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Discussed by the Planning Team

**The Churchwide Organization's Function, Form, and Funding:
*Processes and decisions in the months ahead***

This paper describes the host of processes completed, underway or anticipated that have bearing on the churchwide organization's ministries, structure, and budget for the period commencing **February 1, 2004** and beyond. The paper also indicates the specific or estimated dates when critical decisions will be reached that bear on the ministries, structure, and budget. A description of the major intersections of all pertinent processes and decision-making times concludes the material. Throughout the paper the words function and ministries, structure and form, budget and funding are used interchangeably. All dates mentioned in the paper are in bold print for ease of reference.

A word for staff of the churchwide organization

The activities and time line described in this document unquestionably have implications for churchwide staff. The extent of these implications is unknown at this time. Proposals related to churchwide structure and budget for 2004 and beyond are not developed. Until the 2003 Churchwide Assembly acts on a number of matters related to this process and the Church Council in November 2003 acts on the impending proposals, the implications for the structure and organization of the churchwide office remain unknown. This message is to assure you, however, that if a staff reduction occurs as a result of these processes and decisions, Section 16 of the Personnel Policies of the Churchwide Organization is applicable. You are encouraged to read this policy

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Section I
**Current research and activity that bears on the three areas of
function, form, and funding**

A survey instrument of extensive scope that solicits opinions about ministries, structure, and budget of the churchwide organization was sent to all synodical bishops, assistants to bishops, and the Church Council. The same instrument soon will be in the hands of all churchwide staff. Results of this survey will be shared with the planning team at its **August 5, 2003** meeting.

Regional gatherings of bishops and other synodical leaders are being organized at the present time. It appears that the majority of these meetings will occur in **September-November 2003** and before the Church Council meeting on **November 14-16, 2003**. These gatherings (aka synodical/churchwide consultations) will provide an opportunity for discussion about churchwide ministries, structure, and budget in the context of exploring the roles and responsibilities of synods and the churchwide organization in several key ministry areas: outreach, seminaries, colleges/universities, campus ministries, and companion synod relationships. A report of these discussions will be compiled for the Church Council (**November 14-16, 2003**) and the planning team (**November 10, 2003**).

Section II
Function: The mission and ministries of the churchwide organization

The functions of the churchwide organization- its ministries- are delineated in the ELCA Constitution. Appropriately, in the Constitution, there is neither prioritization of these functions nor a full description of outcomes related to these functions.

Consequently, the strategic planning process that began in **December 2001** is addressing priorities, outcomes, and strategies for churchwide ministries.

In **April 2003**, by action of the Church Council, we achieved the first plateau in this planning process. This is a good thing. Every responsible organization should be able to articulate its understanding of its mission, vision, and priorities. To this end, the ELCA now has statements of mission and vision, and the churchwide organization has a description of its priorities for **2004-2012**.

The priorities have taken two primary forms: five strategic directions and four pervasive ways in which the churchwide organization is bound to implement its ministries.

Additionally, the **2002** communications audit and several meetings related to ministry with people living in poverty have contributed important information and possible directions for prioritized, focused, outcome-based churchwide ministries.

Per the communications audit, the implementation proposal to the planning team on **July 15, 2003** calls for focus on three major communication areas plus the matter of staffing

patterns for churchwide communications, with recommendations forthcoming to the Office of the Bishop by **Feb. 1, 2004**.

Core teams and roundtables are under development related to the five strategic directions and mission funding. The purpose of this major section of our planning process is to assemble approximately 210 persons (one third from churchwide staff and two thirds from partners in this church) to develop: outcomes for each direction and mission funding for the 8 year period ending **2012** and within the context of these outcomes a companion set of outcomes for **the 2004-2005 biennium**; measurement indicators for the biennium's outcomes; and identification of existing or needed strategies for implementation of these outcomes.

At this writing, roundtable dates are set for the strategic directions on public church (**Sept. 18-19, 2003 and October 16-17, 2003**), global mission ecumenical affairs (**September 24-25, 2003**), and the mission funding topic (**Oct. 7-8**). All roundtables will be completed by **October 20, 2003**.

The **August 11-17, 2003** Churchwide Assembly will consider actions that pertain to the strategic planning process and evangelism strategy as well as some memorials that pertain to the strategic directions. These actions will either sustain the current processes and content or amend them.

The **Oct. 2-6, 2003** meeting of the Conference of Bishops will include a status report on the processes described above.

The **Nov.10, 2003** meeting of the planning team will include a discussion of the reports from the roundtables and the status of the implementation of the communications audit. Planning will begin to draw together the outcome statements into a coherent, integrated action plan for the churchwide organization.

The **Nov. 14-16, 2003** meeting of the Church Council will include a report on strategic planning that encompasses the activities described above in research, consultations with synods, roundtables, and pertinent actions of the Churchwide Assembly.

There is a convocation for churchwide staff scheduled for **Nov 18, 2003**. We will include a report on the documents produced by the roundtables.

In the period of **mid-November 2003 to Feb 1, 2004**, churchwide staff will begin intra- and inter- unit discussions aimed toward implementation of the strategic directions and mission funding objectives.

A possible additional step in our strategic planning process has arisen in recent conversations with some synodical bishops. It is the idea of a series of two-day consultations between key synodical and churchwide leaders, each consultation focused on one of the strategic directions. The purpose would be to reach a definitive understanding of the future responsibilities of synods and churchwide organization

relative to various facets of each strategic direction. The present thought is that this series of consultations would begin with one focused on the ‘evangelical outreach’ strategic direction in **early spring 2004**.

Section III

Form: The structure and governance of the churchwide organization

On **July 15, 2003** the planning team has its second and concluding discussion of a paper developed by the administrative team on structure and governance. The paper articulates premises and principles whereby structure and governance of the churchwide organization are evaluated. The final version of the paper will be shared with churchwide staff, the Church Council, and Conference of Bishops as background to our study of current structure and governance.

At the **August 11-17, 2003** Churchwide Assembly, the action on the strategic planning process proposes delegation to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Church Council the responsibility to provide “structure in keeping with the mission, vision, and strategic directions of the strategic plan” and to prepare appropriate “constitutional and bylaw amendments for consideration by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly to provide alignment of the churchwide organization with the strategic plan.” On **August 16, 2003**, a closed session luncheon of the Church Council, Conference of Bishops, and cabinet of executives will be held to discuss process and timing relative to the structural and budgetary proposals anticipated to come to the **Nov. 14-16, 2003** Church Council meeting.

A definitive proposal on restructuring of the churchwide organization and certain governance patterns will be completed by the administrative team, approved by the presiding bishop, and delivered to the cabinet of executives at its meeting on **Sept. 15, 2003**. The proposal will rely on the premises/principles paper referenced above, the extensive research completed and underway at present, the strategic plan, budgetary considerations, and actions of the Churchwide Assembly. Immediately following the cabinet meeting, the proposal will be distributed to churchwide staff, Church Council, Conference of Bishops, boards, steering and advisory committees, roundtable participants, and leaders of institutions and agencies of this church.

A convocation for churchwide staff will be held on **Sept. 23, 2003** for a presentation on and discussion of the proposal.

Responses to the proposal are encouraged from all stakeholders. These responses will be delivered to the Church Council for its deliberations. Such responses will need to be received by **October 31, 2003**.

The planning team will discuss the proposal and emerging responses at its meetings scheduled for **Oct. 21 and Nov. 10, 2003**. Likewise, the Conference of Bishops has time on its agenda to consider the proposal and possibly formulate a conference response. Their meeting is scheduled for **Oct. 2-6, 2003**.

The **Nov. 14-16, 2003** meeting of the Church Council will receive the proposal and results of the discussions enumerated above. Its actions will set the course for all remaining steps. The following steps assume favorable action by the council on the proposal.

Members of the planning team are asked to reserve (or change current schedules) so that the week of **Nov.17-21, 2003** is free of external obligations or major in-house meetings. This will enable immediate attention by our leadership group to the implications of actions by the council. On **Nov.18, 2003**, a convocation of churchwide staff is scheduled at which time the report on all council actions pertaining to strategic planning, structure/governance, and budget will be presented.

Currently it is the intention that the restructured organization, including all personnel-related dimensions and governance (where possible), will be significantly advanced by **Feb 1, 2004**.

In concert with the action proposed for consideration by the **2003** Churchwide Assembly as quoted above, work will commence on pertinent constitutional and bylaw amendments for consideration by the **2005** Churchwide Assembly.

Section IV **Funding: The budget of the churchwide organization**

Discussion of development of the **2004** current operating budget is presently underway in planning team meetings. The process for this discussion was developed by an *ad hoc* committee of the team. These discussions focus on familiarity with each unit's current spending plan, criteria for making budgetary decisions, and compensation of churchwide staff. For your reference, the dates of these discussions are **June 10, July 15, and August 5, 2003**.

The closed session discussion on **August 16, 2003** at the Churchwide Assembly will include discussion of the timing issues related to the churchwide budget. The assembly itself will consider in the actions proposed on the strategic plan, evangelism strategy, and **2004-2005** budget the delegation of responsibility to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Church Council for preparation and adoption respectively of the churchwide budget aligned with the mission, vision, and strategic directions of the strategic plan.

Obviously the preparation of the **2004** budget proposal by the Office of the Bishop is complicated by not knowing the outcome of the council's actions on structure. Therefore two budget proposals will be developed, one constructed on the basis of the current structure and one on the restructured organization. Both, however, will be developed through the converging lenses of the strategic plan, research, planning team discussions on budget development, and synodical/churchwide consultations. The parameters of authority granted by the Churchwide Assembly will be the foundation on which the budget proposals are conceived.

Like the proposal on structure/governance, the budget proposal first will be discussed at the **Sept.15, 2003** meeting of the cabinet of executives. Immediately thereafter it will be disseminated to the same audiences referenced in the distribution of the structure/governance proposal and likewise responses to the proposal will be invited for transmittal to the Church Council. The planning team will discuss the proposal at its **Oct.21 and Nov. 10, 2003** meetings. The Conference of Bishops may choose to respond to the proposal at its **Oct.2-6, 2003** meeting.

The budget proposal in two formats will be presented by the presiding bishop to the Church Council at its **Nov.14-16, 2003** meeting.

The results of the council's action on the budget will be included in the report to churchwide staff on **Nov.18, 2003**.

The budget is effective **Feb.1, 2004**. The budget, in whatever form ultimately adopted by the council, will have a major impact on implementation of the strategic plan.

Section V

Summary of these integrated activities and decision-making intersections

There are several features of this extensive process that merit special note.

First, the process seeks consistently to involve key leadership groups in these three simultaneous enterprises. They are, in no particular order, the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, churchwide staff, Conference of Bishops, other synodical leaders, cabinet/planning team, boards, steering and advisory committees, and representatives of institutions and agencies.

Second, the process is systematic, that is, the process is an interdependent panoply of discussions and proposed actions that form a unified whole.

Third, the process is principled. We seek whenever possible to reach conclusions based on principles rather than on random selection. We also honor responsibilities and authorities granted to the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and Office of the Presiding Bishop.

Here are the key decision-making intersections in this process:

April 2003: Church Council adopted strategic planning material on mission, vision, strategic directions, and implementation principles.

July 2003: Planning team adopts papers on the implementation of the communications audit and premises and principles for evaluating structure and governance, and articulates principles for making budgetary decisions.

August 2003: Planning team renders its advice on the compensation of staff in 2004. The Churchwide Assembly adopts actions pertaining to strategic planning, the evangelism strategy, processes in connection with structure, the budget for the biennium, and memorials or resolutions connected with these topics.

September 15, 2003: The Office of the Bishop disseminates proposals on structure, governance, and the 2004 budget.

September and October 2003: Roundtables develop outcome proposals for the strategic directions and mission funding. Consultations of synods and the churchwide organization produce reports pertinent to planning, structure, governance, and budget. The Conference of Bishops renders its advice on these matters. Boards, steering and advisory committees, and churchwide staff respond to the proposals.

November 14-16, 2003: The Church Council receives reports inclusive of all activity related to strategic planning, structure, governance, and budget from the period following its April 2003 meeting. The council acts on proposals pertaining to structure, governance, and the 2004 budget.

February 2004: This is the formal commencement of decisions reached in November by the Church Council. In addition, specific plans related to the implementation of portions of the communications audit are due from assigned staff task groups for presentation to the Office of the Bishop.

Spring 2004: There is the possibility of the first of a series of synodical/churchwide consultations focused on differentiation of responsibilities on the strategic directions.

August 2005: The Churchwide Assembly considers pertinent constitutional and bylaw changes.