

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Minutes of the National Church Council Meeting via Zoom
March 3-5, 2023 | The Grand Winnipeg Airport Hotel, Winnipeg, MB

Present:

Officers:	National Bishop Susan Johnson Gene Blishen, Treasurer	Bruce Cook, Vice-Chair
Council:	Rev. Chris Bishopp Sarah Harrington Stephen Holmes Kathleen Jensen	Rev. Kevin Powell Heidi Van Schaik Rev. Katrina Vigen
Synod Bishops:	Bishop Kathy Martin, BC Synod Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, ABT Synod Bishop Sid Haugen, SK Synod (<i>Mar. 3 & 4</i>)	Bishop Jason Zinko, MNO Synod Bishop Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod
Staff:	Trina Gallop Blank, Assistant to the Bishop, Communications and Resource Generation Rev. Paul Gehrs, Assistant to the Bishop, Justice and Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Kyle Giesbrecht, Director of Finance and Administration Deacon Gretchen Peterson, Assistant to the Bishop, Youth & Leadership Carmen Ramirez, Assistant to the Bishop, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Desiree Mendoza, Meetings and Communications Coordinator	
Online:	Linda Grainger, Secretary Bill Gastmeier (<i>Mar. 3 & 4</i>) Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry	Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb John Nilson
Guest Co-Facilitator:	Brian Mitchell-Walker	
Not in Attendance:	Rev. Canon Dr. Murray Still The Rev. Peter Wall, Assistant to the Bishop for Worship	

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2023, 7:00 P.M.- 9:00 P.M.

Opening Worship

Meeting co-chaplains Rev. Kevin Powell and Kathleen Jensen led the opening worship.

Business Session One:

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called the meeting to order.

Recognition of Territory

Welcome

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook cited the Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of the meeting.

A land acknowledgement is a way to recognize and show respect to the Indigenous peoples who have inhabited and cared for the land for thousands of years before colonization. Treaty 1 was

signed in 1871 between the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota nations and the British Crown, covering the southern region of what is now Manitoba, including the city of Winnipeg.

We recognize the unique relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land, and their ongoing contributions to the local communities and society as a whole. It is a reminder of the ongoing need for reconciliation and understanding of the legacy of colonization, which has resulted in the displacement, marginalization, and ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples.

"We acknowledge that we are on Treaty 1 territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration."

Approval of Agenda

M/S That NCC approves the meeting agenda. **CARRIED.**

Code of Conduct

Bishop Susan encouraged the meeting group to read the *Code of Conduct*.

The Complaint Handling Committee (CHC) for this meeting consisted of Rev. Kevin Powell and Carmen Ramirez.

NCC Covenant

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb asked to be excused when the nominations for the Leadership Award are being presented to NCC for action.

Approval of September 15–17, 2022 NCC Meeting Minutes

M/S That NCC approves the September 15-17, 2022 NCC meeting minutes. **CARRIED.**

Approval of E-vote Minutes

M/S That NCC approves the January 6, 2023 e-vote minutes.

CC-2023-01 "That NCC approves the opening of an account with Canaccord Genuity with the required wording as follows:

- 1. The Organization (ELCIC) establish and maintain one or more accounts, which may be margin accounts, with the Firm (CANACCORD Genuity) (the "Accounts").**
- 2. Any 2 of the representatives of the Organization specified following paragraph 2 is hereby authorized to give written or oral instructions with respect to purchases and sales (including short sales) in securities (including options) and any other**

transactions in the accounts, excluding the payment of funds to any entity not the organization; to bind and obligate the Organization to and for the carrying out of any contract, arrangement or transaction made with the Firm; to pay such sums as may be necessary in connection with the Accounts; to give instructions with respect to the delivery or transfer of securities; to endorse any securities and/or contracts in order to pass title thereto; to direct the sale or exercise of any right with respect to any securities; to sign for the Organization, affix its seal, if any, and deliver on its behalf all releases, powers of attorney and/or other documents in connection with the Accounts; and generally to do and take all actions as are deemed by any such representative to be necessary or proper in connection with transactions in securities for and on behalf of the Organization.

Susan Johnson – National Bishop and President

Kyle Giesbrecht – Director, Finance and Administration

3. This resolution shall remain in force and be binding upon the Organization until a copy, certified true by a duly authorized representative of the Organization, of a resolution repealing or replacing this resolution shall have been received by the Firm.
4. All acts and things done and documents executed on behalf of the Organization, as hereinbefore authorized, may be relied upon by the Firm and shall be valid and binding upon the Organization, whether or not the seal, if any, of the Organization has been affixed to any such document.”

CARRIED.

CARRIED.

Report of the National Bishop

Bishop Susan presented her report to NCC.

Report of the Officers

Secretary Linda Grainger presented the Report of the Officers to NCC.

Synod Bishops

The synod bishops which included Bishops Kathy Martin, BC Synod; Larry Kochendorfer, ABT Synod; Sid Haugen, SASK Synod; Jason Zinko, MNO Synod; and Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod were invited to share any additional information to supplement their written reports.

(Vice-Chair Bruce Cook turned over the chair to Bishop Susan.)

Discussion re: Court of Appeal Decision

M/S That NCC enters into Committee of the Whole to discuss the decision of the Court of Appeal. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC enters into an in-camera session. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC leaves the in-camera session of the Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC ends the session of the Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

Closing Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2023, 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Business Session Two:

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook called the meeting to order.

Opening Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

M/S That NCC adopts the February 21, 2023 ELCIC Officers Minutes. **CARRIED.**

Anti-Racism Training (Session 1: Awareness)

Carmen Ramirez, Assistant to the Bishop for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and Brian Mitchell-Walker¹, life coach and workshop facilitator, co-facilitated the anti-racism training at the NCC meeting. The session focused on *awareness* and proceeded to the *knowledge* portion as time allowed.

¹Brian is a certified life and executive coach (Be Mindfully Well and Deep Living Institute) and works as a consultant and coach for The EDGE Network for Ministry Development of The United Church of Canada. For more information on Brian, please visit: <https://bemindfullywell.com/> or his [LinkedIn page](#).

Closing Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

(Lunch)

Business Session Three:

Opening Prayer

Led by meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

Bishop Susan chaired the meeting.

Report of the Task Force Addressing Ableism

Rev. Paul Gehrs, Assistant to the Bishop for Justice, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Relations gave an introduction and background on the work of the Task Force Addressing Ableism.

CC-2023-02 That NCC adopts the *Report of the Task Force Addressing Ableism* and recommends it to the 2023 Special Convention. **CARRIED.**

(Appendix A: Updated Report of the Task Force Addressing Ableism)

Report of the Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice Issues

CC-2023-03 That NCC approves the revision of the text in number 7 under ‘Recommendations’ of the Report of the Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice Issues from:

“That the ELCIC review, modify, design, promote, guide, monitor, and adhere to Nominations, Election and Hiring processes at all levels of the church to ensure that intentional efforts are being made to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion; and that progress is shared widely.”

to:

“That the ELCIC reviews, modifies, designs, promotes, guides, monitors, and adheres to nomination, election and hiring processes, to ensure that intentional efforts are being made to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that progress is shared widely; and to encourage other levels of the church to do the same.”

CARRIED.

CC-2023-04 That NCC adopts the *Report of the Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice Issues* and recommends it to the 2023 Special Convention. **CARRIED.**

(Appendix B: Updated Report of the Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice Issues)

Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel

M/S That NCC agrees to table the motion regarding the *Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC enters into Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC ends the session as Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC agrees to lift from the table the motion regarding the *Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel* and resume discussion. **CARRIED.**

CC-2023-05 That NCC approves the following amendments on the document *Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*.

On page 1 add **new point 5:**

5. Our churches to study and reflect upon the long history of anti-semitism within Christianity and the ongoing legacy of anti-semitism in our biblical interpretation and theology (Christian Supersessionism);

CARRIED.

CC-2023-06 That NCC approves the following amendments on the document *Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*.

Add new 5.e. (what will now be 6.e.)

- e. repent for the ways our faith has been weaponized to harm Jewish, Arab, and Muslim communities; and

CARRIED.

CC-2023-07 That NCC approves the following amendments on the document *Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*.

On page 2, edit bullet 4 to add the term ***Christian Supersessionism***

- Commitment to challenge Christian Zionism, ***Christian Supersessionism***, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

CARRIED.

Note: New footnote to define ***Christian Supersessionism*** to be added into the document.

CC-2023-08 That NCC approves and recommends for adoption to the 2023 Special Convention the amended *Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*. This resolution has been prepared in partnership with the Anglican Church of Canada. **CARRIED.**

(Appendix C: Revised *Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel*)

**Appointments—
Guidelines for Appointments
Appointments by NCC and by the Bishop
(Bios of 3 new appointments)**

CC-2023-09 That NCC makes the following appointments for terms that run until December 31, 2025:

- Reappoint David Schulze as ELCIC representative on the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) Board.
- Reappoint the following persons to the Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF) Advisory Board for three-year terms (as per the roles outlined in the CECF Management Handbook): Rev. Adam Snook, (Eastern Synod), Deacon Michelle Collins (MNO Synod), Rev. Ali Tote (SK Synod), Rev. Jeff Decelle (ABT Synod), Bishop Kathy Martin (BC Synod), Bishop Susan Johnson (National Staff), and Gene Blishen (Treasurer, ex-officio).
- Appoint Jamie Foley (lay), Rev. Munyengetero Mtata (pastor), Rev. Dr. Allen Jorgenson (Luther), and Rev. Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein (LTS); and reappoint Bishop Sid Haugen, Deacon Scott Knarr, Vanessa Bergeron (lay), and Dr. Stephen Martin (ACC) to the Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee. (Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb was appointed by NCC in September 2022).
- Reappoint Rev. Paul Gehrs to the KAIROS Steering Committee.
- Reappoint Rev. Paul Gehrs to the Canadian Interfaith Conversation.
- Reappoint Bishop Susan Johnson, Bishop Jason Zinko, and Rev. Paul Gehrs to the Lutheran Council in Canada.
- Appoint Sharon Machina to the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada.
- Reappoint Linda Grainger as LCBI Board Advisory member to the board.

CARRIED.

Special Convention and Assembly Agenda

Bishop Susan mentioned to NCC that she intends to give the apology again regarding the LGBTQ2SIA community, and hopes that the convention will affirm it.

CC-2023-10 That NCC approves the draft agenda for the 2023 Special Convention. **CARRIED.**

[*\(Appendix D: Draft Agenda for the 2023 Special Convention\)*](#)

Nominations for ELCIC Leadership Award

Trina Gallop Blank, Assistant to the Bishop for Communications and Resource Generation presented the *ELCIC Leadership Award* nominations for the 2023 Special Convention. There are eight nominations in total. She also provided explanation on the *Leadership Award*.

Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb stepped out of the room due to conflict of interest.

CC-2023-11 That NCC awards the *ELCIC Leadership Award* to Pat Lovell at the 2023 Special Convention. **CARRIED.**

(Break)

Report of the Task Force on Carbon Neutrality

CC-2023-12 That NCC receives the *Updated Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Carbon Neutrality* and recommend it to the 2023 Special Convention for adoption.

CARRIED.

(Appendix E: Report of the Task Force Addressing Carbon Neutrality)

Report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (Tab 18)

M/S That NCC agrees to table the *Report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia*, and let the working group comprised of Rev. Katrina Vigen, Rev. Paul Gehrs and Heidi Van Schaik work on the recommended wording and report back in the evening business session. **CARRIED.**

One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans, and Moravians – Called to Walk Together in Full Communion

Motion: That NCC approves and recommends for adoption to the 2023 Special Convention the agreement *One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans, and Moravians – Called to Walk Together in Full Communion* declaring that a relationship of Full Communion exists among the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Moravian Church in North America. (This motion affirms motion CC-2021-24 to approve and recommend this same document.)

CC-2023-13 That NCC approves the substitute motion “That NCC affirms motion CC-2021-24 and recommends for adoption to the 2023 Special Convention the agreement *One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans, and Moravians – Called to Walk Together in Full Communion* declaring that a relationship of Full Communion exists among the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Moravian Church in North America.”

CARRIED.

(Appendix F: One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans, and Moravians – Called to Walk Together in Full Communion)

(Break)

Closing Prayer

Led by the meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

(Dinner)

Business Session Four:

Bishop Susan called the meeting to order.

Opening Prayer

Led by the meeting co-chaplain Rev. Kevin Powell.

Report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia *(continuation)*

M/S That NCC lifts up the motion on the *Report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia* from the table. **CARRIED.**

The working group comprised of Rev. Katrina Vigen, Rev. Paul Gehrs, and Heidi Van Schaik presented the recommended wording to NCC after consultation with the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia.

CC-2023-14 That NCC approves replacing Recommendation 9 in the *Report of the Task Force on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia*—

9. We encourage the ELCIC to undertake a 2-year National Study on the ELCIC's affirmation of Human sexuality, consent, and ethical non-monogamy.
 - a. We encourage the ELCIC to work alongside the Task Force addressing Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia to populate a committee of scholars, rostered leaders, and laity who would engage in the writing of this study.
 - b. We encourage Synods, Congregations, and Individuals of the ELCIC to engage with this work and offer feedback.
 - c. We encourage the Study to report back to convention in two years with the possibility of continuing their work of listening, engaging, and educating those within the ELCIC on this topic or move towards a vote on the ELCIC's affirmation of Human sexuality, consent, and ethical non-monogamy.

To—

9. We encourage the ELCIC to create national resources which would support listening, safe conversations, and discernment at all levels of the church around healthy, consensual relationships, including ethical non-monogamous relationships.”

CARRIED.

CC-2023-15 That NCC receives the *Updated Report and Recommendations of the Task Force addressing Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia* (March 2023) and recommends the report as amended to the 2023 Special Convention for adoption. **CARRIED.**

(Appendix G: Updated Report and Recommendations of the Task Force Addressing Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia)

Bishop Susan thanked NCC for how the group handled the reports presented. It gives hope not only to herself but for the special convention as well.

Reports—

Audit

Kyle Giesbrecht, Director of Finance and Administration informed NCC that the Audit Committee will convene and provide a recommendation for e-voting sometime in April or May.

Conference of Bishops

Bishop Susan shared her experience during her trip to the Holy Land while attending the ordination of Sally Azar, the first female pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. Synod Bishops Kathy Martin, Larry Kochendorfer, Sid Haugen, Jason Zinko, and Michael Pryse also shared their experiences and insights during the ordination.

Constitution – no report

Faith, Order and Doctrine – no report

Finance

Treasurer Gene Blishen presented the Finance Report to NCC. Kyle Giesbrecht, Director of Finance and Administration gave more explanation on the reports presented to NCC.

CC-2023-16 That NCC approves for the CECF Advisory Board to pay out to the Synods a total of \$200,000 but of this amount, \$60,000 will be allocated to the Welcome Angels Program with the Rhenish Church. **CARRIED.**

Motion: In reference to the 2023 Budget, Finance Committee recommends—noting the need for clearer direction regarding strategic goals and related expenditures, we recommend discussion as a Committee of the Whole to define priorities of the Church and thereby allocate resources in line with those priorities.

M/S That NCC enters into Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

M/S That NCC ends the session as Committee of the Whole. **CARRIED.**

CC-2023-17 That NCC approves the 2023 budget presented by the Finance Committee. **CARRIED.**

Motion: That NCC establishes a budgetary allotment of \$100,000 to create a pilot project to offer centralized payroll services to congregations and partner organizations through the National Office, in concert with all synods and their respective treasurers. Furthermore, A feasibility assessment may include analysis of software, regulations, information flow, proposed funding model, identification of stakeholders, underwriting, etc. to be presented to NCC in fall of 2023.

M/S to amend the motion as follows: That the Finance Committee explores how to offer centralized payroll services to congregations and partner organizations, in concert with all synods and their respective treasurers, and report back to NCC in the fall of 2023. **CARRIED.**

CC-2023-18 That NCC approves the Finance Committee to explore how to offer centralized payroll services to congregations and partner organizations, in concert with all synods and their respective treasurers, and report back to NCC in the fall of 2023. **CARRIED.**

Governance

Vice-Chair Bruce Cook gave an oral report to NCC.

Closing Prayer

Led by the meeting co-chaplain Kathleen Jensen.

(Social Time)

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2023, 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Business Session Five:

Bishop Susan called the meeting to order.

Opening Prayer

Led by the meeting co-chaplain Rev. Kevin Powell.

Correspondence

ABT Synod Correspondence to NCC

Bishop Larry Kochendorfer of the ABT Synod gave some background on the correspondence presented to NCC.

Bishop Susan will write back to the ABT Synod Council to give gratitude and thanks.

Letter from Jon Fogleman to NCC

CC-2023-19 That NCC refers the correspondence from Jon Fogleman to the Constitution Committee. **CARRIED.**

Bishop Susan will write back to Jon Fogleman and inform him that process has been initiated.

Letter from Rev. Eric Krushel (on behalf of the BC Synod Council)

CC-2023-20 That NCC refers the correspondence from Rev. Eric Krushel BC Synod Council chair) to the ELCIC National Officers for the next steps and report back to NCC. **CARRIED.**

Recommendation from the Complaint Handling Committee

Bishop Susan thanked Trina Gallop Blank, Kyle Giesbrecht and Rev. Paul Gehrs for their work on the Complaint Handling Committee.

CC-2023-21 That NCC refers the recommendations presented by the Complaint Handling Committee to the Governance Committee. **CARRIED.**

Treasurers Group Mandate

Treasurer Gene Blishen gave more background on the document presented to NCC. Bishop Susan will write back to the treasurers' group and express our thanks and continued support for their ongoing work.

CC-2023-22 That NCC acknowledges the end of the ELCIC Task Force for Benevolence (reference CC-2018-49). **CARRIED.**

New Business

Request from GSI for a Zoom meeting with NCC to share strategic plan

Bishop Susan gave more background on the request made by GSI. The staff and NCC will be looking at potential dates in June for a Zoom meeting (Week of June 12, time TBD). Bishop Susan will inform GSI and she will get back to NCC.

Unfinished Business

Meeting Highlights

Prayers
Anti-Racism Training
Resolution – Palestine and Israel
Full Communion – Anglicans, Lutherans and Moravians
Excitement towards the Special Convention
Task Force Reports
Special Convention

(Appendix H: Meeting Highlights)

Meeting Evaluation

- Food was great and the close proximity of the current hotel to the airport is ideal
- U-shape table set-up in the next meeting
- Value in the Committee of the Whole
- Training via Zoom (online) to allow more time for discussion on the direction of the church
- Allow time in the September meeting to encourage more conversations
- Sharing of expertise/experience (ABT Synod) so others could leverage on it

What resources do we need so we can have good conversations in September?

- Challenges and opportunities in resource generation that will change/impact our outlook
- Pieces from the Reimagining the Church document to be used in other pieces
- Changing cultures in relation to faith formation (Spiritual Renewal)
- Membership, updates on stats, and numbers in regards to giving

- Lutheran global view (i.e. LWF) and what those other cultures bring is important to us, too.
- Information on recruitment initiative (rostered)

Closing Prayer

Meeting co-chaplain Rev. Kevin Powell led the Closing Prayer.

Next Meetings:

Next Meetings:

2023

June 28 at 4:00 p.m. (MST) - right before the Special Convention (University of Calgary)

September 7–9 (Thursday-Saturday)

Chaplains – MNO Synod team (Bishop Jason Zinko, Rev. Chris Bishopp and Sarah Harrington)
Bible Study –

2024

March 1-3 (Friday-Sunday)

September 5-7 (Thursday-Saturday)

Meeting Adjourned.

**ELCIC Task Force Addressing Ableism
Report to ELCIC Special Convention at Assembly 2023
(As Recommended by N CC - March 2023)**

Preamble for 2023

This report was shared at the 2022 ELCIC National Convention. It was updated and re-submitted to the National Church Council (NCC) in March 2023. After reviewing the 2022 report, the task force made no changes to the content of the report.

The task force addressing ableism is grateful for the chance to open this conversation in our community. We acknowledge the contributions of Rev. Sonje Finnestad and the late Rev. Mark Urquhart as we made this journey.

2021 the government of Canada identified that 73% of Canadians with disabilities encountered at least one barrier that would limit their daily activity. Barriers could be accessing information and communication technology, understanding or being understood, or even accessing transportation (Government of Canada C, 2020). In addition, 2.7 million Canadians aged 15 or older have a mobility disability (9.6%). Of this group, over one-quarter consider themselves housebound because of their disability (Government of Canada, 2021). During the COVID19 pandemic, almost half of Canadians with disabilities interviewed named their health worse than before, with 77% naming they needed but were unable to receive one or more therapies for their condition (Government of Canada, 2020B). Among those with a disability, almost one in five reported not using the internet (Government of Canada, 2020A).

Persons living with disability are part of our community and church. Disability is a part of being human. It is a condition or experience from injury, illness, or unique development which makes it more difficult for a person to engage in meaningful activity or interact with the world around them. Disability can be easily identifiable, invisible, temporary, and/or permanent and is not a fixed experience. Inclusion in our context is naming that all people are made in the image of God, and so living in relationship with each person as complete and valuable in and of themselves. Inclusion seeks to engage each person as they are in the whole of our church body and family.

In the 1990s, churches across Canada made significant investments in their buildings to provide wheelchair ramps and elevators as a sign of accessibility. In the 2000s, as provincial standards updated, accessibility statements and policies were introduced. However, our church has not grappled with the significant barriers those with a disability might experience in the ELCIC since. Significantly, we first need to facilitate conversations with persons experiencing disability, and in the communities we worship

within. Possible opportunities for moving forward include organizing accessibility audit tools for congregations as well as devotional and discussion resources.

This task force also names how diverse the experiences are in our community and how challenging it is to discern a common approach. A survey has been shared across the national church to address this challenge, inviting all interested to give feedback and share their stories around disability and the ELCIC. Some have told us that their accessibility needs have been addressed, while others continue to experience significant barriers. From these results, our learning is just beginning as a church in working to dismantle ableism in our context.

Recommendations

As a task force, we

1. Recommend that the ELCIC implement ongoing certified accessibility and ableism training for national staff, National Church Council, and national committees. Curriculum should address privilege, power structures, and movement towards more equitable representation at ELCIC decision making and governance tables. Training should happen at least every three years.
2. Recommend to Synods, Seminaries, and Schools that all rostered leaders, Synod Councils, Synod Committees, Board members, employees, candidates for ordination and students participate in ongoing certified accessibility and ableism training at least every three years.
3. Recommend accessibility and ableism training for congregational councils, committees, leaders, and all employees of the local congregations. Encourage critical conversation and intentional formation on how faith communities can better confront ableism at the congregational level.
4. Recommend that the work of this task force continue for (at least) another three years with for an expanded community of ELCIC members with lived experiences of disability and allies committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion the opportunity to serve
5. Recommend that the national office provide for staffing with dedicated responsibility for diversity, equity, and inclusion

Respectfully submitted

Ms. Birgit Giesser (she/her)
Ms. Kate Reid (she/her)
Deacon Sarah Rudd (she/her), Chair
Ms. Judy Verge (she/her)
Rev. Paul Gehrs (he/him), Staff

Sources:

Government of Canada. (2020A, July 6). *Persons with disabilities and COVID-19*. Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2020040-eng.htm>

Government of Canada. (2020B, October 7). *How are Canadians with long-term conditions and disabilities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?* Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2020073-eng.htm>

Government of Canada. (2020C, December 3). *Canadians with a mobility disability*. Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2020085-eng.htm>

Government of Canada. (2021, August 18). *What are the accessibility experiences of Canadians with disabilities, difficulties or long-term conditions?* Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2021056-eng.htm>

**ELCIC Task Force Addressing Racism, White Supremacy and Racial Justice Issues
Report to ELCIC Special Convention at Assembly 2023
(As Recommended by NCC - March 2023)**

Preamble for 2023

This report was shared at the 2022 ELCIC National Convention. It was updated and re-submitted to the National Church Council (NCC) in March 2023. The only change in the report is on page 4. In March 2022, NCC asked the task force to review recommendation 7. After further deliberation and consultation with NCC representatives, the task force provides a revised “recommendation 7.”

Introduction

The task force addressing Racism, White Supremacy and Racial Justice Issues has met several times over the last two years. All meetings were online (Zoom). These meetings include time to get to know each other and discussion of the mandate of the task force.

On May 12, 2021, the task force met jointly with the Racial Justice Advisory Committee (RJAC) of the Eastern Synod. This was an important conversation, and the task force is grateful to the members of the RJAC.

The task force identified the lack of an anti-racism policy as a major gap in ELCIC policy, and thus have drafted a proposed ELCIC Statement on Racism. Several anti-racism statements from partner churches and other organizations were reviewed to help inform the wording of this ELCIC statement. This proposed statement forms the bulk of this report.

The task force is grateful for the opportunity for open conversation about becoming an anti-racist church.

The members of the task force are:

Rev. Ron Flamand (he/him)
Emma Fomgbami (she/her)
Rev. Nathan Fong (he/him)
Richard Kotowich (he/him)
Dr. Mary Philip aka Joy (she/her)
Rev. Aneeta Saroop (she/her), Chair

Proposed ELCIC Statement on Racism
For submission to National Church Council, February 11, 2022

“Seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.” Micah 6:8¹

“Racism is a social evil and ‘dehumanizing to everyone it touches.’”²

[We are] “Convinced that any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere.”³

We, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), as a church of Christ acknowledge the presence and perpetration of the sin of racism. We admit that we have been, both explicitly and implicitly, guilty of racial discrimination in the church. We confess the longstanding and historical patterns of neglect, abuse, and maltreatment perpetrated on People of Colour, which includes people who identify as Indigenous, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander and other racialized people in our church and societies.⁴

We recognize the deep pain and frustration some people have experienced as consequences of systemic racism that permeate our church and society. We recognize that we have not fully welcomed the presence, voices, and talents of our fellow members who are racialized into our various councils, committees, and leadership. People of Colour have been absent in the life and learning of the ELCIC at the national, synodical, and congregational levels for far too long.

We recognize that racism can be conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional, active or passive. Racially discriminatory acts have far-reaching negative impacts, whether purposeful or not. Racism as an issue is also systemic; with historical, political, and cultural roots in colonialism and settlement immigration. Systemic racism is real in all aspects of the church. In our calling to be an anti-racist church, we need to purposefully identify, study, discuss, and challenge the social construct and issues of race and colour and their impacts on our individual congregations and people.

We also recognize and accept that it is not enough to simply condemn racism; we must intentionally become an anti-racist church. We must diligently confront racism so that our anti-racism commitment will be reflected in the life and culture of the church through our policies, programs, practices, and people.⁵ Trusting our faith and one another, we stand willing to be convicted of our biases by the Spirit in order to learn, confront, and correct all and any injustices and inequities that we discover. We will gain a better understanding of ourselves as individuals

¹ Micah 6: 8

² University of New Hampshire, College of Health and Human Services anti-racism statement. <https://chhs.unh.edu/social-work/about/anti-racism-statement>

³ *The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, United Nations General Assembly, December 21, 1965. <https://ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>

⁴ American Society of Transplantation statement on racism. <https://www.myast.org/about-ast/who-we-are/statement-racism>

⁵ Ibid.

and collectively as the church, as we continue to grow in our ministry of reconciliation and identity as new creations in Christ as we learn in 2 Corinthians 5:16-18.

We believe that by grace we are recipients of God's forgiveness and mercy. We have the assurance that no one is beyond the bounds of Christ's reconciling and redeeming love. Luther said that to know Christ is to know a new justice;⁶ and we understand this justice to be one that sees, hears, accepts, and values People of Colour and their contributions in our midst.

We recognize that in striving to become an anti-racist church we are answerable to the past injustices, and that we have a shared responsibility to create a better and more accountable church that upholds and promotes the values of respect, equity, diversity, and inclusivity. We commit to being a compassionate church by welcoming, receiving, appreciating, respecting, and celebrating all for their unique identities as children of God created in God's own image. We commit to working for equity and justice in the church and in the world. We commit to accountable anti-racist action as individuals, as congregations and as the wider church.

We are called to engage in the decolonizing work of dismantling racism. We recognize there are languages, choices, and actions that may serve to privilege certain groups of people and impede others. We understand that the foremost prerequisite to being an anti-racist church is to assume this decolonizing mindset, posture, and lens. There should not be any aspect or avenue or institution of the church and its mission and ministry that does not go through the fine-toothed comb of decolonizing change. This will push us out of our comfort zones and into the new and the unknown. In the words of Lutheran poet Friedrich Hölderlin "Yet where danger lies, grows that which saves."⁷

We commit to zero tolerance for racism and racial discrimination, and we commit to eliminating such behaviour within the church and its ministries.⁸

We commit to creating an environment within the ELCIC where People of Colour feel safe and are empowered to speak about their experiences of racism and racial discrimination and to seek redress without fear of retaliation. We also pledge to ensure that such experiences and concerns are duly addressed.⁹

In faithful discernment as God's forgiven people, we the ELCIC, as a tangible expression of our commitment to address racism, white supremacy, and issues of racial injustice, hereby commit to dismantle systemic racism and bring about justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, and adopt the following as definitive actions:

⁶ WA 31/II, 439, 19f.; Martin Luther, "Isaiah 53:11," Luther's Works vol. 17 Lectures on Isaiah 40–66, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Herbert J. Bouman (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 230.

⁷ Friedrich Hölderlin, "Patmos," in *Gedichte/Hyperion* (Augsburg: Wilhelm Goldmann, 1978), 138.

⁸ Statement by Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). "Racism and Racial Discrimination in the Humanitarian Sector," 10 September 2020.

⁹ Ibid.

Recommendations

1. That the ELCIC implement ongoing certified anti-racism training for national staff, National Church Council, and national committees. Curriculum should address privilege, power structures, and movement towards more equitable representation at ELCIC decision making and governance tables. Training should happen at least every three years.
2. That Synods, seminaries, and schools ensure that all rostered leaders, councils, committees, board members, employees, candidates for ordination, and students participate in ongoing certified anti-racism training at least every three years.
3. Anti-racism training for congregational councils, committees, leaders, and employees of the local congregations. Encourage critical conversation and intentional formation on how faith communities can better confront racism at the congregational level.
4. That each Synod create a racial justice committee based on the Eastern Synod model.
5. That the ELCIC develop a National Church Theological Study on Anti-Racism, White Supremacy, and Issues of Racial Injustice to encourage members in learning and ongoing reformation.
6. That National and Synodical Bishops issue frequent public statements condemning Systemic Racism and calling for ongoing reformation in our church.
7. That the ELCIC review, modify, design, promote, guide, monitor, and adhere to Nomination, Election and Hiring processes, to ensure that intentional efforts are being made to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that progress is shared widely; and to encourage all levels of the church to do the same.
8. That the ELCIC work with educational institutions (schools and colleges) to decolonize the curriculum and require educators and administrators to put the responsibility of equity, diversity, and inclusion at the center of their teaching and research. For example, create mandatory scholarship and innovative certificate programs in Black, Asian, and Indigenous Studies.
9. That the ELCIC communicate and possibly collaborate with ELCIC Group Services Inc. and Canadian Lutheran World Relief regarding the ELCIC's new commitments to anti-racism.
10. That the national office provide for staffing with dedicated responsibility for diversity, equity and inclusion.

11. That NCC appoint a task force to continue the work of addressing Racism, White Supremacy, and issues of Racial Injustice. The task force will report and be accountable to NCC and will report to the National Convention in 2025.

Assembly 2023 Resolution on Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel

Be it resolved that the Anglicans and Lutherans, gathered as Assembly 2023, reaffirm the commitment of our churches to the pursuit of peace with justice for all in Palestine and Israel.

We ask:

1. The Primate and the National Bishop to respond to opportunities for solidarity and advocacy, including responding to specific incidents of human rights violations;
2. Our churches to seek ways to provide safe spaces in Canada for conversation and collaboration in pursuing truth, and working for a just and lasting peace among all people of the region;¹
3. Our churches to decrease the presence and impact of Christian Zionism² within our denominations while discerning ecumenical and civil society possibilities for greater interaction with Palestinian Christians and those of the Muslim and Jewish faith who seek a just peace in the region;
4. Our churches to study and reflect upon the parallels between the dispossession of Palestinians from their homes and lands and the experience of broken treaties and the occupation of unceded territories of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, including the ways the churches themselves have been complicit in this, and to discern actions for justice, peace and healing in all contexts;
5. Our churches to study and reflect upon the long history of anti-semitism within Christianity and the ongoing legacy of anti-semitism in our biblical interpretation and theology (Christian Supersessionism³);
6. Anglicans and Lutherans to
 - a. pray for peace and justice in Palestine and Israel,
 - b. celebrate Jerusalem and Holy Land Sunday annually,
 - c. grow in awareness of the realities of life and Christian ministry in the Holy Land, and,
 - d. be open to opportunities for accompaniment, advocacy, and action
 - e. repent for the ways our faith has been weaponized to harm Jewish, Arab, and Muslim communities; and
7. The General Synod Office and the National Office to

¹ [Seeking Justice and Peace for All in the Middle East](#), WCC Assembly, 2022, page 2.

² Definition: *In its narrow sense, **Christian Zionism** refers to a particular movement within evangelical Christianity, which dates from the nineteenth century, although with earlier roots in the Puritan period of the seventeenth century. Using certain key biblical texts it articulates, on the basis of its understanding of Christian faith, support for the continuing return or 'restoration' of the Jewish diaspora to a homeland in the Middle East centred on Jerusalem. It also looks to an apocalyptic resolution of human history, and currently propounds an ideology of support for the State of Israel, finding practical expression in more or less uncritical support for Israeli positions in conflicts with Palestinian and Arab interests.* (from [Land of Promise?: A Report from the Anglican Communion Network for Interfaith Concerns](#), 2012, paragraph 2.14.)

³ Definition: **Christian Supersessionism** is a term denoting traditional Christian claims that the church has replaced Israel in the divine purposes and has inherited all that was positive in Israel's tradition... (from *Supersessionism and Early Christian Self-Definition*, Terence L. Donaldson, Wycliffe College JJMJS No. 3 (2016): 1---32, page 2.) http://www.jjmjs.org/uploads/1/1/9/0/11908749/jjmjs-3_donaldson.pdf

- a. examine, discuss, and address emerging realities, including the implications of the recent reports by [B'Tselem](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), and [Amnesty International](#), and for its governing bodies to respond appropriately;⁴ and
- b. continue to support the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem in their deep capacity for and implementation of programs that serve the needs of local communities and peoples.

We affirm the rightful place of the State of Israel in the community of nations and recognize its legitimate security needs. We affirm the State of Palestine and its right of self-determination and legitimate security needs. We condemn the Israeli blockade of Gaza, and the occupation of East Jerusalem and West Bank since 1967, including settlement construction and expansion in these territories, as illegal under international law and must be ended. We believe it is only through an end to the occupation and a just, comprehensive and lasting peace settlement that the security of both Palestinians and Israelis can be assured.⁵

We affirm that our work concerning Palestine and Israel is guided by principles for human rights and peace⁶, including:

- Respect and assertion of human rights and dignity for all
- Commitment to International Law and International Conventions
- Equality including gender justice and racial justice
- Commitment to challenge Christian Zionism⁷, Christian Supersessionism⁸, anti-Semitism⁹ and Islamophobia¹⁰
- Non-violence
- Ending political and religious extremism
- Self-determination
- Commitment to advocacy and action

We affirm the need to listen to the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches, and repeated pleas of the Christian communities of the region, and to accompany them in prayer and action.¹¹ This includes our

⁴ [Seeking Justice and Peace for All in the Middle East](#), WCC Assembly, 2022, page 3.

⁵ [Seeking Justice and Peace for All in the Middle East](#), WCC Assembly, 2022, page 2

⁶ [KAIROS Palestine and Israel Delegation Report](#), 2020, page 3.

⁷ See footnote 2 above.

⁸ See footnote 3 above.

⁹ Definition: According to the 2021 [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#), **Antisemitism** is “discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish).” We recognize that there are complexities and nuances surrounding the definition of antisemitism and all that it entails, both within the Jewish community and more widely. Another source that has been widely referenced in this discussion is the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#) working definition of 2016.

¹⁰ Definition: **Islamophobia** is a fear, prejudice and hatred of Muslims that leads to provocation, hostility and intolerance by means of threatening, harassment, abuse, incitement and intimidation of Muslims and non-Muslims, both in the online and offline world. Motivated by institutional, ideological, political and religious hostility that transcends into structural and cultural racism, it targets the symbols and markers of being a Muslim. (from the [United Nations](#))

¹¹ [Seeking Justice and Peace for All in the Middle East](#), WCC Assembly, 2022, page 3.

primary partners, The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

We join the World Council of Churches in recognizing that Israeli discrimination against Palestinians is overt and systemic. The ongoing half-century-long occupation continues to contradict the human dignity and human rights of Palestinians living under this system of control, while the response of the international community to this travesty continues to fail. The 2022 suppression of several Palestinian human rights organizations by Israeli authorities without much effective opposition by the international community is an emblematic example of this system of control and failings. For Palestinians, the situation is sadly compounded by the grave divisions and inadequacies of the Palestinian authorities, including reprisals against opposition leaders and the lack of legal and democratic accountability.¹²

We affirm the advocacy concerns identified by Canadian church members in the 2020 KAIROS *Palestine and Israel Delegation Report*¹³ :

- Canada has a strong policy base to take leadership and support local women's peace building initiatives as reflected in the [Feminist International Assistance Policy \(FIAP\)](#) and [National Action Plan of Women, Peace and Security](#). We urge Canada to take leadership on these issues and to implement these policies in the government's work in Palestine and Israel.
- Canada has articulated a strengthened commitment to support and defend human rights defenders in the recent policy, [Voices at Risk: Canada's Guidelines on Supporting Human Rights Defenders](#). We welcome this new policy and call on the Canadian government and its Embassy and Office, to fully implement these guidelines in its relations with, and development in, Israel and Palestine.
- Canada's efforts to promote international human rights includes strong commitments to protecting the human rights and safety of children and youth. We urge Canada to closely monitor and report on the treatment of Palestinian children arrested by Israeli forces and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system, and on the increasing numbers of Palestinian children killed by Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories where a climate of impunity and an almost total lack of accountability persists.¹⁴
- We urge Canada to take a lead in supporting the right to self-determination on the ground in Palestine as we recognize and continue to address the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination in Canada and globally.
- We urge Canada to take leadership in the international community to end the blockade on Gaza and ensure residents have immediate access to humanitarian assistance and freedom of movement, while affirming the necessary conditions to address Israel's legitimate security concerns.
- We call on Canada to increase funding to UNRWA which provides essential services to millions of refugees, including those in Gaza where 70 percentage are refugees of 1948. In 2020 the

¹² [Seeking Justice and Peace for All in the Middle East](#), WCC Assembly, 2022, page 2.

¹³ [KAIROS Palestine and Israel Delegation Report](#), 2020, page 9.

¹⁴ [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, August 11, 2022](#).

Canadian government announced a 3-year, \$90 million commitment from 2020 through 2022,¹⁵ but this funding is not increasing rapidly enough to fill this critical gap. We urge Canada to give \$50 million annually to UNRWA, matching Norway's contribution based on GDP.

- We call on the Canadian government to continue to take a just, constructive, and human rights-based approach on Palestine-Israel issues, taking into account the extreme imbalance of power between Palestine and Israel and in line with international law and official Canadian foreign policy.
- We urge the government of Canada to live up to the entirety of its existing policies on peace in Palestine and Israel, and to its commitments to International Law and International Conventions.

¹⁵ [Statement by Ambassador Bob Rae](#), Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, June 23, 2022, at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Pledging Conference.



Appendix D

Assembly 2023 AGENDA

	June 28	June 29	June 30	July 1	July 2
Morning 8:00 am		Joint 1	ELCIC 3 Opening prayer TF on Carbon Neutrality 1 TF on Ableism 3	Joint 4	9:00 am Joint Worship
Break 10:00 to 10:30					
			TF on HBT 1 TF on CN 2 Closing prayer		
Lunch 12:00-1:30					
1. Afternoon	4:00 NCC	ELCIC 2 Opening prayer TF on Ableism 1 TF on Anti-Racism 1	Joint 3	ELCIC 5 Opening prayer TF on CN 3 TF on AR 4 Full Communion with Moravians	

Break 3:00 to 3:45					
		Reference and Counsel TF on Ableism 2 TF on AR 2 Closing prayer		TF on CN 4 TF on HBT 3 Reference and Counsel Closing Prayer	
Supper 5:00 to 7:00	<i>Note: supper not served until 5:30</i>				
Evening 7:00 to 8:45	ELCIC 1 Opening of Convention Quorum Adoption of agenda Orientation Report of the National Bishop	Joint 2	ELCIC 4 Opening Prayer TF on HBT 2 TF on AR 3 TF on AB 4 8:45 Deadline for Submissions to Reference and Counsel	ELCIC 6 Opening Prayer TF on HBT 4 Israel/Palestine Reference and Counsel Leadership Award Closing Prayer	
	<i>8:45 travel to Anglicans for evening prayer</i>				

ELCIC Task Force on Carbon Neutrality
Report to ELCIC Special Convention at Assembly 2023
(As Recommended by NCC - March 2023)

Contents

1. Preamble	page 2
2. Journey to Carbon Neutrality	page 3
3. Definition of Carbon Neutrality	page 4
4. Journey of theological and ethical reflection	page 5
5. Journey of relationship and partnership	page 5
6. Pathways to Climate Justice: Accountability for GHG Emissions	page 6
a. GHG Inventory Calculator	page 6
b. Get Net Zero Right	page 7
7. Strategies for Reducing Emissions	page 9
a. Reducing consumption	page 10
b. Increasing efficiency	page 10
c. Substitute fossil fuel-derived energy with renewable energy	page 11
d. Neutralizing remaining emissions	page 12
8. Targets	page 13
9. Situating ELCIC's Climate Action in the Context of Canadian Public Policy	page 14
10. Be Inspired by Youth & Young Adults: DARE to be BRAVE	page 19
11. Recommendations	page 23
12. Meet the task force	page 25

Appendices ([Available here via Box file](#))

- Appendix 1 Science of Climate Change
- Appendix 2 Theological Perspectives on Climate Change
- Appendix 3 Ecumenical Perspectives & Summary of ELCIC climate justice engagement
- Appendix 4 Canada and Climate Change
- Appendix 5 GHG Emissions Inventory for Congregations
- Appendix 6 Framework for Carbon Reduction
- Appendix 7 Pathways for Reducing GHG emissions
- Appendix 8 User Manual for GHG Inventory Calculator
- Appendix 9 Carbon Accounting
- Appendix 10 Example GHG Inventory Calculation for a Congregation
(Using 2019 data form Abundant Life, Birds Hill, MB)
- Appendix 11 LWF Strategic Directions for Climate Justice

Land Acknowledgement

The ELCIC acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast, are on traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples. Working for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, respecting Indigenous Rights and learning from Indigenous wisdom is essential to climate justice and renewed relationships with the land.

1. Preamble

This report was shared at the 2022 ELCIC National Convention. It was re-submitted to the National Church Council (NCC) in March 2023. The additions to the previous report are footnotes on pages 7 and 24.

The climate crisis is calling all of us and each of us to work for climate justice. The 2019 ELCIC National Convention adopted the following resolution:

NC-2019-19 That the ELCIC acknowledges the call by the 2017 Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Assembly for “the global communion to strengthen its efforts even more for climate justice;” and the call “for the LWF to be carbon neutral by 2050.” The National Convention directs the National Church Council to investigate what would be required for the ELCIC to be carbon neutral by 2050, and to report to the 2022 National Convention.

This resolution was based, in part, on a 2017 Lutheran World Federation (LWF) assembly resolution:

The Assembly reaffirms the 2014 public statement calling for the LWF to be carbon neutral by 2050 and urges the LWF to put in place a concrete plan of action to achieve that goal.¹

The National Church Council (NCC) followed up on this motion by establishing a Task Force on Carbon Neutrality with the following mandate:

CC-2020-12 That NCC directs the National Bishop to appoint a task force to investigate what would be required for the ELCIC to be carbon neutral by 2050.

The task force will:

- Prepare a definition of “carbon neutral” and identify the way or ways that the ELCIC might measure carbon emissions.
- Gather resources and ideas for reducing carbon emissions.
- Describe what would be required for the ELCIC to be carbon neutral by 2050, including options for how to move forward.

¹ <https://www.lutheranworld.org/climate-justice/resolutions-statements-climate>

- Follow up with Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) regarding their offer to help the ELCIC animate our convention motions on climate justice; and communicate with other key partners regarding potential input, synergy and ideas.
- prepare a formal report for the March 2022 NCC meeting, in preparation for reporting to the 2022 National Convention. The formal report may include recommendations for convention action and for future work.

The membership of the task force will consist of 3 to 5 persons who collectively have the following:

- Expertise in the science of climate change
- Skills for organizational planning and adaptation
- At least one youth under 30 years of age at the time of appointment

Members will be appointed for terms that conclude with the end of National Convention in July 2022.

2. Journey to Carbon Neutrality

The critical need to limit global temperature increases to 1.5° C above preindustrial levels, as outlined in the Paris Agreement (COP 21), has been communicated by the United Nations, the Lutheran World Federation,² the ELCIC National Convention,³ and many others. The goal of “carbon neutrality” is about reducing GHG emissions in order to limit global temperature increases and, therefore, to reduce the impacts of climate change. Additional information about the science of climate change can be found in Appendix 1.

Becoming carbon neutral is a huge challenge but it is attainable. The implications and difficulty of specific options for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions vary from context to context.

Contextual solutions for how to move toward carbon neutrality will need to be as diverse as the people who are implementing actions. In this report, the task force invites the ELCIC, its members, congregations, faith communities,⁴ synods, and national office, on a journey to carbon neutrality. We invite you to bring your wisdom, creativity, and voice to this journey. We invite to walk with openness to spiritual growth, learning, and partnership. We invite you to walk with respect, passion, hope, and a sense of God’s presence.

² <https://www.lutheranworld.org/climate-justice/resolutions-statements-climate>

³ NC-2019-20, <https://elcic.ca/In-Convention/2019-Regina/Minutes.cfm>

⁴ “Faith Communities” is intended to include ministries, organizations, institution and local groups who are connected to the ELCIC and who feel called to be part of this journey to carbon neutrality.

3. Definition of “Carbon Neutral”

In seeking to define “carbon neutrality,” the task force looked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as an organization dedicated to addressing climate change in the global context. In 2021, UNFCCC articulate this definition to individual institutions and organizations join the journey to net zero:

An individual actor has reached a state of net zero when it reduces its emissions following science-based pathways, with any remaining greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions attributable to that actor being fully neutralized by like-for-like removals exclusively claimed by that actor, either within the value chain or through purchase of valid offset credits.⁵

The ELCIC will have achieved “Carbon neutrality” (Net Zero) when ELCIC member organizations (national church, synods, congregations, and faith communities) have minimized greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are within their sphere of control and neutralized remaining emissions by like-for-like removals.

GHGs is a term referring to various gases that contribute to climate change. CO₂ is the largest contributor to climate change; other GHGs include methane and nitrous oxide. GHGs are often reported as “CO₂e” or “carbon dioxide equivalent.” There is a need to reduce emission of all GHGs to address the climate crisis. CO₂ removal is also known as carbon fixation and CO₂ assimilation. It involves the addition of carbon dioxide to organic molecules (usually carbohydrates) to prevent it from remaining in the atmosphere in that free state.⁶

To make the journey to carbon neutrality, the national church, synods, congregations, and faith communities will need to focus on choices that are in their control. Emissions will need to be documented using a GHG Inventory Calculator, as described in Section 6 below. Faithfully making these choices is a response to God’s call to care for creation and demonstrates responsibility for doing our fair share to address the climate crisis.

⁵ UNFCCC. 2021b. Race to Zero Lexicon. Race to Zero Expert Review Group. UNFCCC. 2021c. Race to Zero Interpretation Guide. R2Z Expert Peer Review Group. The following document proposes a similar approach for corporations: Science Based Standards Institute. October 2021. SBTi corporate net-zero standards. SBTi, United Nations Global Compact, World Resource Institute, WWF.

⁶ www.biologyonline.com/dictionary/carbon-fixation

4. Journey of theological and ethical reflection

As we considered carbon neutrality, climate justice and the mandate of this task force, we repeatedly found ourselves in meaningful discussion about principles, ethics and theology that need to inform our decision making as people of faith.

Ongoing prayer, worship, reflection, conversation, and learning are essential elements for a deeper and healthier relationship and reconciliation with God's creation. The practice of theological reflection strengthens and empowers communities for following God's call to love creation and act for climate justice.

Some of the questions that emerged regularly are:

- Are we listening to marginalized voices?
- What is our fair share of emission reductions?
- What is achievable?
- How do we act for intergenerational justice and the needs of future generations?

Recently, the task force heard this piece of wisdom: "Don't let the perfect get in the way of the good."⁷ Making choices about sustainable living tends to generate conversation and options. Finding a more perfect solution can become an excuse for delaying action or luxury for those who have more resources. The urgency of the climate crises points us on a path of action, reflection and learning. The time to act is now.

As a result of our conversation on the task force, we have prepared Appendix 2: "Theological Perspectives on Climate Change."

5. Journey in relationship and partnership

We all live in relationship with God, with human neighbours, with all creatures and with ecosystems. "We stand in awe and wonder at God's great creation, at the diversity of beings, and at the intricate balance of relationships that sustains life. We recognize that everything in this world is an integral part of the web of life."⁸ "Actively loving the land is climate action."⁹

⁷ Voltaire: "The best is the enemy of the good." Confucius: "Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without." Quoted by Neil Patel, blog post, August 31, 2015, Entrepreneur.com <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/249676>

⁸ [*The Joint Assembly Declaration*](#), Endorsed by the Joint Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada, July 2013, Ottawa.

⁹ Kata Kuhnert, Fining your Voice presentation, January 28, 2022

Individual organizations do not become carbon neutral in isolation; the call to sustainable living and carbon neutrality is lived out in partnership and relationship. Individual efforts alone will not address the climate crisis; systemic change is required.

Climate justice is a call to communities from local to global scope. It requires wisdom, commitment, and innovation. It involves action by governments, organizations, corporations, faith-based organizations, households, and individuals. The ELCIC's ecumenical and interfaith partners provide valuable resources and encouragement on this journey.

The effects of climate change are not experienced equally, with marginalized communities commonly experience more painful and difficult consequences. Work for justice includes an ongoing call to intentionally listen to the perspectives of those most impacted by systemic oppression and inequity.

Some ecumenical perspectives on climate justice and a summary of the ELCIC's current climate justice work is available in Appendix 3. Information on Canada's role in climate change can be found in Appendix 4.

6. Pathways to Climate Justice: Accountability GHG Emissions

To make the journey to carbon neutrality, the ELCIC will need to measure greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This will take time and effort by the national church, congregations, and ministries.

a. GHG Inventory Calculator

The recommended approach is for the national church to develop a GHG Inventory Calculator to use coherently across ELCIC member organizations. The task force has prepared a prototype GHG Inventory Calculator (Appendix 5). It uses a simple approach to apportion annual financial statements categories into key carbon emissions categories and convert them to carbon equivalents.

The GHG Inventory Calculator categorizes emissions according to internationally recognized standards. Scope 1 emissions include emissions that are emitted directly from equipment owned by the organization – natural gas-burning heating equipment, for example. Scope 2 emissions include emissions indirectly emitted through the consumption of electricity. Scope 3 emissions include indirect emissions related to other activities: for example, travel, materials consumption, land management, and waste management. The areas of heating, electricity, transportation, and consumption the primary ways that congregations and ministries generate GHG emissions. They

are already tracked in financial budgets so data from bills, invoices and financial reports is available to use with the carbon footprint calculator.

Examples of financial categories that can be converted to carbon equivalents are heating, lighting and electrical expenses, fuel for maintenance (lawn mowing, snow removal, etc.) Also, transportation data can be converted to carbon equivalents based on information on distance traveled and mode of transportation.

Using the ELCIC GHG Inventory Calculator as a guide, we recommend that the national church use the calculator and report emissions from national ministries on an annual basis, and that congregations and ministries be invited to annually calculate and report emissions. One step in this process is becoming more aware of the sources we use for heat, electricity, travel, and consumption.

We recommend that the ELCIC use 2019¹⁰ as the baseline for assessing progress on GHG emissions. 2020 and 2021 have been hugely affected by the global pandemic and are not representative of normal operations. The significant reduction in travel, gatherings, and activities in during the pandemic mean that 2019 emissions are a more accurate baseline compared to times when public health practices restrict activities.

Additional information on GHG inventory calculations can be found in:

- Appendix 6 – Framework for Carbon Reduction

- Appendix 7 – Pathways for Reducing GHG emissions

- Appendix 8 – User Manual for GHG Inventory Calculator

- Appendix 9 – Carbon Accounting

- Appendix 10 – is an example of how the GHG Inventory Calculator looks for a congregation, using 2019 data from Abundant Life, Birds Hill, MB

b. Get Net Zero Right

The [“Get Net Zero Right”](#) strategy (GNZR) proposed this year by the United Nations can be a landmark document for the church. It provides a credible Net Zero strategy for small organizations on four grounds:

- 1- It puts the accent on emissions reduction. The science shows that a Net Zero strategy exclusively based on carbon offsets, carbon markets, and carbon capture is not credible

¹⁰ New for 2023: For practical reasons, some faith communities may find it more feasible to use 2022 as a baseline year for data.

because the amount of carbon to dispose of using this strategy is so high that you would need a Planet B to offset or capture that much carbon.

2- It puts the accent on early emissions reduction. Here the scientists are trying to counter the idea that we can succeed through a carbon capture technology breakthrough late in the game. UN scientists argue that we must start reducing emissions now, using proven technologies that can achieve these emissions reductions at scale (primarily wind and solar technologies, with other complementary components). A “Hail Mary pass” type of plan is not a credible strategy.

3- It puts the accent on a credible Offset Plan, as follows: Once significant emissions reduction efforts have been achieved, identify the hard-to-abate GHG emissions and develop an Offset Plan that demonstrates that the selected offsets will not undermine social justice or harm biodiversity; re-visit this Offset Plan as best practices evolve.

4- It provides a rigorous Net Zero definition that allows small organizations to inscribe their Net Zero contributions within global Net Zero efforts while preventing double-counting and ensuring that the reductions are not ‘additional’¹¹.

Using this approach, the ELCIC could achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 while serving its neighbours, being responsible citizens in the world, and being a faithful steward of all God's creation.

“Get Net Zero Right” key measures are as follows:

Key Measures	Action
Is it about now?	Reduce emissions this decade. Long term targets must be complemented by an interim target.
Is there a credible plan?	Have a clear action plan for the immediate and the next five years, with interim and long-term targets.

¹¹ GHG reductions are *additional* if they would *not* have occurred in the absence of a market for offset credits. [...] If their associated GHG reductions are not additional, then purchasing offset credits in lieu of reducing your own emissions will make climate change worse.
<https://www.offsetguide.org/high-quality-offsets/additionality/>

Key Measures	Action
Is it fast enough?	Reduce emissions quickly this decade. The end goal is to reach Net Zero by 2050 by continuing to prioritize carbon emissions reductions.
Can we see progress?	Report on Scope1, 2, and 3 emissions clearly and publicly, at least annually.
Will it cover all emissions?	Cover all greenhouse gases by using CO2e equivalencies.
Is it just offsetting?	Use valid credits and sinks to balance hardest-to-abate emissions and demonstrate that they do not undermine social justice or harm biodiversity.

7. Strategies for Reducing Emissions

Planning for ambitious reductions in greenhouse gas emissions for an institution such as the ELCIC can be a daunting task. To be sure, any institution has “low hanging fruit” that should be addressed first: for example, reducing travel by using virtual meetings when appropriate, or changing printer defaults from single-sided to double-sided. These actions may come with some cost savings. However, these typically can only address a small percentage of overall emissions. The task of achieving significant GHG emissions reductions involves careful and intentional planning, as well as dedicating significant funds towards emissions reductions actions.

The best practice for achieving emissions reductions follows this general strategy:

- a. Reduce consumption;
- b. Increase efficiency;
- c. Substitute fossil fuel-derived energy with renewable energy;
- d. Neutralize remaining emissions.¹²

Often, reducing emissions has additional benefits, including cost-savings and healthy stewardship. Additional information on these strategies is available in Appendix 7: “Pathways to Net Zero Emissions.”

¹² This strategy is adapted from the “RED” strategy proposed by Dr. E. Bibeau, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Manitoba. RED stands for Renewable energy; Efficiency; and Demand reduction (to be followed in reverse order).

A GHG Inventory Calculator, such as the one in Appendix 5, is crucial prior to implementing this strategy. The GHG Inventory Calculator shows which activities are large contributors to the GHG emissions of an institution, and which are minor or insignificant contributors. For example, reducing electricity consumption may have a significant impact on a congregation in a higher-carbon electricity market such as Alberta, Saskatchewan, or Nova Scotia, but may have little or negligible impact on GHG emissions in a lower-carbon electricity market such as BC, Manitoba or Quebec.

a. Reducing consumption

Reducing consumption involves activities and policies that reduce the consumption or waste of fossil fuels. Often, these activities are low-cost, and may provide cost savings. Considering the Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions identified in the GHG Inventory Calculator, opportunities for reducing consumption should be identified according to the categories named above

Many guidelines are available for organizations and faith-based institutions for identifying opportunities for reducing energy consumption. These include:

- Resources available through Faith and the Common Good, available online at <https://www.faithcommongood.org/guides>:
 - *Energy Star Action Workbook for Congregations* (Updated August 2020)
 - *Do-It-Yourself Faith Building Energy Audit Guide* (2018)
- Energy Star Workbook for Small Businesses:
 - https://www.energystar.gov/sites/default/files/tools/Action%20Workbook_Small%20Business_0.pdf

b. Increasing Efficiency

Once consumption has been reduced as much as practical, the second part of the strategy is to move towards increasing energy efficiency or decreasing carbon-intensity. This may involve using technology to decrease the amount of fossil fuels consumed, or the amount of GHG emissions created by other means (i.e. waste sent to landfill). It can be as simple as addressing drafty windows and doors or adding/improving insulation. It may involve investment in a more efficient furnace and/or appliances). Again, considering the Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions identified in the GHG Inventory, opportunities for increasing efficiency should be identified related to heating, electricity consumption, travel, and water and materials consumption.

c. Substituting fossil fuel-derived energy with renewable energy or low-carbon energy

Once options for consumption reduction and increasing efficiency have been implemented, the third component in reducing emissions is to substitute fossil fuel-derived energy with renewable or low-carbon energy. In certain circumstances, replacing fossil-based energy with renewable energy is readily achievable with current technology. In other circumstances, we will be relying on solutions being generated in the broader society.

Renewable energy includes the following:

Electricity: wind, solar, hydro, sustainably harvested biomass; biogas and landfill gas;

Heat: solar, geothermal, heat pumps, sustainably harvested biomass, biogas and landfill gas;

Transportation fuel: renewable electricity, biofuels and hydrogen derived from renewable sources.¹³

Conversion from fossil fuel to renewable energy often requires significant financial capital. For example, installing a photo-voltaic solar array (commonly called “solar panels”) on a church rooftop, or purchasing an electric vehicle over a gasoline-powered vehicle typically requires a significant capital investment, though there may be long-term savings when it comes to avoided energy costs (i.e. a reduced electricity or fuel bill). For a congregation or institution that owns its own equipment, and has good financial resources, this may be a good option to consider. However, many congregations or institutions may not have the ability to convert fossil fuel-based equipment to renewable energy, short of moving, either due to financial limitations or because they do not control that equipment (i.e. renting building space).

In this case, a congregation or institution may consider renewable energy displacement, whereby:

- The congregation or institution (the customer) contracts with a renewable energy retailer for a certain amount of renewable energy (i.e. kilowatt-hours of electricity or cubic meters of natural gas) per month;
- The retailer commits to ensuring that the contracted amount of renewable energy is delivered to the Canadian energy grid;
- Though the customer continues to pay the local utility for electricity or natural gas, and they continue to receive fossil-based electricity or natural gas from that utility, that energy is “displaced” somewhere else on the grid with renewable energy.
- The retailer delivers an annual report to the customer reporting on the emissions saved by renewable energy displacement that year.

¹³ Biofuels and hydrogen, while often called “green fuels,” vary in their environmental impact depending upon how they are produced. Ethanol, for example, is considered renewable, since it is most often produced from grain crops (corn and wheat). However, considering the emissions associated with the production of the feedstock

With renewable energy displacement, a congregation or institution may displace their building's fossil fuel consumption with renewable energy, without pursuing an expensive and technically complicated renewable energy project such as installing a solar array. Instead of the capital cost of renewable energy equipment, the congregation or institution pays a monthly fee for "premium" renewable energy. Financial feasibility will vary from community to community. The leading renewable energy displacement company in Canada is Bullfrog Power. Details related to renewable energy displacement may be found on the [Bullfrog Power website](#).

d. Neutralizing Remaining Emissions

Once the practical options of the first three strategies are fully implemented, a new GHG inventory is performed to calculate the remainder of the GHG emissions that still must be neutralized or offset. There are two broad categories of carbon offsets:

- a) Domestic carbon offsets.
- b) International carbon offsets.

Domestic and International carbon offsets essentially function in the same way. A party implements a project that reduces GHG emissions or fixes carbon, which creates the opportunity for a carbon credit. The party then registers these offsets with a credible offset vendor, who sells them. When a party purchases these offsets, they basically purchase the right to claim the offsets as their own emissions reduction. Carbon offsets are a way to create a financial incentive for projects that reduce emissions. Domestic carbon offsets involve projects that reduce emissions in Canada, whereas international carbon offsets involve projects that reduce emissions outside of Canada.

Not all carbon offsets are equal, and the use of offsets generated significant conversation for the task force. There are many vendors of carbon offsets; some follow strict protocols for quality assurance, social responsibility, and offset registration, while others are much less diligent. Socially speaking, do carbon offset projects respect Indigenous sovereignty, or do they perpetuate colonial systems? Do carbon offsets reward heavy emitters who should be paying for their own emissions reductions? Do carbon offsets have hidden environmental costs? And are these offsets permanent – for example, what measures are taken to ensure that trees that are planted are protected for future generations? Using carbon offsets may send a signal that reducing consumption or substituting energy sources is not urgent.

When evaluating carbon offsets, a good place to start is to ask whether they are registered and verified with a reputable carbon offset registry. For domestic offsets, an example is the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) GHG Clean Projects Registry. For international offsets, one of the most respected registries is the Gold Standard, which is supported by many NGO's including the World Wildlife Foundation and the David Suzuki Foundation.

An excellent guide (though slightly dated) for understanding carbon offsets is [Purchasing Carbon Offsets](#), by the David Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute, 2009. Additional analysis of climate policies is available from:

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC: [IPBES-IPCC Co-Sponsored Workshop Report on Biodiversity](#), Pörtner, H.O., et al. 2021.

Indigenous Climate Action, [Decolonizing Climate Policy in Canada: Report from Phase One](#), 2021.

Recently, the task force learned that the LWF has a CO2 Travel Compensation Policy. A financial compensation amount is calculated for each flight based on CO2 emissions using a [website calculator](#). Compensation funds are used to implement climate justice projects in LWF member churches or to support initiatives in World Service Country programs.¹⁴ The LWF program is neither certified nor a carbon offset program. It invests in its own LWF programming to recognize the GHG emission impact of travel.

An offset plan will demonstrate that the selected offsets will not undermine social justice or harm biodiversity. The ELCIC will need to investigate options for principled and respectful carbon offset and/or ethical investment in green spaces that absorb CO₂. This Offset Plan will need to be reviewed as best practices evolve. Additional information on offsets can be found in Appendix 7 “Pathways for reducing carbon emissions.”

8. Targets

One way to generate focus and action for carbon neutrality by 2050 is to set short-term and long-term targets for reducing the GHG emissions.

Canada’s plan to reach Net-Zero identifies an enhanced Paris Agreement target to reduce emissions by 40-45% from 2005 levels by 2030. The Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, which became law on June 29, 2021, enshrines in legislation Canada’s commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.¹⁵

¹⁴ Information provided by LWF staff.

¹⁵ <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/net-zero-emissions-2050.html>

We recommend using 2019 as the baseline for assessing ELCIC carbon emissions. 2020 and 2021 have been hugely affected by the global pandemic and data from 2019 is much more easily accessible than data from 2005.

Urgency, achievability and ambiti

Recognizing the urgency of the climate crisis, we recommend that the ELCIC national office commit to greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets, relative to 2019 ELCIC emissions, of: 50% by 2030; and 100% by 2050.

Naming a 2030 target for the ELCIC generated significant conversation for the task force, particularly regarding “what is our fair share?” and “what is achievable?” The latest science suggests that reaching the Paris Agreement's temperature goals will require reaching net-zero emissions on the following timelines:

- In scenarios limiting warming to 1.5 degrees C, carbon dioxide (CO₂) needs to reach net-zero between 2044 and 2052, and total GHG emissions must reach net-zero between 2063 and 2068.
- Reaching net zero earlier in the range avoids a risk of temporarily overshooting 1.5 degrees C. Reaching the top of the range almost guarantees surpassing 1.5 degrees C for some time before it eventually drops down.
- The IPCC [Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C](#) finds that if the world reaches net-zero emissions by 2040, the chance of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees C is considerably higher.¹⁶

By 2025, we anticipate that participants will initiate the process of learning to use the GHG Inventory Calculator, gathering data on 2019 emissions and take first the steps for reducing emissions. Congregations and faith communities are invited to investigate and discern local targets that encourage bold engagement in the journey to carbon neutrality. As people of faith, how ambitious are we willing to be on this journey?

We recommend that the ELCIC update targets in 2030 and develop an Offset Plan to neutralize the GHG emissions that are not expected to be abated, through like-for-like removals exclusively claimed by the ELCIC within the value chain, or through purchases of valid nature-based credits.

¹⁶ IPCC [Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C](#)

9. Situating ELCIC's Climate Action in the Context of Canadian Public Policy

As noted in section 2, Principles of Climate Justice, individual organizations do not become carbon neutral in isolation; the call to sustainable living and carbon neutrality is lived out in partnership and relationship. Public policy is a way of guiding and coordinating community actions among various sectors. Advocacy is a way of lifting up principles and encouraging decision makers to address the big challenge of climate change.

In June 2019, the Parliament of Canada declared a climate emergency. In doing so, they agreed “climate change is a real and urgent crisis” and recognized the imperative that “Canada commit to meeting its national emissions target under the Paris Agreement,” make “deeper reductions in line with the Agreement’s objective of holding global warming below two degrees Celsius” and pursue “efforts to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius.” Action to align Canadian policy with this declaration has been slow, but in December 2020, the federal government introduced a new climate plan, “[A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy](#)” and a strengthened emissions reduction target. Then, in April 2021, the Prime Minister announced that Canada would “will enhance our emissions reduction target under the Paris Agreement—known as a Nationally Determined Contribution—by 40-45% below 2005 levels, by 2030.” In June, “Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act” (Bill C-12), was passed, thereby enshrining Canada’s commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 in law.

Legal requirements set by C-12 include:

- Setting five-year milestone emissions reductions targets starting in 2030, with an interim objective in 2026;
- Establishing climate targets 10 years in advance;
- Creating a framework for detailed climate policy planning and progress reporting;
- Consider the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in climate planning and target-setting; and,
- Conducting a legislative review of the Bill 5 years after its adoption.

Canada’s Climate Accountability Act provides an important framework for our collective climate action. The mandate letters issued to the federal Cabinet by the Prime Minister in December 2021 provide an abundant and significant set of directives that complement this legislation. Of particular note is the mandate given to the Minister of Finance to “ensure budgetary measures are consistent with the Government’s climate goals.”

As it stands, a great deal of work needs to be done, and quickly. Canada’s current climate plan identifies *potential* reductions that would get us to 32 per cent below 2005 emission levels by 2030. The new plan, required from the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change by the end of March 2022, must include additional measures that would reduce emissions to 45 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 to align with Canada’s official target.

To avoid far-reaching, catastrophic consequences, however, the Government of Canada still needs to go further to align our emissions-reduction target with the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement (no more than 1.5 C over pre-industrial levels). Taking into account Canada's historic emissions and our current place among the top ten global emitters, this means a fair share target to reduce national GHG emissions to 60 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030.

The ELCIC and our ecumenical partners have a long history of advocating for climate justice. Congregations and member organizations are also called to work for principled public policy, locally and beyond. In 2021, through our collaboration with the national, faith-based climate justice initiative, [For the Love of Creation](#), we joined with national churches, faith-based justice and international development organizations, Catholic religious orders, and interfaith partners urging the federal government to commit to a fair-share emissions-reduction target and invest in a just transition to a new, green economy that priorities good jobs, ecological health, and the well-being of all. We celebrated the passage of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and will continue to work tirelessly to see that it is operationalized. We also welcomed the doubling of Canadian climate finance and will continue to press for increased support for climate adaptation in the Global South as well as better international finance mechanisms based in fairness and justice. In an effort to amplify this collective effort in advance of the UN climate conference COP26 in November 2021, National Bishop Susan Johnson, Anglican Archbishop Linda Nicholls and Lutheran and Anglican and Lutheran bishops across Canada wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau to “to [call for action](#) from the Canadian government in ensuring that Canada make its fair-share contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the impacts of climate change.”

In recent consultations to inform Canada's new climate plan, Environment and Climate Change Canada identified several sectors in which emissions reductions can and should be achieved: buildings; electricity; heavy industry, including oil and gas; transportation; agriculture and waste; nature-based climate solutions; and, economy-wide.¹⁷ Legislative, policy, regulatory, and budgetary decisions across these—and indeed all—sectors will undoubtedly impact the broader context within which the ELCIC undertakes efforts to achieve carbon neutrality. Achieving carbon neutrality as a individual, a family, a community, or a church requires structural, systems-level changes. Achieving these changes, in turn, requires advocacy. The emissions-reduction work we do locally, as a faith community, and as part of our national church, is inextricably linked to the advocacy work that we do nationally.

¹⁷ See Appendix 7 for additional information on mechanisms through which emissions reductions can be achieved nationally.

These are some targets that have been shared with the federal government on how targets might be achieved.¹⁸

Buildings: Energy efficiency is key to reducing emissions as well as the cost of heating and cooling buildings. Minimum energy efficiency standards should be incorporated into all building codes as well as all new housing and housing renovations being funded through the National Housing Strategy, with particular support for people in low-income and core housing need.

Electricity: The electrification of Canada's energy grid would also serve to significantly reduce emissions. In Canada's energy transition, it is imperative that we avoid the use of "less bad" bridge fuels, such as natural gas, and instead emphasize renewable sources of energy including wind, solar, geothermal, and tidal. Financial assistance should be made available to support the participation of people with low income, as well as those in remote rural and Northern communities, in this transition.

Heavy industry, including oil and gas: Fundamental to reducing emissions is ending all subsidies to the fossil fuel industry, capping emissions from the same, and then cutting these emissions. Of course, a cap only works if it is set at current emissions levels. This seems self-evident, and yet in 2016 as part of negotiations toward the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, the Government of Alberta agreed to cap oil sands emissions at 100 megatonnes annually; over 30 megatonnes above emission levels at the time (and certainly far above levels aligned with any Canadian climate target). To be effective, Canada's emissions cap must correspond to current emissions levels. Moving into the future, emissions must be required to drop consistently and significantly.

Transportation: In order to effectively accelerate the uptake of zero-emissions vehicles in Canada, significant investment in charging infrastructure is essential. Even more important than supporting the electrification of personal transportation, however, is the decarbonization and expansion of accessible public transit systems across the country and investments in active transportation infrastructure, such as designing 15-minute cities in major urban hubs. Investing in free or low-cost accessible public and active transportation would increase uptake and improve equitable access for people with low incomes.

Agriculture and waste: Everyone in Canada relies on farmers to put food on the table, so investing in lower-emission, climate-resilient farming practices supports all of society. Regenerative farming practices like integrated crop-livestock systems, rotational grazing, and cover-cropping all serve to reduce emissions, increase resilience, and contribute to food security.

¹⁸ Source: Citizens for Public Justice submission to the January 2022 Environment and Climate Change Canada Engagement on Canada's 2030 Emission Reduction Plan Survey.

Nature-based climate solutions: Nature-based solutions must be truly “natural.” This means a focus on the preservation of wilderness, especially old-growth forests and other natural ecosystems rich in biodiversity and carbon capture capability, over and above industrial tree plantations and commercial environmental management. It also means allowing already deforested lands to naturally regenerate while implementing legislation to mitigate future deforestation. Indigenous land defenders and water protectors have long called for the protection and sustainable use of the natural environment; respecting Treaty rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples must be foundational to our nature-based climate solutions.

Economy-wide: Addressing the climate emergency requires a massive transition. The Government of Canada can and must simultaneously implement measures to reduce GHG emissions, support workers and communities, and move us towards a decarbonized economy that also addresses existing socioeconomic inequities. This will build resiliency and well-being in Canada and globally.

10. Be Inspired by Youth & Young Adults: DARE to be BRAVE

What are the kids on the block sayin’?

The youth have some DAREs for you, fellow colleagues & co-conspirators with Christ...

That’s right, DAREs! What are these DAREs, you ask?

DARE stands for:

Decolonization

Accountability

Relationships

Engagement

And represents our living, breathing framework for carbon neutrality as climate justice. Within this framework, we challenge the National Church, our Member Churches and every individual Lutheran to help ground our path towards climate justice and carbon neutrality in optimism and care. Concretely achieving carbon neutrality requires us to *dare* - to push ourselves and our communities - to engage within our world differently.

Decolonization

I. Unpacking Decolonization

a. What is decolonization?

Decolonization is not a metaphor. As members of the church, decolonizing means rejecting Terra Nullius and the Doctrine of Discovery as a justification for colonial occupation of land in the name of extractive industries that exacerbate the current climate emergency. An anti-colonial approach to climate justice rejects colonial capitalism, the dispossession of Indigenous peoples off their ancestral lands for corporate extractivism, and embraces the land from a position of right relationships with Indigenous peoples, each other, and ourselves.

b. Why is decolonization important?

Decolonization is important as a refusal to replicate systems of oppression and domination within the green economy and governance system that we are uplifting as the alternative to non-renewable exploitation.

II. Calls to Action (Dares)

A. We dare our National Church to:

Ground our commitment to climate action in decolonizing, in the very literal sense of rejecting the expropriation of Indigenous lands

for resource extraction and upholding Indigenous self-determination on their traditional territories;

B. We dare our Member Churches to:

Look to Indigenous-led climate organizations and local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities for stewardship in action towards carbon neutrality;

C. We dare every Lutheran to:

Learn the traditional names and colonial history of the unceded and treaty lands we occupy and accept our responsibilities and obligations as treaty peoples.

Accountability

I. Unpacking Accountability

a. What is accountability?

Embracing accountability, and not just accounting, means that we recognize our responsibility as high historic greenhouse gas emitters and we commit to acting in accordance with our impact, not just the bare minimum of what we can get away with.

b. Why is accountability important?

Accountability for our past and continued harms allows us to enter into renewed relationships. We cannot reconcile with the harms we have caused to the environment and other people in Canada and in the international community until we have admitted the truth and committed to acting better in the future.

II. Calls to Action

A. We dare our National Church to:

Move beyond the numerical accounting of carbon emissions to accept responsibility for our emissions and seek to balance harm caused by collective climate crisis;

B. We dare our Member Churches:

Take accountability for the specific situation of each church including being more ambitious in certain areas according to capacity and relative impact;

C. We dare every Lutheran to

Integrate faithful accountability for Creation into our daily lives and implement low-carbon strategies in our homes and workplaces.

Relationships

I. Unpacking Relationships

a. What are relationships?

Centering community and relationship building within the climate justice movement is our responsibility and our joy. Our actions hold implications for many others on this shared land and within the global commons.

Through living our faith we are called into good relationships with God's creation - the land, waters, and all living beings.

b. Why are relationships important?

We are not doing this work in a vacuum and we are not alone. Our actions have real life consequences and our emissions reductions cause real life benefits within the global community. It is easier to do good work in good company so we approach this work together.

II. Calls to Action

A. We dare our National Church to:

Encourage diverse collaboration to create interdependent, intersectional and sustainable networks to carry this work forwards;

B. We dare our Member Churches to:

Hold and uplift each other in this work by sharing strategies and ideas, successes and failures, so that we can learn from each other and move forward in a good way;

C. We dare every Lutheran to:

Explore ways we can connect and create new, sustainable relationships with one another, our communities, and the land.

Engagement

I. Unpacking Engagement

a. What is engagement?

Climate change is an intersectional and intergenerational issue so we must engage the solutions from an intersectional and intergenerational perspective. We also engage from a faith-based perspective, knowing that we are a part of God's Creation and that God's Creation is good. We engage from a scientific perspective because we know that faith and

science both work in concert to help us better understand the world around us.

b. Why is engagement important?

Understanding why we are engaging with climate justice movements is important for motivating us through changes that can be challenging. We are being asked to make changes that can be uncomfortable, inconvenient, or just different from what we're used to. But we understand that we are doing this for the wellbeing of ourselves, our neighbours, and generations to come.

II. Calls to Action

A. We dare our National Church to:

Guide our climate justice work with faithful and theological reflection that incorporates a scientific perspective;

B. We dare our Member Churches to:

Reflect on what resilience looks like within our churches so that we can create sustainable movements towards reduced emissions within the day to day operations of our ministry;

C. We dare every Lutheran to:

Personally reflect on why and how we do this work and ground our actions in the knowledge that we are making a safer environment for our kids and grandkids.

The work ahead might be challenging while also enabling us to explore concepts that are new to us. To accept these DAREs we must be BRAVE:

Bold

Reciprocal

Action oriented

Vocal

Empathetic

We are blessed to do this good work together. Thank you for walking with us and we look forward to journeying together.

11. Recommendations

1. That the ELCIC seeks to be carbon neutral by 2050.
The ELCIC will have achieved “Carbon neutrality” (Net Zero) when ELCIC member organizations (national church, synods, congregations, and faith communities) have minimized greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that are within their sphere of control and neutralized remaining emissions by like-for-like removals.
2. That the ELCIC commits to greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets, relative to 2019 ELCIC emissions, of: 50%, by 2030 and 100% by 2050.
3. That the ELCIC implement a Framework for Carbon Reduction to achieve its GHG emissions reduction targets. Under this framework, the ELCIC’s GHG emissions would be measured on a regular basis; short-term, medium-term, and long-term plans would be created to support the long-term target; and systems of accountability and reporting would be set in place to review progress towards this target and make course-corrections along the way. (Detailed recommendations on a potential structure for this framework are found in Appendix 6: “Framework for Carbon Reduction.”)
4. That the ELCIC national church be asked to:
 - a. Model best practices for achieving emission reduction targets.
 - b. Develop and promote a GHG Inventory Calculator for use across the church. (A “beta” version of this calculator is included as a spreadsheet in this report.)
 - c. Use the GHG Inventory Calculator to report annually on emissions and monitor progress toward meeting targets.
 - d. Invite and encourage congregations, faith communities, and synods on the journey to carbon neutrality and commit to the GHG reduction targets.
 - e. Gather GHG emission data from congregations and member organizations.
 - f. Investigate options for principled and respectful carbon offset and/or ethical investment in green spaces that absorb CO₂.
 - g. Continue to advocate for Government of Canada to carry out or exceed its climate change commitments and to make appropriate assistance, information and enhancements in its policy
 - h. Be in conversation with partners to learn lessons that might be applied to the ELCIC’s own emissions reduction initiative. Partners active in this work include: the Lutheran World Federation, the Anglican Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada (Faithful Footprints initiative) and Citizens for Public Justice.
 - i. Share stories of best practices and innovations from across the church. Lift up useful resources for seeking climate justice
 - j. Establish a project implementation team.

- k. Work with synods to provide leaders to animate climate justice work and encourage congregational participation.
 - l. Review and strengthen ELCIC investment policy to ensure ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) investing.
 - m. Continue to advocate for effective climate policy and structural change that supports faith communities in their climate neutrality goals.
 - n. In 2030, review and revise the ELCIC's Carbon Neutral strategy and targets to take into account recently developments in technology, governance, public policy and emerging context.
5. That congregations, faith communities, and synods be invited to:
 - a. Commit to carbon neutrality and adopt targets related to emissions reductions.
 - b. Model best practices for achieving emissions reductions: reduce consumption, increase efficiency, substitute fossil fuel-derived energy with renewable energy or low-carbon energy, and offset the remainder using a credible offset provider.
 - c. Monitor GHG emissions and report annually to the ELCIC using the GHG Inventory Calculator.
 - d. Make connections with partners in their ministry contexts.
 - e. Share stories and learn from others.
 - f. Continue to engage in prayer, worship, theological reflection, conversation, and learning that promote climate justice and a healthy relationship with the earth.
 6. Advocate for systemic change at federal, provincial, and municipal levels in order to create a policy environment conducive to rapid decarbonization throughout Canadian economic and social structures.
 7. Support each other in addressing climate change through mitigation, adaptation, and transition to carbon neutrality.
 8. Encourage the ELCIC national office, synods, congregations, faith communities and members to embrace the DARE and be BRAVE challenge.

12. Meet the task force¹⁹

Sophos Slessor (they/he); Sophos is our resident young adult and philosopher! They are a current MA student in Kijipuktuk/Halifax and former camper, counsellor and director at Camp Mush-A-Mush. In between existential crises and pitching tents, Sophos plays guitar, cooks, and dances, when provoked.

Jeremy Langner (he/him), M.Div., M.Sc. (Mechanical Engineering); Jeremy is a Shared Ministry Pastor at Spirit of Life Ministry, a shared ministry of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Winnipeg, Manitoba, Treaty One), and Abundant Life Lutheran Church (East St. Paul, Manitoba, Treaty One). Jeremy is a settler Canadian / fifth generation settler. He completed a Bachelor's degree and Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering at University of Manitoba (2006 and 2010). He worked for Manitoba Hydro for seven years as a Renewable Energy Engineer, specializing in bioenergy, solar energy, and energy efficiency. In 2019 Jeremy completed his Master's of Divinity through Luther Seminary (St. Paul, Minnesota) and was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Manitoba Northwestern Ontario Synod.

Louis Giguere (he/him). Like most everyone, I was born and raised in the Center of the Universe. My parents had me baptized with great hope. Here is how it turned out. Hobbies: SCUBA diving and kayaking. Biggest thrills: Running rapids, sometime backwards and/or upside down. Favourite authors: Sophocles, Dostoevsky, Vonnegut. Best trip: Moving to the West Coast. Best holiday: the coast of Turkey, with Sue. Oddest encounters: Charged by a Sea Lion 100-feet deep, sandwiched between a bison and a bear on the short grass prairie; your pick! Oddity: When in danger, a foreign siuoL took charge deep down and did a totally unexpected right 'thing'. Favourite event: my daughters's weddings. Challenges: my sons-in-law. The absolute best: Holding my baby granddaughter. Best memory: Losing my memory (Ha! Ha!). Biggest surprise: Jesus choosing me. Precious moments: Sunday worship. 'Luckiest' moment: A blessed life. Greatest gift: The Holy Spirit giving me the words when I need them most (Luke 12). Epitaph: "All is not forgiven yet... but Jesus is holding my hand".

Adele Buckley (she/her), M.Sc., Ph.D., D.Sc.(hon); physicist, engineer(aerospace) and environmental scientist. Advent Lutheran, Toronto. Board Member, Past Chair of Canadian Pugwash; member of international Pugwash Council. Founding partner of Sciex, developer and manufacturer of mass spectrometry systems; formerly V.P. Solarchem Environmental Systems, UVB systems for removal of environmental contaminants in water; formerly V.P. Ontario Centre for Environmental Technology Advancement; environmental technology verification; advising environmental technology entrepreneurs.

¹⁹ New for 2023: Sophos Slessor and Karri Munn-Venn concluded work with the task force in June 2022.

Karri Munn-Venn (she/her) is the Senior Policy Analyst at Citizens for Public Justice, a national organization of members inspired by faith to act for justice in Canadian public policy. She coordinates CPJ's annual faith-in-action campaign, Give it up for the Earth! and convenes the Advocacy Group of For the Love of Creation. Karri edited two books: *Living Ecological Justice* (2013) and *Living Justice* (2011); and was the founding Coordinator of Dignity for All: The Campaign for a Poverty-Free Canada. Prior to joining CPJ in 2008, Karri worked in the international development community. She has an M.A. from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (Carleton University) and an Honours B.A. in International Studies/Political Science from York University. Karri is also a wool farmer at Leystone Farms located on traditional Algonquin territory in west Quebec where she lives with her husband and three kids.

Paul Gehrs (he/him) serves as Assistant to the Bishop, Justice and Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, at the ELCIC national office. He lives on Treaty One Territory and the Homeland of the Métis Nation in Winnipeg, MB. He is an ELCIC pastor.

We would like to thank the ELCIC for the opportunity to be part of this task force.

January 2022. This proposed agreement has been authorized for further consideration across our churches by elected leaders in the Moravian Church in Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada. For additional information about this document, contact

- Rev. Paul Gehrs, pgehrs@elcic.ca, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
- Rev. Canon Dr. Scott Sharman, ssharman@national.anglican.ca, Anglican Church of Canada
- Rev. James Lavoy, jlavoy@gmail.com, Moravian Church in Canada



**Moravian Church
in Canada**



The Anglican Church of Canada

One Flock, One Shepherd: Lutherans, Anglicans, and Moravians — Called to Walk Together in Full Communion

Introduction

1. In John 17, Jesus, the Good Shepherd of the faith, prays that all those who believe in the Gospel will be completely one. By so praying, he teaches those who follow in his way that it is through the witness of their diversity in unity, and unity in diversity, that the world may come to know God's love more deeply, and to perceive Christ's message of reconciliation and peace more visibly. In recent decades, many churches have begun to see renewed signs of the fulfillment of Jesus' words as they unite in common witness and loving service in response to the joys, hopes, challenges, and needs of local, regional, and global communities.

2. The Moravian, Lutheran, and Anglican traditions are each historic communities of faith in Jesus Christ which have their roots in the ancient common tradition of the apostolic Church. They were also each shaped in many ways by the reforming impulses of 15th and 16th century Europe. At various times in their early histories, they found important points of contact and collaboration. The proto-reformers John Wycliffe and Jan Hus had many similar convictions about the need to root out corruption in the Church and renew its evangelistic witness, and they would mutually impact later reform movements in the British Isles, Bohemian lands, and elsewhere. The work of both figures would influence the thought of a young Martin Luther, who would carry it further. Luther saw the early Moravian Brethren as close colleagues, and there was a considerable exchange of ideas and support between both groups in the 16th and 17th centuries. Under persecution, Moravians would later seek refuge in reformation-era England, and the Church of England of that time undertook several campaigns to provide these exiled Moravian communities with ecclesial and material support as recognized protestant-episcopal siblings in Christ. Other interesting intersections between the three churches would occur in subsequent centuries and up to the present.

3. Today, Moravians, Lutherans, and Anglicans find themselves as neighbours in various parts of their respective global communions. The largest concentrations of the three are in Tanzania, South Africa, parts of Central America, England, and North America. In Canada, the Moravian Church in North America, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Anglican Church of Canada have congregations that live and minister alongside of one another in the greater Edmonton area, the greater Calgary area, West Toronto, and the east coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. Local ministry collaborations have developed between these communities to varying extents and degrees, and increasingly so in recent years.

4. These emerging grassroots connections, along with a growing sense of the need for churches to walk faithfully together as disciples into an uncertain future, have raised to our shared ecumenical consciousness a call to seek full communion and deeper ministry partnerships together according to the prayer of our common Savior.

5. We do not hear this call alone. In several places in recent decades, the Lutheran, Moravian, and Anglican traditions have already found ways to enhance and formalise their relationships as a result of several decades of thorough dialogue on key theological issues. The 1995 *Fetter Lane Common Statement* enabled the Church of England and the Moravian Church in Great Britain to mutually recognize one another as churches holding the apostolic faith, and to formally covenant together to share in sacramental life and common mission and witness as fully as possible.¹ In 1999, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America established a relationship of full communion with the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church in North America through the declaration *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*.² These provinces of the Moravian Church also came into a full communion partnership with the US-based Episcopal Church through the affirmation of *Finding Our Delight in the Lord* in 2011.³

6. The Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada have been in full communion since 2001 through the *Waterloo Declaration*.⁴ Since that time, the two churches have grown closer together and pursued an increased sharing of common life, witness, and ministry at all levels. In 2019, the two *Waterloo* churches were able to take further steps with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the US-based Episcopal Church, expanding their relationships into a cross-border full communion partnership that has since come to be known as *Churches Beyond Borders*.⁵ This cross-continental Anglican-Lutheran relationship continues to enlarge the horizons of ecumenical imagination, including the possibility of Canadian Anglicans and Lutherans deepening connections with the full communion partners of our American Lutheran and Episcopal friends. In Canada, it is the same Northern Province of the Moravian Church in North America which has oversight, through a Canadian District, for the Moravian congregations that live and minister here.

7. Commitment 9 of the *Waterloo Declaration* calls on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada to draw on their full communion relationship as a basis to “continue to work together for the full visible unity of the Church of God.” This ecumenical commitment is consistent with Moravian convictions about the centrality of seeking the unity of the Church as found in the foundational document known as *The Ground of Unity*.⁶ In a spirit of thanksgiving for what God has already accomplished in each of our churches in drawing us towards this vision of unity, and with confidence and hope for what God has prepared for the whole Church, we believe it is time to take another step along the path where our One Shepherd desires to lead us – into a future of communion that becomes ever more full.

8. Therefore, we, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Moravian Church in North America proceed to state the following acknowledgments, affirmations, declarations, commitments, and vision.

1 “The Fetter Lane Common Statement,” in *Anglican-Moravian Conversations* (Church House Publishing, 1996).

2 “Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion” (1999), accessible at:
http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Following_Our_Shepherd_To_Full_Communion.pdf

3 “Finding Our Delight in the Lord” (2011), accessible at:
https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/07/eir_finding_our_delight_official_text.pdf

4 “Called to Common Mission: The Waterloo Declaration,” accessible at:
https://www.anglicanlutheran.ca/wp-content/uploads/waterloo_declaration.pdf

5 “Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion,” accessible at:
<https://gs2019.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Memorandum-of-Mutual-Recognition-JALC-LECC-Rev.-Feb-26-2019.pdf>

6 *The Ground of Unity*, accessible at:
<https://www.moravian.org/bcm/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/05/New-Ground-of-the-Unity-Layout-2020-85x11.pdf>

Acknowledgments

9. Building upon on the foundations of existing covenants and full communion agreements between the Church of England, the Moravian Church in Great Britain, The Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Moravian Church in North America, and drawing on the content of these and other international dialogue texts between our three churches, we acknowledge the following:

- a. That in each church the Word of God is preached and looked to as containing all things necessary for our salvation, even as our respective reception of the Gospel always requires renewal and reform.⁷
- b. That our churches share in the common confession of the apostolic faith as summarized in the Nicene Creed and witnessed to in our subsequent foundation and confessional texts.⁸
- c. That the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord/Holy Communion are carried out in each church in manners that stand in accordance with the institution of the Lord Jesus.⁹
- d. That the whole people of God are called to participate in God's mission.¹⁰
- e. That personal, collegial, and communal oversight (episcopate) is embodied and exercised in our three churches in a variety of forms; and that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in each of our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission, and ministry.¹¹
- f. That one another's ordained ministries are given by God as instruments of divine grace and as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also Christ's commission through his Body the Church; and that these ministries are the gifts of God's Spirit to equip the whole people of God for the work of ministry.¹²

Affirmations

10. In the light of the above acknowledgments, we make the following affirmations:

- a. All three churches affirm one another's baptisms as sacramental signs of the washing away of sins and incorporation into the One Body of Christ.
- b. We affirm one another's celebrations of Holy Communion as the means of remembrance and participation in Christ and a sharing in the grace of his life, death, and resurrection.
- c. We affirm one another's expressions of the ministry of all the baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit, seeing this as the fundamental basis of the Church's witness and mission. We give thanks for the diverse ways that different kinds of lay ministries build up the Body of Christ in each of our respective traditions.

7 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28a, 55a.ii; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, I.1, IV.B.1; TEC Resolution 2003-A087, Explanation 3.

8 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28b-c, f, g-h, 55a.iii-iv; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, I.1; TEC Resolution 2003-A087, Explanation 3.

9 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28d-e, 55a.ii; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, I.2, IV.B.3; TEC Resolution 2003-A087, Explanation 3.

10 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28i; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, IV.C.3; *Finding Our Delight in the Lord*, 14-15.

11 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28j, 34-48, 55a.vi-vii; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, I.3, IV.C.3; *Finding Our Delight in the Lord*, 20-29).

12 *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, 28i, 29-31; *Following Our Shepherd into Full Communion*, IV.C.1-3; *Finding Our Delight in the Lord*, 16-19).

d. The Anglican Church of Canada affirms the full authenticity of the ordained ministries of bishops and presbyters/pastors presently existing within the Moravian Church in North America. We recognise its presbyters as priests and pastors in the Church of God, ordained to ministries of Word and Sacrament. We recognise its bishops as signs of continuity and unity in apostolic faith, ordained for life service to a ministry of episcopate and the historic episcopate on behalf of regional and local churches within their church and for the whole Church of God.

e. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada affirms the full authenticity of the ordained ministries of bishops and presbyters/pastors presently existing within the Moravian Church in North America. We recognise its presbyters as priests and pastors in the Church of God, ordained to ministries of Word and Sacrament. We recognise its bishops as signs of continuity and unity in apostolic faith, ordained for life service to a ministry of episcopate and the historic episcopate on behalf of regional and local churches within their church and for the whole Church of God.

f. The Moravian Church in North America affirms the full authenticity of the ordained ministries of bishops and presbyters/pastors presently existing within the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. We recognise their priests and pastors as priests and pastors in the Church of God, ordained to ministries of Word and Sacrament. We recognise their bishops as signs of continuity and unity in apostolic faith, ordained for life service to a ministry of episcopate and the historic episcopate over the jurisdictional areas of the Anglican Church of Canada and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in which they preside and for the whole Church of God.¹³

g. All three churches affirm one another's expressions of diaconal ministry as a sign of the Church's vocation to Christlike servanthood and the role of prophetic witness in the world and to the Church. We thus understand that deacons of each of the churches are ordained for service to their communities as a distinct vocation in ministry.¹⁴

Declaration

11. On the basis of these acknowledgments and affirmations, we joyfully declare the Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Moravian Church in North America to be in full communion, and extend to one another the requisite reciprocity and relationship which this entails.

Commitments

12. As churches in full communion, we now commit ourselves:

a. To welcome members of our churches to receive as appropriate the pastoral and sacramental ministrations of one another's churches with complete hospitality.

13 Moravian bishops do not have geographically defined episcopal jurisdictions in the way that Lutheran and Anglican bishops do. In that sense, every Moravian bishop is a bishop for the entirety of the global communion ("the worldwide Moravian Unity"). This means that not every region where there are Moravian congregations would have a bishop who is proximately resident in that area. In practice, however, the Moravian communities in a particular place would typically have a pastoral relationship with a particular bishop or bishops, and would be visited by that bishop or bishops as needs and circumstances in the local context call for.

14 Diaconal ministry is an area where there is diversity among us. For example, the Anglican and Lutheran churches understand diaconal ministry as a ministry of the Word and service, whereas Moravian deacons are ordained to preside in a ministry of Word and Sacrament. Lutherans ordain pastors directly, and normally ordain deacons to permanent offices of that distinct ministry. Moravians and Anglicans retain the practice of sequential ordination to the diaconate prior to ordination to the presbyterate. Some Anglicans deacons are ordained to permanent offices of that distinct ministry. While these kinds of diversity of understanding and practice entail that a complete transferability of diaconal ministers and ministries between the three churches is not possible at this time, deacons of each church could and should still be invited by appropriate authorities to share those many aspects of their ministries and gifts within the other partner churches according to the full extent that existing provisions in those other churches allow.

- b. To welcome persons ordained in any of our churches to the office of presbyter/priest/pastor to serve, by invitation of the local ordinary and in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination.
- c. To work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry, and with collaboration in diakonia to the fullest extent possible in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force.
- d. To invite one another's bishops to attend and participate as appropriate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of bishops as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church, and, as far as practically possible, to invite the members and clergy of one another's churches to attend and participate as appropriate in the ordination services of each church.
- e. To consult with one another regarding developments in our understanding of the ministry of all the baptized.
- f. To encourage as appropriate consultation and collaboration among members of our churches at all levels and to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and information on theological, pastoral, and mission matters.
- g. To establish a Trilateral Commission, with appropriate Lutheran, Anglican, Moravian and Indigenous membership, to nurture our growth in communion, to coordinate the implementation of this Declaration, and to report to the decision-making bodies of each of our churches.¹⁵
- h. To continue to work together for the full visible unity of the whole Church of God.

Vision

13. In addition to these specific areas of commitment, we also raise the following elements of a future vision of the fruits of full communion.

- a. In consultation and relationship with Indigenous expressions of faith in Jesus and the Gospel, to draw from the strength of our partnership and rededicate our churches to the ongoing responsibility of seeking further healing and reparation in relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples in wider Canadian society, and to the related work of systemic decolonisation in the three churches.
- b. To recognize and respond to the way that the reconciliation of past separations between churches is both interconnected with and a calling to deeper commitment in the wider mending of relationships across other lines of human division, exclusion, and hostility.
- c. To embrace together a common effort to promote transformative discipleship that empowers our members to join courageously and faithfully in God's transforming mission for the life of the world.
- d. To encourage the formulation of local ministry covenants for common work in mission and ministry between trios of Moravian, Lutheran, and Anglican congregations in geographically proximate places.
- e. To endeavor to undertake no new initiative in ministry on our own without first exploring ways that it could be done more faithfully together in at least a tripartite or bipartite partnership.

¹⁵ The existing Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission (JALC) is replaced the Trilateral Commission.

Conclusion

14. We rejoice in our Declaration as an expression of the visible unity of our churches in the one Body of Christ. We are ready to be co-workers with God in whatever tasks of mission serve the Gospel and the Ministry of Reconciliation. We give glory to God for the gift of unity already ours in Christ, and we pray for the fuller realisation of this gift in the entire Church.¹⁶

¹⁶ Although not directly indicated throughout, numerous elements of this declaration explicitly draw upon forms and phrasing from the 2001 *Waterloo Declaration*. This is done intentionally create a family resemblance between both agreements, and to witness to their continuity.

**ELCIC Task Force Addressing Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia
Report to ELCIC Special Convention at Assembly 2023
(As Recommended by NCC - March 2023)**

Preamble for 2023

This report was shared at the 2022 ELCIC National Convention. It was updated and re-submitted to the National Church Council (NCC) in March 2023. The changes to the report begin at the bottom of page 4. In March 2022, NCC asked the task force to review its final three recommendations. After further deliberation and consultation with NCC representatives, the task force provides a new “recommendation 9” as an alternative to the original recommendations 9, 10 and 11.

Background and Process:

The formation of the Task Force addressing Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia within the ELCIC came about through a motion passed at the 2019 National Convention. This task force is working alongside two other Task Forces: one addressing Ableism, and the other addressing Racism and White Supremacy.

This task force was populated by one person from each synod and is comprised of persons who identify as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community or other identities not listed but known within the community from across this church. The members of the task force are: Heather Werboweski (they/them), Rev. Lindsey Jorgensen-Skakum (they/them) [Co-chair], Margot Reiners (they/she), Rev. Steve Hoffard (he/him) [Co-chair], Brent Langenberger (he/him). We are also joined and supported by national staff member Rev. Paul Gehrs (he/him).

Our first meeting took place in July of 2020.

The Mandate of this task force is to:

- Collect and identify resources to encourage conversation and deeper understanding of concerns, issues, and experiences with Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia across the ELCIC.
- Recommend ways to gather and share stories of people with lived experiences of these realities.
- Name ELCIC policies and practices to candidacy and first call that create barriers to 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples full inclusion.
- Propose to NCC amendments to their task force’s mandate as may be needed to more effectively live out the goals expressed by the national convention.

- Report regularly to NCC and prepare this report for the March 2022 NCC meeting, in preparation for reporting to the 2022 National Convention. The formal report may include recommendations for convention action and for future work.

To begin our work together as a Task Force we spent some time intentionally visioning and in Strategic planning to carry out this mandate.

While we trusted in the diversity of our experiences across our lives and our Synods to inform our work, we felt none of us could speak to the vast experiences of those from across the ELCIC presently and those who have experienced homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia within its previous governing bodies, and so one of our first tasks from within the mandate has been to formally hold space for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals to share their experiences and stories with us.

As many people on this taskforce didn't personally experience some of the more troubling years of being members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community when it wasn't possible to be publicly out – we realized we needed to hear from those who had survived those times.

So, we reached out to those who had attended National or synodical conventions where the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities place within the ELCIC was argued about or voted on, those who were put through disciplinary proceedings for coming out or being outted, and those who are members of the Queer community who led congregations who were disciplined.

As a committee, we also realized in listening to these stories we needed to hear as many queer experiences as possible with an emphasis on those further on the margins of the ELCIC such as:

- Those who are trans, two-spirited, gender queer, or non-binary.
- polyamorous or ethically non-monogamous
- asexual, pansexual,
- and those who are still closeted

Using a zoom interview format, we took the time to hear and hold the stories of 6 individuals who helped us further form the response to our mandate.

We then launched a jot form in conjunction with a video invite from the task force to hold space for the diversity of voices, stories, and experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples across the ELCIC who were willing to share with us. We distributed this invitation as widely as possible in the ELCIC and on social media.

We have followed up with some of the responses where they indicated they were willing to be contacted and will be continuing to hear their stories in whatever format they are most comfortable in sharing with us.

We have been reviewing and reflecting on all the voices we have heard from and have used them as the basis of our recommendations at the end of this report.

We also began to identify and review existing ELCIC policies and documents to identify wording and other systemic problems which might prevent full equity and inclusion for 2SLGBTQIA+ in the ELCIC, noting that what we uncover may also exclude other equity seeking communities and individuals.

We also noted that the ELCIC Social Statement on Human Sexuality (approved July 15, 2011) is now well over 10 years old and is in need of review.

Our plan is to continue to hear the stories of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and to identify and review ELCIC policy and documents until the National Convention in July 2022 in anticipation that this work will need to continue beyond the assembly and we don't want to lose momentum.

We want to thank those members and allies who have shared their stories and experiences and we are grateful for the work that has been done in the past. We would also like to thank the ELCIC for the opportunity to continue this work on its behalf.

What are we ready to recommend now?

1. Recognizing there is still work to be done, we recommend that the ELCIC appoint a task force to continue the work of addressing Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in the ELCIC. The task force will report and be accountable to NCC and will report to the National Convention in 2025. We recommend that the task force continues with a focus on the following:
 - a. Find ways to support and encourage the ELCIC to promote a healthy understanding of sexuality and consent.
 - b. Review of policies and documents for language and other systemic problems that might cause harm or inequity to 2SLGBTQIA+ folx by ensuring gender neutral language and attempting to view policies and documents through a non hetero-normative lens.
 - c. Explore options for recommending how to provide reparation for 2SLGBTQIA+ folx who have been harmed by the ELCIC in the past.
 - d. Research and recommend educational resources for use in the ELCIC.
 - e. Continue to hear and listen to the stories and experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ persons in the ELCIC.
2. We recommend an increased usage of pronouns.
 - a. Encourage all members of ELCIC to include pronouns wherever people are identified (ex. in the email signatures, name tags, agendas, registrations forms, meetings and virtual meeting screens.)

- b. Encourage all members to ensure they are incorporating their pronouns into their digital signatures. This step will normalize the use of pronouns and allow members of congregations to engage in conversation.
 - c. Encourage the education of all members on the importance of pronoun usage and acknowledgement. Reconciling works provides a helpful resource for education. <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/pronouns-matter-helpful-suggestions/>
- 3. We recommend we increase our visibility as an affirming church by encouraging congregations, ministry areas, and synods to participate in local pride parades, celebrations and events as well as other local queer events throughout the year.
- 4. We recommend that a public statement of apology to 2SLGBTQIA+ folx that have been harmed by the ELCIC be presented.
- 5. We recommend the creation of a naming liturgy service to publicly affirm and celebrate transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse members of the ELCIC.
- 6. We recommend that the ELCIC encourage ongoing sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) training.
 - a. Recommend that the ELCIC implement ongoing certified SOGIE training for national staff, National Church Council, and national committees. Curriculum should address privilege, power structures and movement towards more equitable representation at ELCIC decision making and governance tables. Training should happen at least every three years.
 - b. Recommend to Synods, Seminaries and Schools that all rostered leaders, Synod Councils, Synod Committees, Board members, employees, candidates for ordination and students participate in ongoing certified SOGIE training at least every three years.
 - c. Recommend SOGIE training for congregational councils, committees, leaders, and all employees of the local congregations. Encourage critical conversation and intentional formation on how faith communities can better confront homophobia, biphobia and transphobia at the congregational level.
- 7. We recommend for the national office to provide staffing with dedicated responsibilities for diversity, equity and inclusion.
- 8. We encourage congregations in the ELCIC to begin a “Reconciling in Christ” process. <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/ric/aboutric/>

[New for the 2023 report]

- 9. We encourage the ELCIC to create national resources which would support listening, safe conversations, and discernment at all levels of the church around healthy, consensual relationships, including ethical non-monogamous relationships.”



March 2023

National Church Council Meeting Highlights

The ELCIC's National Church Council (NCC) met March 3–5, 2023. The council members met via a hybrid model with many attending in person in Winnipeg, MB as they were able, and several joining the meeting via the online platform.

The following are just a few highlights from the recent council meeting. For specific wording on motions and additional actions from the meeting, please view the draft minutes which will be available online at <http://elcic.ca/National-Church-Council/National-Church-Council-Minutes.cfm>.

NCC meetings open and close with worship. Over the course of their term, NCC members take turns with leading worship and devotions. This meeting's worship team was from the Synod of Alberta and the Territories. Kathleen Jensen and Rev. Kevin Powell led worship and prayers throughout the meeting. NCC members remarked on how much they appreciated their "beautiful prayers and beautiful delivery."

Anti-Racism Training

A half day of the agenda was devoted to Anti-Racism Training, led by Carmen Ramirez, Assistant to the Bishop for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Brian Mitchell-Walker, co-workshop facilitator. NCC members were asked to prepare in advance for the session by completing a racial identity autobiography and power analysis worksheet, as well as ensure they were familiar with terms and definitions to fully engage in the training. The session focused on different experiences of racial injustice among people who are racialized as Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) and working on understanding the impact of race. As well, NCC members worked on: deepening their understanding of becoming an intercultural church and how this connects with racial justice; gathering a shared language for discussing racial justice in the ELCIC; hearing contemporary examples of manifestations of racism in the Canadian context; and reflecting theologically on racial justice and connecting this awareness of racial justice with scripture and the gospel.

Assembly 2023 and the 2023 ELCIC Special Convention

NCC members were updated on Assembly 2023, a joint gathering of the ELCIC and Anglican Church of Canada in Calgary, Alberta at the University of Calgary. This gathering will also include the 2023 ELCIC Special Convention. NCC reviewed the draft agenda and received an update on worship, joint time with the Anglicans, as well as information on convention logistics.

In preparation for the 2023 ELCIC Special Convention, which will be a time of business for ELCIC delegates, NCC received updated reports from several task forces that will be presented to the convention, including: Task Force on Carbon Neutrality, Task Force on Addressing Ableism, Task Force on Addressing Racism, White Supremacy and Racial Injustice, and the Task Force on Addressing Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. The Assembly 2023 will also include discussions and action on peace and justice in Palestine and Israel, and an affirmation of a new relationship between Lutherans, Anglicans and Moravians.

NCC noted while at times there were difficult and challenging conversations that took place over their three days of meetings, the council upholds the spirit of their covenant that guides their discussion and relationship with one another—lifting up open and honest conversation, a safe space, respect for one another, and building an environment of trust.

Other action at this NCC meeting included:

Finance Report

NCC members approved recommendations from the Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF), as well as the 2023 Budget.

Praema Fund Approval

NCC approved a request from the Officers to disburse \$9,872 from the Praema fund to Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR)'s response to the Türkiye/Syria earthquake appeal. This endowment fund was established in 2000 from a generous donation that enables the disbursement of income from the fund towards programs and ministries of the ELCIC that are not funded through regular budgets, with special consideration being given to world missions, relief of hunger and disaster relief. Praema is a phonetic rendering of the word in the Telugu language, the predominant language of the Andhra province of India, that means love.

The next meeting of NCC will take place just prior to Assembly 2023 and the 2023 ELCIC Special Convention on June 28, 2023.