendations called upon the Church Council to establish task forces, direct development of various resources, adopt continuing resolutions, establish policy measures, and recommend certain constitutional and bylaw amendments to the Churchwide Assembly.

The Report of the CRLC included 13 recommendations. Recommendations 7, 8, and 10–12, which involve constitutional and bylaw matters, were received by the council at its November 2024 meeting in advance of the final report of the CRLC, and resulted in proposed constitutional and bylaw amendments that were forwarded to the synods in January, as required by the ELCA Constitution. These amendments will be considered by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Action was taken to defer consideration of Recommendation 13 until after the assembly.

At its April meeting, the Church Council received and responded to Recommendations 1–6. The council also responded to Recommendation 9, related to the Association of Synod Vice Presidents, by adopting a continuing resolution establishing the association.

As part of the work of the Church Council, in-depth discussions were had regarding feasibility, resource constraints (both staff and financial), and polity impacts of the CRLC recommendations. In certain instances, such as Recommendations 1, 3, and 4, the Church Council wanted to add more measurable items and clarify goals to unclear mandates. In other instances, such as Recommendation 6, members discussed the difficulty of creating a one-size-fits-all approach to very different synods. In certain instances, such as Recommendation 5, it was noted that the materials in the CRLC’s recommendations already existed, though perhaps not in the most accessible way. In all instances, the Church Council responded to each CRLC recommendation with seriousness, prayer, and deep discussion.