

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Minutes of the National Church Council Meeting
March 5–7, 2015
Hampton Inn Winnipeg Airport, 730 Berry St., Winnipeg, MB**

Present:

Officers: National Bishop Susan Johnson
Sheila Hamilton, Vice-President Murray Walter, Secretary
Ken Day, Treasurer

Council: Vanessa Bergeron Allyn Langager
Rev. Chris Bishopp Pat Lovell
Jeff Buhse Rev. Kathy Martin
Marie-Laure Collet Rev. Heather Spencer-Stoltz
Rev. Dr. Cameron Harder Rev. Jeffrey Smith
Cindy Hoppe Jeanie Stann
Cynthia Haines-Turner Rev. Brian Wilker-Frey
Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry

Synod Bishops: Bishop Greg Mohr, BC Synod Bishop Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod
Bishop Sidney Haugen, SK Synod Bishop Elaine Sauer, MNO Synod
Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, ABT Synod

Staff: Rev. Paul Gehrs, Assistant to the Bishop, Justice and Leadership
Rev. André Lavergne, Assistant to the Bishop, Ecumenical and Interfaith
Rev. Lyle McKenzie, Assistant to the Bishop, Worship
Trina Gallop Blank, Director of Communications and Stewardship
Gloria McNabb, Director of Finance and Administration
Desiree Mendoza, Meetings and Communications Coordinator

ELCIC-GSI Lisa Thiessen, Executive Director

*(Mar. 6 only via
conference call)*

Regrets: Bruce Cook
Judy Wry

THURSDAY, MAR. 5, 2015, 7:00 P.M.

Opening Worship

Led by meeting chaplains Bishop Elaine Sauer, Rev. Dr. Cam Harder and Jeff Buhse (MNO Synod council members).

Vice-President Sheila Hamilton called the meeting to order.

AGENDA

Amendments: Include Report of Global Mission Task Force and Committee Appointments after Convention under New Business.

M/S That NCC adopt the amended agenda. **CARRIED.**

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest – No conflicts declared.

M/S That NCC approve the September 4–6, 2014 meeting minutes. **CARRIED.**

Report of the National Bishop

Bishop Susan Johnson gave an oral report to NCC. She thanked everyone for the support and prayers in regards to her father's illness. Bishop Susan also thanked the task force responsible for drafting the motion on Criminal Justice and Correctional Systems which includes Rev. Ken Kuhn, Rev. Terry Richardson and Rev. Pam Pederson; also to Rev. Karen Kuhnert and Rev. Phil Heinze for the motion on Doctrine of Discovery as well as to Rev. Paul Gehrs and Jeff Buhse for working on the motions on Climate Justice. She also thanked all other committees, including Faith Order and Doctrine, for their hard work.

CC-2015-01 That NCC adopt the “Youth Assembly Delegate Reporting Guidelines” in order to encourage reflection by youth delegates to foster deeper understanding of youth perspectives by church leaders. **CARRIED.**

Youth Assembly Delegate Reporting Guidelines (Appendix A)

CC-2015-02 That the ABT Synod “CTEL Checklist for Diaconal Ministry Process,” be added to the *Candidacy Manual* as an additional form. **CARRIED.**

CTEL Checklist for Diaconal Ministry Process (Appendix B)

CC-2015-03 That the CEP Long Term Grants policy be amended to state that with each submission for reimbursement of long term study costs, 90% will come from the grant account and 10% will come from the individual's member account. **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-04 That the CEP Long Term Grants policy be amended by adding “or be engaged in part-time study toward an advanced degree.” to the sections on Eligibility and Leave Requirements. **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-05 That the CEP Short Term policy be amended by adding “The education event may also have the format of a lesson for a small group or individual, including coaching, when it meets the qualifying criteria listed above.” to the section on Qualifying Education Disbursements. **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-06 That the CEP Short Term policy be amended by adding the following section: “Guidance for Rostered Members without a Call regarding their CEP Account.”

Guidance for Rostered Members without a Call regarding their CEP Account

Continuing Education Plan (CEP) is a resource of funds for plan members to enhance their employment skills. This is the overriding criteria, which allows these funds to be used on a tax free basis to the member. When a plan member leaves employment with the ELCIC, one of the following will occur depending on the circumstance.

Member Status	Intention for future employment	CEP Account Status
Rostered member on leave from call	Is seeking a call	Account may remain open and funds used for education to maintain and enhance skills relating to future employment
Rostered member on a statutory leave	Intends to return to work or seek a new call at end of leave	Account may remain open and funds used for education to maintain and enhance skills relating to future employment
Rostered member retiring	Intends to continue working from time to time in interim positions and supply	Account may remain open and funds used for education to maintain and enhance skills relating to employment
Rostered member retiring	No known intent to return to current employer or to be hired by another ELCIC employer	Member portion of account returned to member and employer portion transferred to the long term study plan
Non-rostered employee or formerly rostered employee now terminated on the roster or transferred to another non-ELCIC roster	No known intent to return to current employer or to be hired by another ELCIC employer	Member portion of account returned to member and employer portion transferred to the long term study plan

CARRIED.

M/S That GSI use the up to date ELCIC expense guidelines in determining eligible CEP expenses. The phrase “CEP expenses are subject to ELCIC Expense Guidelines” will be added to the expense reimbursement request form.

M/S That the motion “That GSI use the up to date ELCIC expense guidelines in determining eligible CEP expenses. The phrase ‘CEP expenses are subject to ELCIC Expense Guidelines’ will be added to the expense reimbursement request form” be referred to the Finance Committee.” **CARRIED.**

ELCIC and Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB)

CC-2015-07 That NCC approve in principle the dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) for 2015 to 2018 including:

1. Inviting communities across Canada where there is a critical mass of Lutherans and Roman Catholics to engage in intentional “prayer, worship and service” together. Communities would be invited to take advantage of resources being prepared internationally for common liturgical commemoration. Local bishops and ecumenical officers would be helpful in informing local possibilities. And,
2. Convening a joint body around a baptismal theme (perhaps “reformation as baptismal vocation”) to interpret the 5 imperatives to our communities. The body would be similar to a traditional theological "dialogue" (baptismal focus) but would be tasked with producing a practical and accessible resource rather than a theological consensus. **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-08 That NCC reappoint André Lavergne and Pat Lovell to The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) Governing Board and add Bishop Susan Johnson as an alternate for terms ending in 2018.

CARRIED.

Closing Worship for the Day

The meeting chaplains led the group in Closing Prayer.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 9:00 A.M.

Opening Worship

Led by the meeting chaplains.

Bishop Susan called the meeting to order.

Report of the ELCIC Officers

Vice-President Sheila Hamilton gave an oral report to NCC on the performance review of the National Bishop. She underlined the positive nature of the review and thanked everyone for their participation.

Reports of the Synod Bishops

COGS Report

Conference of Bishops Report

Bishop Greg Mohr presented the Conference of Bishops (COB) Report to NCC.

CC-2015-09 That NCC amend the Worship Notes of the ELCIC Rite of Ordination of a Bishop as follows: “As a sign of unity of the Body of Christ, the other bishops of this church (**including retired**), together with bishops ~~or ministers having pastoral oversight~~ in churches with which this church is in full communion, are invited to participate in the laying-on of hands or exhortations with scripture at the time of the giving of the signs of the ministry.” **CARRIED.**

Work Plan Update

National Bishop Susan Johnson presented the updated work plan implementing the strategic plan to NCC.

2015 National Convention

National Bishop Susan Johnson presented a draft agenda for the upcoming National Convention. National Church Council members made several suggestions, additions and amendments. Bishop Johnson will distribute an amended agenda for e-vote.

CC-2015-10 That NCC approve the use of e-balloting in National Convention. **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-11 That NCC designate the offering at the Opening Worship of the National Convention towards Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) and designate the offering at the Closing Worship to the ELCIC Reformation Challenge. **CARRIED.**

ELCIC Reformation Challenge

M/S That NCC approve and recommend for adoption to the 2015 National Convention the ELCIC Reformation Challenge.

That the ELCIC in convention adopts the ELCIC Reformation Challenge for 2015–2017. In honour of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation we will commit ourselves, as individuals, congregations, specialized ministries, and synods, to:

- 50 new refugee sponsorships
- 50 new bursaries for students in schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
- 500,000 trees to be planted in Canada and around the world
- \$50,000.00 to be raised for the Lutheran World Federation Endowment Fund.

M/S To amend by adding a zero in the first, second and last bullets. **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-12 That NCC approve and recommend for adoption to the 2015 National Convention the ELCIC Reformation Challenge.

That the ELCIC in convention adopts the ELCIC Reformation Challenge for 2015-2017. In honour of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation we will commit ourselves, as individuals, congregations, specialized ministries, and synods, to:

- 500 new refugee sponsorships
- 500 new bursaries for students in schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
- 500,000 trees to be planted in Canada and around the world
- \$500,000.00 to be raised for the Lutheran World Federation Endowment Fund. **CARRIED.**

ELCIC Resolution On The Doctrine of Discovery

National Bishop Susan Johnson presented the ELCIC Resolution on the Doctrine of Discovery to NCC.

CC-2015-13 That NCC approve and recommend for adoption to the 2015 National Convention the following “ELCIC Resolution on the Doctrine of Discovery:”

That the ELCIC in convention repudiates and renounces the Doctrine of Discovery as fundamentally opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and our understanding of the inherent rights that individuals and peoples have received from God.

We confess that this doctrine encourages patterns of domination and oppression that continue to afflict Indigenous Peoples today. The ways of life, identities, well-being and very existence of Indigenous People are threatened by the continuing effects of colonization and national policies, regulations and laws that attempt to force Indigenous Peoples to assimilate into the cultures of dominant societies.

We confess that this doctrine encourages patterns of domination and oppression of land and environment which continue today. These patterns discourage healthy and holistic relationships with God's whole creation. The doctrine continues to inform national policies, regulations and laws thereby becoming a detriment to addressing urgent environmental challenges such as climate justice, responsible resource extraction and establishing sustainable lifestyles.

Liberated by God's Grace, we will:

- Pray for wisdom, humility, courage and God's guidance towards action as we live into the reality that salvation is not for sale, human beings are not for sale and creation is not for sale.
- Encourage all members and congregations to reflect upon our own national and church history, and seek greater understanding of the issues facing Indigenous Peoples.
- Walk with Indigenous Peoples in their ongoing efforts to exercise their inherent sovereignty and fundamental human rights and renew our commitment to truth, reconciliation and equity.
- Reflect on how the church's policies and programs have been impacted by the Doctrine of Discovery, and work toward transforming policies, program, and structures in order to promote equality, self-determination and respect for the land.
- Urge governments to transform legal structures and policies based on the Doctrine of Discovery and dominance, so as better to empower and enable Indigenous Peoples to identify their own aspirations and issues of concern.
- Support the continued development of theological reflections by Indigenous Peoples which promote indigenous visions of full, good and abundant life and which strengthen their own spiritual and theological reflections.

This convention asks the National Bishop to

- Communicate this action to our key ecumenical partners, including the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, the Canadian Council of Churches, our Full Communion partner: the Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Episcopal Church.
- Communicate this action to key national aboriginal organizations, including the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Metis National Council.
- Communicate this action to the United Nations and to the Government of Canada.

CARRIED.

CC-2015-14 That NCC approve the report of the Nominating Committee.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) has the mandate of submitting the names of two candidates for each available position on National Church Council, the Court of Adjudication and the Board of Directors of ELCIC Group Services Inc.

The following represents the report of the Nominating Committee which will be presented to the ELCIC in Convention, July 9 - 12, 2015 in Edmonton, AB. The committee expresses thanks to all who were willing to participate in this process.

National Church Council			
Positions Required: BC – 1 Rostered, AB - 1 Lay, SK – 1 Lay & 1 Rostered, MNO – 1 Lay, EAST – 1 Lay & 2 Rostered			
Synod	Type	Term	Nominee
BC	Rostered	4 years	Jane Gingrich
	Rostered		Erik Bjorgan
ABT	Lay	4 years	Wayne Street
	Lay		Les Pearson
SK	Lay	4 years	Ed Miller
	Lay		Cole Guenter
SK	Rostered	4 years	Christopher Bishopp (e)
	Rostered		Stewart Miller
MNO	Lay	4 years	Jeffrey Buhse (e)
	Lay		Jennifer Jantz
EAST	Lay	4 years	Pat Lovell (e)
	Lay		Judy von Wahl
	Rostered 1	4 years	Heather Spencer (e)
	Rostered 1		Susan Climo
	Rostered 2	4 years	Jeffrey Smith (e)
	Rostered 2		Steve Hoffard

Note: (e) eligible for re-election

ELCIC Group Services Inc.		
GSI Positions Elected at Convention: 1 Lay Plan Member and 1 Rostered Plan Member		
Lay Plan Member	4 years	Pamela Giles (e)
Lay Plan Member		Darla Wildfang
Rostered Plan Member	4 years	Mark Van House (e)
Rostered Plan Member		Sebastian Meadows-Helmer

Notes: (e) eligible for re-election

Court of Adjudication		
Positions Required: 2 Rostered and 2 Lay		
Type	Term	Nominee
Lay 1	4 years	Tim Kurbis (e)
Lay 1		Stephen Thornton
Lay 2	4 years	Glen David Tait (e)
Lay 2		Joan Meyer
Rostered 1	4 years	Patricia Giannelia (e)
Rostered 1		Eric Krushel
Rostered 2	4 years	Allan Grundahl (e)
Rostered 2		Richard Pryce

Notes: (e) eligible for re-election

2017 Nominating Committee		
Synod	Term	Nominee
BC Synod	2 years	One person
ABT Synod	2 years	Patricia Schmermund Allyn Langager
SK Synod	2 years	Two people
MNO Synod	2 years	One person
Eastern Synod	2 years	Wendell Grahlman Linda Grainger Douglas Reble

Murray Walter
National Secretary
CARRIED.

CC-2015-15 That NCC nominate Ken Day to the 2015 ELCIC National Convention for election as treasurer. **CARRIED.**

Global Mission

Sheila Hamilton gave a report on the Global Mission Task Force to NCC.

Bible Study

ELCIC Resolution on Climate Justice

CC-2015-16 That NCC approve and recommend for adoption to the 2015 National Convention the following “ELCIC Resolution on Climate Justice:”

That the ELCIC in Convention adopt the following motion on Climate Justice:

As members of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) – A Communion of Churches, the ELCIC commits to joining the global Christian community, and people of all faiths and persuasions, on the journey for climate justice. This task is one that we can only achieve when we unite in a common cause, living out our joint destiny on this fragile, beautiful world which we all share.

The ELCIC affirms the position of the LWF and understands that:

- Climate change is real and influenced by human actions;
- Increasingly severe impacts are already being experienced on every continent, with growing economic and social costs;
- If we act now it will still be possible to keep global warming below the internationally agreed danger-threshold of an increase of 2 degrees Celsius. To achieve this, carbon pollution must be reduced quickly; and
- Climate change is a matter of social and economic justice, as it most affects the poorest people and displaces the most vulnerable.

As those who live in the resurrection hope of renewal and restoration for all of God’s Creation, we believe we cannot stand by and ignore the impacts of Climate Change. Creation groans under the weight of human action and inaction (Rom 8:22). Our hope for justice and peace for all, and our trust in God, forms the impetus for this statement. We believe that taking global action now can make a difference.

The ELCIC support the LWF in calling on world political and business leaders to:

- Design and agree on elements of a strong global response to climate change that reflects the strong and growing scientific and environmental evidence and draft an ambitious new climate agreement to tackle climate change in the coming decades;
- Urge Heads of State and key decision makers to make it a personal priority to address the human contribution to Climate Change, and make firm commitments for deeper cuts in carbon pollution;
- Make national contributions meaningful by ensuring that they feature convincing targets to reduce carbon pollution while providing money to help poorer countries take climate action as well; and
- Respect the principles of equity, ensuring that the response includes provisions to assist the most vulnerable communities to adapt to the impacts of Climate Change already being experienced, and to account for the loss and damage being caused.

The ELCIC calls on its members, congregations, synods and the national church to:

- Take action now to initiate or strengthen policies and practices aimed at becoming sustainable and eco-friendly, with the goal of becoming carbon-neutral at organizational, congregational and personal levels by 2050;
- Register as an Accredited Greening Congregation through the Stewardship of Creation program of the ELCIC. <http://elcic.ca/Stewardship/Stewardship-of-Creation/default.cfm>
- Encourage others in the communion by sharing good practices through the LWF Facebook page “LWF for Climate Justice”;

Engage in sustained climate justice advocacy with local and national governments in the perspective of COP20 in Lima, Peru, and all along the process leading to COP21 in Paris, France. This advocacy would be based upon the advocacy call of the LWF and the policy

- papers on climate justice of the ACT Alliance; http://www.actalliance.org/what-we-do/issues/climate-change/issueview?b_start:int=15
- Participate in ecumenical and interfaith climate justice initiatives in the local, national and regional contexts;
- Sign up to the #fastfortheclimate campaign on the 1st day of each month until December 1, 2015, at the beginning of COP21 in Paris; <http://www.lutheranworld.org/fastfortheclimate>
 - “We fast in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable who are unduly affected by extreme weather events. We fast to underline the urgency of the negotiations on climate change. We fast in many different places and faith communities worldwide, united in a common practice. We fast for climate justice.”

This convention asks the National Bishop to:

- Write to the Prime Minister of Canada expressing the ELCIC’s concern for the climate and hopes for an effective global process through COP21 in Paris.
- Write to the LWF sharing this resolution as one response to the Call for Commitment by Member Churches. **CARRIED.**

ELCIC Resolution on the Criminal Justice and Corrections Systems

M/S That NCC approve and recommend for adoption to the 2015 National Convention the following motion regarding the “ELCIC Resolution on the Criminal Justice and Correctional Systems in Canada,”:

That the ELCIC National Convention adopts the “ELCIC Resolution on the Criminal Justice and Correctional Systems in Canada.”

And that this convention:

- Commits the ELCIC to a prayerful approach for addressing the challenges of the criminal justice and correctional systems in Canada, and affirms support for restorative justice approaches that facilitate the righting of harms done, and foster the healing of relationships between offenders, victims and the larger community.
- Asks the National Church to identify educational resources to encourage and facilitate study by congregations and individuals of a wide range of materials relevant to developing a deeper understanding of the current concerns of Canada’s criminal justice and correctional system.
- Commits the ELCIC to continuing to work with ecumenical, interfaith and community partners, including the Church Council on Justice and Corrections, in order to facilitate a criminal justice and correctional system that embodies the values of restorative justice, and to make provision for effective spiritual care.
- Invites all congregations and members to seek a deeper understanding of Canada’s criminal justice and correctional system in order to express a critical evaluation of current practices and policies, and encourages congregations and members to engage in projects, programs, and ministries that provide support for victims, offenders, correctional services staff and others involved in the criminal justice system.
- Encourage the participation by all rostered ministers and congregations in the annual Restorative Justice Week sponsored by the Correctional Service of Canada in the third week of November.

- Asks the National Bishop to communicate the concerns raised in this policy resolution to the federal government and to the governments of each province and territory.
- Asks the National Bishop to share this policy resolution with our key ecumenical and interfaith partners, including the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, the Canadian Council of Churches, and our Full Communion partner, the Anglican Church of Canada.

M/S To amend the third affirmation and commitment by inserting the sentence “The ELCIC supports judges being given sufficient discretion in sentencing to consider the circumstances of each particular case.”

“3. The ELCIC encourages the use of conditional sentences, probation and parole rather than incarceration as means of seeking correction and rehabilitation in the lives of offenders. **The ELCIC supports judges being given sufficient discretion in sentencing to consider the circumstances of each particular case.** The ELCIC encourages positive community based relationships with offenders and parolees in order to foster safe reintegration and crime prevention.” **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-17 That NCC approve and recommend for adoption to the 2015 National Convention the following motion regarding the “ELCIC Resolution on the Criminal Justice and Correctional Systems in Canada,”:

That the ELCIC National Convention adopts the “ELCIC Resolution on the Criminal Justice and Correctional Systems in Canada.”

And that this convention:

- Commits the ELCIC to a prayerful approach for addressing the challenges of the criminal justice and correctional systems in Canada, and affirms support for restorative justice approaches that facilitate the righting of harms done, and foster the healing of relationships between offenders, victims and the larger community.
- Asks the National Church to identify educational resources to encourage and facilitate study by congregations and individuals of a wide range of materials relevant to developing a deeper understanding of the current concerns of Canada’s criminal justice and correctional system.
- Commits the ELCIC to continuing to work with ecumenical, interfaith and community partners, including the Church Council on Justice and Corrections, in order to minimize the use of mandatory sentencing and to facilitate the criminal justice and correctional system that embodies the values of restorative justice, and to make provision for effective spiritual care.
- Invites all congregations and members to seek a deeper understanding of Canada’s criminal justice and correctional system in order to express a critical evaluation of current practices and policies, and encourages congregations and members to engage in projects, programs, and ministries that provide support for victims, offenders, correctional services staff, and others involved in the criminal justice system.
- Encourage the participation by all rostered ministers and congregations in the annual Restorative Justice Week sponsored by the Correctional Service of Canada in the third week of November.
- Asks the National Bishop to communicate the concerns raised in this policy resolution to the federal government and to the governments of each province and territory.

- Asks the National Bishop to share this policy resolution with our key ecumenical and interfaith partners, including the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, the Canadian Council of Churches, and our Full Communion partner, the Anglican Church of Canada.

Proposed February 13, 2015
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC)

***An ELCIC Resolution on the
Criminal Justice and Correctional Systems in Canada***

Part I: Examining the Current Context

Preamble

The biblical vision of the reign of God in the world is one of harmony and well-being for all human beings. This vision is fractured when individuals and groups transgress sacred and social standards of behaviour that foster shalom. Public safety is required for human well-being to be realized in Canadian society. The criminal justice and correctional systems are a human response to this essential social goal.

Statistics Canada reports that crime in Canada is at its lowest since 1969. Apparently all types of crime are down due to factors such as an aging population, changing police strategies, the use of technology, shifts in unemployment, changing attitudes toward various behaviours and in alcohol consumption.¹ Yet, court dockets are filled and prison populations overflowing. Currently the criminal justice and correctional systems faces several challenges:

- Delays in the scheduling of trials which result in significant numbers being held on remand awaiting trial.
- Overpopulation of both provincial and federal correctional facilities.
- Increasing rates of incarceration.
- Prevalence of adversarial procedures and punishment, rather than practices that promote reconciliation, rehabilitation, healing and social harmony.
- Prison populations include a disproportionate number of Aboriginal Peoples.
- Prison populations include many people with mental illnesses.
- The importance of addressing the unique needs of women and youth in correctional facilities.
- Many who are released from prison go on to reoffend.

¹ <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/01/28/crime-in-canada-falls-to-lowest-point-since-the-60s.html>

Echoing the insight of a social statement of a predecessor body, *A Social Statement in Pursuit of Justice and Dignity: Society, the Offender, and Systems of Correction*,² the Canadian criminal justice and correctional systems require reform to achieve the stated goals of fairness, impartiality and effectiveness to achieve positive social behaviours and accountability in the use of financial and human resources.

The Justice System

Canadians benefit from a well-developed and respected criminal justice system, which is an essential social institution constructed to ensure community stability and individual safety and security. The criminal justice system is a complex and inter-connected network involving legislation, enforcement, courts – judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys – correctional facilities, and measures to reintegrate offenders into the community and meet the needs of victims. Canadians are deeply concerned when these institutional structures appear to fail. There is public outcry in the face of horrific criminal acts. Yet in spite of reports of these perplexing crimes that fill the headlines, the majority of crimes are of lesser harm, though no less significant. Most crime occurs among persons who know one another rather than indiscriminate acts against strangers.

Legislation that structures the criminal justice system is continually reviewed and reworked to address ongoing social needs. The Criminal Code of Canada is federal legislation that defines criminal acts and sets out the policies that seek to ensure public safety. Sacred teachings such as the Ten Commandments have been central to the emergence of common law in western societies. International agreements, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other covenants, articulate an emerging sense of universal standards. There is considerable public debate about what constitutes crime in our Canadian society. Current debates are evident in such important matters as privacy, physician-assisted dying, the registration and classification of firearms, the decriminalization or legalization of marijuana, and prostitution. Although rates of criminal behaviours have generally been decreasing in Canada in recent decades, there is considerable concern about violent crimes, violations against children, sexual assaults, the growth of gangs among youth, and blatant white collar crime and corruption.

Enforcement of the criminal law is a joint endeavour of the federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions through police services and other agencies of investigation and apprehension. Public awareness and appreciation of the exposure to danger by police on behalf of the community is accentuated when officers are killed or injured in the line of duty. While Canadians have a high regard for enforcement agencies, there is an ongoing need that police and other agencies have civilian oversight. Most police agencies would benefit from having more members from among Aboriginal Peoples and minority ethnic groups. Community policing which links closely with social agencies, families and neighbourhoods has proven to be a viable strategy for preventing crime.

² *A Social Statement in Pursuit of Justice and Dignity: Society, the Offender, and Systems of Correction*, Lutheran Church in America, 1972 www.elcic.ca

Courts play a significant role in the administration of justice. It is important that judges be appointed through procedures apart from political or ideological interference to ensure fair and unbiased application of the law. The courts make judgements regarding guilt or innocence and determine appropriate sanctions. Current sentencing practices tend to equate the length of a sentence with the apparent severity of an offence – that sanctions be proportionate to the harm inflicted. While legislation mandating minimum sentences may have some merit, judges must be given sufficient discretion to consider the circumstances of each particular case. In the Canadian judicial system, crown prosecutors have considerable discretion in how cases are dealt with. Adequate legal aid is required to support and protect those who lack the means to defend themselves in the courts given the immense powers and resources of the state. Increasingly the voices of victims have a place in assessing harm done. Procedures are needed to protect and compensate both victims and those who are wrongfully convicted.

The Correctional System

Our society has developed multiple means to apply sanctions that uphold the law, to seek correction for offenders and to secure redress for those who have been victims of criminal acts. Criminologists suggest that the functions of the correctional system include retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation and social protection. There is general consensus that incarceration should be the last resort to deal with those who violate the law and that those convicted should be detained in the least restrictive means to ensure public safety. There is little relationship between the length of sentences imposed and rates of criminal behaviours.³ When sentences are imposed, penalties less than two years in length become the responsibility of provincial jurisdictions and those two years and above are administered federally by *Correctional Service Canada*.

The task of corrections is to administer the sentences determined by the courts. Many sentences include a time of incarceration in a prison or correctional facility. The courts may grant conditional sentences in which those convicted remain in the community under supervision by probation or parole officers. The National Parole may grant parole to prisoners by which part of the sentence is served in the community under supervision. The prospect of parole or eventual pardon (record suspension) motivates offenders to conform to community standards and put their misdeeds behind them. The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* mandates that the primary function of correctional institutions and community resources is to prepare offenders held in custody to reintegrate into the community.

Unfortunately, in spite of insightful case management and the rehabilitation programs that are available, for many offenders the prison experience is one of simply being confined, and for some it may even become a school of crime in a deviant subculture. The demographic make-up of the prison population raises concerns about racial bias and inadequate response to those with mental illnesses in the correctional system. The fact that so many more men than women are in prison raises concerns about providing for the unique needs of female inmates. It also raises questions about the root causes for gender differences in criminal activities. The practice and frequency of holding prisoners in solitary confinement for excessive periods of time is a controversial matter. While the federal system has a special investigator to appeal cases, most provinces lack this back up service.

³ David Cayley, *The Expanding Prison*, Anansi Press, Toronto, 1998, pp.89-99

Chaplains and Spiritual Care Providers

International standards hold that those in prisons have a fundamental right to worship in their own tradition. Offenders who develop a faith commitment have the potential to express their faith in pro-social attitudes and behaviours. Chaplains, spiritual advisors and spiritual care providers facilitate the provision of freedom of religion and assurance that religious rights and spiritual accommodation are given appropriate attention. They care for spiritual needs, journey both with offenders and also with the staff and volunteers who work with offenders, and offer support for families. Chaplains and spiritual advisors/providers represent a holistic approach to treating offender issues.

Christian chaplains share the hope of the gospel message of forgiveness and new life.

Our church certifies the status and suitability of ordained and diaconal ministers called to work in prisons. Through visible presence and Word and Sacrament they signal hope and light, performing a significant role in maintaining linkage with caring community and liaise with faith communities. They engage Canadian faith communities in addressing those affected by the consequences of crime: offenders, victims, and the community. In Matthew 25, Jesus affirms the importance of visiting those in prison, saying “I was in prison and you visited me.”⁴

Restorative Justice

Canada has been a nurturing place for the emergence of restorative justice approaches to address criminal justice issues.⁵ In recent years there has been a convergence of Christian and aboriginal teachings in a movement of restorative justice. While established approaches have given emphasis to punishment as a solution to crime, restorative justice lifts up the importance of the restoration of broken relationships. While accustomed policies focus upon crime as a breaking of the laws of the state, restorative justice gives emphasis to the healing of broken relationships as a goal of bringing about justice. This changed lens views justice as restoring and healing relationships between victims and offenders and the larger community. The focus of restorative justice is on conflict resolution rather than adversarial postures between victims and offenders.⁶

At the heart of restorative justice is reconciliation rather than retribution. Through offender-victim mediation, family group conferencing and sharing circles, the restoration of broken relationships is sought through restitution and community service. While restorative justice is often chastised as being “soft on crime,” these measures actually increase accountability for offenders who must face directly the injury inflicted upon victims. In recent years there has been an increase in the use of alternatives which divert offenders from the courts and incarceration into restorative justice programs that increase accountability and healing. Restorative justice approaches are perhaps most suitable for first-time offenders, youth and in cases of non-violent altercations, but have also been found effective in more serious cases. The establishment of special courts for youth, the mentally ill and those whose crimes can be attributed to addictions, are positive steps.

⁴ Matthew 25:36

⁵ Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses*, Herald Press, Waterloo, 2005; Michael L. Hadley, editor, *The Spiritual Roots of Restorative Justice*, State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y., 2001

⁶ See, for example, Correctional Service of Canada,

The courts have affirmed that in the sentencing of aboriginal persons, special consideration is to be given to the history of mistreatment experienced by many aboriginals. Incorporating additional insights from restorative justice into the criminal justice system has the potential to increase public safety.

Community

Those who come before the law have been formed in our communities. There is considerable debate about the sources of criminal behaviour. Some cite the unequal opportunity structures of our society. Others cite the varied social relationships in families and peer groups which shape identity, values and actions. Some point to significant psychological or emotional factors. Offenders often come from fragmented social backgrounds of family abuse, poverty, racial discrimination, poor educational attainment, substance abuse, addictions, inadequate child and family services, and the failure to internalize social norms. Laws, enforcement, courts and prisons are only partial responses to criminal behaviours. The ultimate solutions to deviance lay in communities that exhibit greater opportunities, mutual respect and equity. The care and education of children is particularly important as a major preventive measure; addressing critical developmental and social needs will reduce the number of youth falling into or choosing lives of crime. These are values that are inherent in the Christian gospel and the theology and practices that have emerged in the church around the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Faith communities can be significant settings in which both victims and offenders can find healing.

Part II: Affirming the Courage of Faith

The ELCIC, as an expression of the body of Christ in the world, has significant resources to address current concerns in the criminal justice and correctional systems in Canada.

The seminal foundations of Lutheran theology and ethics remain instructive and authoritative to address current challenges.⁷

Law and Gospel

Lutheran theology distinguishes between law and gospel as significant dimensions of the Christian message. The importance of law in our social affairs is essential for the formation of a healthy society. The biblical teachings of law provide a framework for ethical standards and social structures; function to convict the consciences of individuals and societies regarding the effects of sinful beliefs, attitudes and actions; and serve as guides for those who have sought forgiveness through sincere repentance. Guided by these enduring values, this church can utilize contemporary insights and research that seek to contribute to the harmony and social well-being envisioned in the reign of God.

<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/restorative-justice/003005-0007-eng.shtml>

The gospel of Christ is supportive of restorative justice practices. We are reminded of the teachings of Jesus:

“So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; **first be reconciled** to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison.”⁸

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.”⁹

We also remember the words of the Hebrew prophet:

“O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”¹⁰

Looking through the eyes of Jesus and the prophets, reconciliation is a central principle informing our perspectives on criminal justice practices.

Church and Society

This church affirms the confessional teachings that understand that God is at work in both the church and society.¹¹ God offers the comfort of salvation through the means of grace, Word and Sacrament. God also works through the “left hand” of God to provide safety and security in the society through social institutions such as the family, government, the economy, health and social services. Human reason is a significant gift of God to order human relationships.¹²

Saints and Sinners

Public opinion about those who commit criminal offences often expresses critical judgment of those who are “criminals.” Offenders are stigmatized which isolates them from the acceptance and respect offered to others. The label “criminal” becomes descriptive of the whole person, rather than being associated with specific behaviours. Religious notions often divide people into saints and sinners, the righteous and unrighteous, those who are good and those who are evil. Yet the Christian faith affirms that all persons are made in the image of God and have intrinsic value. The scriptures also teach that “...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”¹³ In his personal testimony of faith, St. Paul confessed this inner struggle: “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”¹⁴ Luther expressed this tension in the doctrine of *simul justus et peccator*, that a believer is at the same time both a sinner and a saint.

⁷ George W. Forell, *Faith Active in Love*, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1954; Karen L. Bloomquist and John R. Stumme, editors, *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1998

⁸ Matthew 5:23-25

⁹ Matthew 5:38-41

¹⁰ Micah 6:8, NRSV

While Lutheran theology refutes the notion that salvation can be earned by good behaviour, it also affirms that faith brings forth good works.¹⁵ Caution is needed when categorizing other persons as good or evil. Although there certainly are some whose antisocial behaviour patterns are so engrained that there is little possibility of personal change, the overall vision of Jesus is that persons can be transformed through faith and a relationship with God. It is important not to confuse ultimate redemption which is in the hands of a gracious God, with deviance from social norms, which may be subject to correction and reform. The goal of the justice and correctional systems is to assist those who have broken the law to discover ways to live with freedom and responsibility as law-abiding citizens.

Biblical Interpretation

Our biblical foundations are built upon values of compassion, unconditional love, the theology of the cross that embraces the reality of suffering and an enduring hope. While Luther recognized the importance of natural law revealed to all persons and also positive laws established by legitimate authorities, he also encouraged a flexible administration of the law based upon values of equity, mildness, and love. In Luther's words, the law must "make room for love."¹⁶

¹¹ Augsburg Confession Article XVI

¹² Mary Gaebler, *The Courage of Faith*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2013

¹³ Romans 3:23

¹⁴ Romans 7:19

¹⁵ Augsburg Confession IV and VI

¹⁶ Paul Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1972 p.135

Part III: Imagining New Possibilities

The harm caused by crime leaves lasting effects, which make healing and reconciliation both challenging and essential. The ELCIC recognizes the tremendous needs in society of all who are affected by crime. As a church *In Mission for Others*, the ELCIC commits to raising awareness of the many and various ways by which congregations and individuals can participate in addressing such needs. We seek to be informed by the values of compassion, mercy and inclusiveness when dealing with offenders and victims. We understand the challenges and opportunities in promoting restorative justice to be both personal and systemic.

Affirmation and Commitments

1. The ELCIC is dedicated to a prayerful approach for addressing the challenges of the criminal justice and correctional systems in Canada, and commits to praying for all who are affected by crime and the criminal justice system, including victims, offenders, and all who work in the corrections and public safety fields.
2. The ELCIC affirms restorative justice approaches that consider crime as the breaking down of human relationships among victims, offenders and the larger community, rather than simply the breaking of laws against the state. The ELCIC supports initiatives that facilitate the righting of

harms done, and foster the healing of relationships between offenders, victims and the larger community.

3. The ELCIC encourages the use of conditional sentences, probation and parole rather than incarceration as means of seeking correction and rehabilitation in the lives of offenders. The ELCIC supports judges being given sufficient discretion in sentencing to consider the circumstances of each particular case. The ELCIC encourages positive community based relationships with offenders and parolees in order to foster safe reintegration and crime prevention.
4. The ELCIC encourages initiatives to reduce the numbers of those awaiting trial, the numbers of those incarcerated and held in custody and measures that eliminate the overcrowding in Canada's prisons.
5. The ELCIC affirms that fostering economic justice, access to affordable housing, an effective public health system and encouraging healthy family relationships and the care of children are measures that help reduce deviance and crime in our society.
6. The ELCIC recognizes the impact that social inequality has on an individual's experience of the criminal justice and correctional systems. The ELCIC encourages reflection on meaningful approaches that will be effective for women, the aboriginal community and those who experience mental illness.
7. The ELCIC affirms that in the face of the expansion of correctional facilities, that increased funding for preventive, rehabilitative and re-integrative processes and programs be encouraged.
8. The ELCIC supports best practices in the operation of correctional facilities, including addressing the specific and unique needs of all those who are convicted.
9. The ELCIC regards the operation of correctional facilities in Canada as the responsibility of governments. This church urges extreme caution in any consideration of private ownership or administration of correctional facilities.
10. The ELCIC supports those who are victims of crime, through compassionate pastoral care, community support and constructive programs that may assist victims to deal with trauma, psychological and emotional distress and the loss of resources.
11. The ELCIC encourages congregations and individuals to give of their time and talents to engage meaningfully in projects, programs, and ministries that provide support for victims, offenders and others involved in the criminal justice system.
12. The ELCIC encourages all members to become informed about Canada's criminal justice and correctional system in order to express a critical evaluation of current practices and policies.
13. The ELCIC encourages members to consider their vocational call from God and supports those who enter occupations and professions in the criminal justice and correctional systems.

14. The ELCIC affirms the role of chaplains and other spiritual care providers who serve those in the criminal justice and correctional systems, and supports the public funding of these services.
15. The ELCIC advocates for those who are marginalized and suffering as a result of the challenges which currently exist in Canada's criminal justice and correctional system, by speaking forth through various venues of communication and ensuring that the necessary voices for accountability are heard especially by those in positions of authority and power.
16. The ELCIC recognizes that engaging the criminal justice and correctional systems is an opportunity for a ministry of reconciliation, and we hold the hope of enabling all people to contribute positively to the life of the community as family members, workers and persons who contribute positively to the life of the community as family members, workers and persons who respect the rights of others.

CARRIED.

CC-2015-18 That in accordance with the ELCIC's policies that bear on same-gender marriage that we permit our bishop and ordained staff to preside at same-gender weddings at their discretion. **CARRIED**

Report from GSI

Lisa Thiessen, Executive Director of ELCIC GSI gave an oral report to NCC via conference call on the proposed revisions to the current Disability Benefit Program, and the Maternity Parental Leave Supplementary Salary Program.

ELCIC Resolution on *Welcoming the Stranger*

CC-2015-19 That NCC approve and recommend for adoption to the 2015 National Convention the following "ELCIC Resolution on Welcoming the Stranger:"

That the ELCIC in Convention endorses the document "Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders."

The ELCIC invites members and congregations to review the document and to sign the Affirmations.

This convention asks the National Bishop to:

- Communicate this church's endorsement of the document to the ELCIC's key ecumenical and interfaith partners, and to Canadian Lutheran World Relief.
- Communicate this church's endorsement to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and thank the LWF for faithful work and leadership in promoting the values of hospitality, protection, respect, and equality.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER:
AFFIRMATIONS FOR FAITH LEADERS

A core value of my faith is to welcome the stranger, the refugee, the internally displaced, the other. I shall treat him or her as I would like to be treated. I will challenge others, even leaders in my faith community, to do the same.

Together with faith leaders, faith-based organizations and communities of conscience around the world, I affirm:

My faith teaches that compassion, mercy, love and hospitality are for everyone: the native born and the foreign born, the member of my community and the newcomer.

I will remember and remind members of my community that we are all considered “strangers” somewhere, that we should treat the stranger to our community as we would like to be treated, and challenge intolerance.

I will remember and remind others in my community that no one leaves his or her homeland without a reason: some flee because of persecution, violence or exploitation; others due to natural disaster; yet others out of love to provide better lives for their families.

I recognize that all persons are entitled to dignity and respect as human beings. All those in my country, including the stranger, are subject to its laws, and none should be subject to hostility or discrimination.

I acknowledge that welcoming the stranger sometimes takes courage, but the joys and the hopes of doing so outweigh the risks and the challenges. I will support others who exercise courage in welcoming the stranger.

I will offer the stranger hospitality, for this brings blessings upon the community, upon my family, upon the stranger and upon me.

I will respect and honor the reality that the stranger may be of a different faith or hold beliefs different from mine or other members of my community.

I will respect the right of the stranger to practice his or her own faith freely. I will seek to create space where he or she can freely worship.

I will speak of my own faith without demeaning or ridiculing the faith of others.

I will build bridges between the stranger and myself. Through my example, I will encourage others to do the same.

I will make an effort not only to welcome the stranger, but also to listen to him or her deeply, and to promote understanding and welcome in my community.

I will speak out for social justice for the stranger, just as I do for other members of my community.

Where I see hostility towards the stranger in my community, whether through words or deeds, I will not ignore it, but will instead endeavor to establish a dialogue and facilitate peace.

I will not keep silent when I see others, even leaders in my faith community, speaking ill of strangers, judging them without coming to know them, or when I see them being excluded, wronged or oppressed.

I will encourage my faith community to work with other faith communities and faith-based organizations to find better ways to assist the stranger.

I will welcome the stranger.

Date

Signature

Founding Principles

The call to “welcome the stranger,” through protection and hospitality, and to honor the stranger or those of other faiths with respect and equality, is deeply rooted in all major religions.

In the *Upanishads*, the mantra *atithi devo bhava* or “the guest is as God” expresses the fundamental importance of hospitality in Hindu culture. Central to the Hindu *Dharma*, or Law, are the values of *karuna* or compassion, *ahimsa* or non-violence towards all, and *seva* or the willingness to serve the stranger and the unknown guest. Providing food and shelter to a needy stranger was a traditional duty of the householder and is practiced by many still. More broadly, the concept of *Dharma* embodies the task to do one’s duty, including an obligation to the community, which should be carried out respecting values such as non-violence and selfless service for the greater good.

The *Tripitaka* highlights the importance of cultivating four states of mind: *metta* (loving kindness), *muditha* (sympathetic joy), *upekkha* (equanimity), and *karuna* (compassion). There are many different traditions of Buddhism, but the concept of *karuna* is a fundamental tenet in all of them. It embodies the qualities of tolerance, non-discrimination, inclusion and empathy for the suffering of others, mirroring the central role which compassion plays in other religions.

The Torah makes thirty-six references to honoring the “stranger.” The book of Leviticus contains one of the most prominent tenets of the Jewish faith: “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Leviticus 19:33-34). Further, the Torah provides that “You shall not oppress the stranger, for you know the soul of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 23:9)

In Matthew’s Gospel (25:35) we hear the call: “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me...” And in the Letter to the Hebrews (13:1-2) we read, “Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

When the Prophet Muhammad fled persecution in Mecca, he sought refuge in Medina, where he was hospitably welcomed. The Prophet's *hijrah*, or migration, symbolizes the movement from lands of oppression, and his hospitable treatment embodies the Islamic model of refugee protection. The Holy Qur'an calls for the protection of the asylum seeker, or *al-mustamin*, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, whose safety is irrevocably guaranteed under the institution of *Aman* (the provision of security and protection). As noted in the Surat Al-Anfal: "Those who give asylum and aid are in very truth the believers: for them is the forgiveness of sins and a provision most generous." (8:74)

There are tens of millions of refugees and internally displaced people in the world. Our faiths demand that we remember we are all migrants on this earth, journeying together in hope.

Background

In December 2012, UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres organized a Dialogue with faith leaders, faith-based humanitarian organizations, academics and government representatives from countries around the world on the theme of "Faith and Protection." As the High Commissioner noted in his opening remarks, "...all major religious value systems embrace humanity, caring and respect, and the tradition of granting protection to those in danger. The principles of modern refugee law have their oldest roots in these ancient texts and traditions." At the conclusion of this landmark event, the High Commissioner embraced a recommendation for the development of a Code of Conduct for faith leaders to welcome migrants, refugees and other forcibly displaced people, and stand together against xenophobia.

In response to this call, from February through April 2013, a coalition of leading faith-based humanitarian organizations and academic institutions (including HIAS, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Jesuit Refugee Service, Lutheran World Federation, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, Religions for Peace, University of Vienna Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology, World Council of Churches, World Evangelical Alliance and World Vision International) drafted "Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders." The Affirmations, which have been translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Hebrew, Russian and Spanish, inspire leaders of all faiths to "welcome the stranger" with dignity, respect and loving support. Faith groups around the world will use the Affirmations and supporting resources as practical tools to foster support for refugees and other displaced people in their communities. **CARRIED.**

Spiritual Renewal for a Community

NCC had a discussion and shared ideas regarding the Spiritual Renewal for a Community document.

Faith Order and Doctrine Committee Report

Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry presented the Report of the Faith Order and Doctrine Committee.

CC-2015-20 That NCC approves that further study be given to the topics of *Diaconal Ministry* and *Orders of Ministry*. **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-21 That FOD create the parameters for a study of Diaconal Ministry and Orders of Ministry and present these to NCC in November 2015. **CARRIED.**

M/S National Church Council recommends to the **National Convention** the following policy regarding the provision of Word and Sacrament ministry in under-served areas:

M/S To amend: “We recognize that, under particular local circumstances, the usual norm of a ~~single pastor serving one congregation~~ **pastor presiding over Word and Sacrament Ministry** is not possible. In most of these circumstances congregations can be served by one or more of the following: **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-22 National Church Council recommends to the **National Convention** the following policy regarding the provision of Word and Sacrament ministry in under-served areas:

POLICY REGARDING AUTHORIZED LAY MINISTRIES
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

The proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments are inseparable and are central to Lutheran worship and church life.

We affirm that the normal means by which Word and Sacrament ministry is provided in congregations is through a called and ordained pastor.

We recognize that, under particular local circumstances, the usual norm of pastor presiding over Word and Sacrament ministry is not possible. In most of these circumstances congregations can be served by one or more of the following:

- Interim/vice-pastors;
- Multi-point parishes or companion/yoked congregations;
- Wide-area parishes;
- Arrangements with our Anglican Full Communion partner;
- Assistance from ecumenical partners with whom we have an Ecumenical Shared Ministry protocol (eg. United and Presbyterian);
- "Circuit riders" or itinerant ministers;
- Calling an individual who has been ordained through the *Alternate Route for Admission to the Roster of Ordained Ministers*;
- Partnering with other congregations to share their pastor.

In certain, rare circumstances none of these options is workable. In such cases:

1. The Bishop of the Synod may initiate a conversation with the congregational council about *authorized lay ministry* and whether it may be appropriate to their context.
2. The Bishop of the Synod would then seek approval of the Synod Council and the Conference of Bishops for authorized lay ministry in this context.
3. The Congregational Council would normally identify more than one candidate to serve in the ministry context. Candidates should have an aptitude for preaching and presiding.
4. The Bishop of the Synod and the Synod Council would approve *authorized lay ministers* subject to the following:

- Authorized lay ministers will be appointed for one-year renewable terms;

- The synod will provide appropriate preparation in Scripture, Lutheran Confessions, preaching, worship and in appropriate boundaries;
- Authorized lay ministers will work under the supervision of a mentoring pastor appointed by the Bishop of the Synod;
- The mentoring pastor will provide on-going support and review;
- Authorized lay ministers will normally be installed by the Dean;
- Authorized lay ministers will participate in a regular, on-going process of formation and education.

Authorized lay ministry is non-stipendiary.

Authorized lay ministers are appointed to a specific ministry context and do not serve outside that context.

Authorized lay ministers are permitted to proclaim the Word and preside at Holy Communion. This authorization does not extend to baptisms, weddings, funerals, or other activities which are normally in the purview of ordained ministers.

Authorized lay ministers shall not wear clerical garb or vestments. When preaching or presiding, authorized lay ministers may choose to wear an alb.

The title "Pastor" is reserved for ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament. There is no title associated with authorized lay ministry.

In cases where pastoral counselling is needed, authorized lay ministers shall refer the individual(s) to their mentoring pastor.

There shall be an annual review of both the authorized lay ministers and of the appropriateness of the site for authorized lay ministry.

The Synod will ensure that resources are available for preaching and worship leadership which might include a sermon bank, seminary resources, and synod workshops.

This policy, once adopted by the ELCIC in convention, will be reviewed and amended as required by National Church Council. **CARRIED.**

Constitution Committee Report

Secretary Murray Walter presented the Report of the Constitution Committee to NCC.

CC-2015-23 That NCC adopt the following to be part of Administrative By-laws and recommend to National Convention for approval:

Part XVIII Transition:

Section 8. The individuals elected to the Court of Adjudication shall be deemed members of the Court of Appeal and shall perform the duties of that Court until their current term of office expires. The number of members of that court shall be reduced to five commencing with the convention in 2017. **CARRIED.**

Closing Worship

The meeting chaplains led the group in Closing Worship.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 9:00 A.M.

Opening Prayer

Led by the meeting chaplains.

M/S The officers recommended that the questions from the constitution committee be referred to the Conference of Bishops (COB) for report back in November. **CARRIED.**

Reports—

Audit Committee

Gloria McNabb gave an oral report on the Audit Committee to NCC.

Finance Committee

Treasurer Ken Day presented the report of the Finance Committee to NCC.

CC-2015-24 That NCC approve the Reserve for Future Capital Expenditures be maintained at \$325,000 and that the balance of the reserve of \$422,428.85 be transferred to the ELCIC General Endowment as of December 2014. (*Appendix C, page 3*) **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-25 That NCC approve the revised balanced 2015 operating budget with revenues and expenses projected at \$2,473,350. (*Appendix C, page 7*) **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-26 That NCC endorse the decision of the CECF Advisory Board to provide a total of \$200,000 of national initiative funding to each synod over two years (2015 and 2016) in support of Canadian mission initiatives to participate in God's mission in our changing context. (*Appendix D, pages 3–6*) **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-27 That NCC approve the revised 2015 CECF budget with revenues projected at \$1,206,800, expenses projected at \$1,163,950 and a surplus of 42,850. (*Appendix D*) **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-28 That NCC approve the revised 2015 LIFE budget with revenues projected at \$286,400, expenses projected at \$194,740 and a surplus of \$91,700. (*Appendix C, page 9*) **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-29 That NCC recommend to the 2015 National Convention the approval of the 2016 and 2017 Operating, CECF and LIFE Fund budgets. (*Appendix C&D*) **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-30 That NCC approve that the reference in the CECF Management Handbook to the Lutheran Investment Fund and Endowments (LIFE) in Section B. Capital Fund, II. Operating Policies, A. General Statement, Clause 10 be removed from the handbook. (*Appendix D, pages 1&2*) **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-31 That NCC approve a second clause be added to section B. Capital Fund, II. Operating Policies, E. Loan Securities to indicate that mortgages need to be registered at land titles in the name of the ELCIC. (*Appendix D*) **CARRIED.**

CC-2015-32 That NCC approve that ELCIC Holdings Inc. has been dissolved and that all properties and mortgages are to be in the name of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the words “ELCIC Holdings Inc.” be removed and replaced with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada” in section B. Capital Fund, II. Operating Policies, O. Canada Board of American Missions. (*Appendix D*) **CARRIED.**

Governance Committee Report (Tab 29)

Vice-President Sheila Hamilton presented the report of the Governance Committee. She presented the results of the survey conducted with NCC.

Correspondence—

Transfer of St. Paul Lutheran Church

CC-2015-33 That NCC approve the transfer of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Burstall, SK into the Synod of Alberta and the Territories. **CARRIED.**

New Business

NCC discussed possible talking points for their use after this meeting.

NEXT MEETINGS:

July 8 & 12, 2015

- Chaplain—Rev. Brian Wilker-Frey

November 13–15, 2015 (joint meeting with ACC)

- Chaplain—Bishop Michael Pryse
- Bible Study—Cynthia Haines-Turner/Vanessa Bergeron

March 3-5, 2016

Closing worship

Led by the meeting chaplains.

Meeting adjourned