

The 12th Biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was held Aug. 15-19, 2011, at the Marriott World Center in Orlando, Fla. The assembly included 1,025 voting members. The theme was "Freed in Christ to Serve."

Summary of Actions

ELCA Malaria Campaign officially launched

The assembly officially launched the ELCA Malaria Campaign under the auspices of ELCA World Hunger. Along with our full communion partners, ELCA members will join with Lutheran churches in Africa to work toward a malaria-free future. A goal of the campaign is to raise \$15 million over a four-year period. The assembly acknowledged that gifts to the ELCA Malaria Campaign are not intended to replace gifts to ELCA World Hunger.

"Genetics, Faith and Responsibility" social statement adopted

The assembly adopted "Genetics, Faith and Responsibility," a social statement on genetics. The statement, described as the first by a North American church, develops a comprehensive ethical framework for addressing advancements in medical and agricultural research. It is the 11th social statement of the ELCA.

Review process for social statements adopted

The assembly called for a review process of current procedures for the development and adoption of social statements. No new social statements will be considered until a review process has been completed and shared with the ELCA Church Council in the fall of 2012, followed by a report to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly. During this time, the process for developing the criminal justice social statement and the justice for woman social statement will continue.

Living into the Future Together implementing resolutions adopted

There were resolutions put forth by the ELCA Church Council and the Living into the Future task force, designed to set a course for the ELCA's future and to consider this church's structure and relationships.

- Churchwide Assemblies will transition from a biennial to a triennial cycle, starting after the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.
- The assembly also approved recommendations that focus on strengthening connections within and across the expressions and partner ministries of this church.
- Voting members of the ELCA Church Council shall include the four churchwide officers and the chair of the ELCA Conference of Bishops. Thirty-three members will continue to be nominated by their synods; the council may not exceed 45 members. Additional members may be nominated by the Church Council to ensure diversity and expertise. All will continue to be elected by the Churchwide Assembly.
- The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit of the churchwide organization will review a recommendation for ministry with mentally and physically "handi-capable" children and adults.
- The assembly invited members of the ELCA to initiate collaborative work by congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, institutions of the church and others to create and support diverse non-legislative forums and events that bring together leaders

of this church to participate in theological study and reflection, foster leadership development and enhance the interdependence of this church.

- The assembly provided a means to continue the work assigned to the Living into the Future Together task force in collaboration with the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops.

ELCA budget proposals adopted

The assembly approved a 2012 current fund spending authorization of \$61,792,900, and approved a 2012 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$18,500,000. This vote included approving a 2013 current fund income proposal of \$61,939,400, a 2013 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$18,500,000, and authorizing the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

Memorials adopted

The assembly adopted a variety of resolutions to expand multicultural ministry, acknowledge the International Year for People of African Descent and work to prevent bullying, harassment and related violence.

- The assembly supported immigration reform and the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act, which would provide a path for citizenship for undocumented high school graduates.
- The assembly received memorials related to investment for positive change in Palestine, and encouraged members, congregations, synods and agencies of this church to achieve a deeper understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- The assembly also recognized and celebrated Lutheran Campus Ministry and the central role of farmers and ranchers in providing an abundant supply of food and fiber for our nation and the world. The assembly declined to change governing documents that would increase the number of voting members to Synod Assemblies and Churchwide Assemblies who are layperson.

Constitutional amendments adopted

The assembly moved to change ELCA governing documents related to Living into the Future Together, the redesign of the churchwide organization and other matters.

Resolutions from the Reference and Counsel committee

The assembly considered and approved a variety of resolutions on topics ranging from suicide prevention to confronting injustices in immigration, from youth-related matters to mission support.