

FLC GOVERNANCE CONVERSATION

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

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**YOU ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT FULFILLING THE
ONGOING MISSION OF FLC AS AM I.**

GOALS FOR PRESENTATION

1) WHY WAS A TASK FORCE FORMED?

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- 2) WHAT DOES BELONGING TO THE ELCA MEAN FOR OUR CONGREGATION?**

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- 4) **WHAT ARE THE TASK FORCE'S RECOMMENDATIONS?**

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- 3) WHAT FINDINGS HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED AFTER EXTENSIVE INVESTIGATION AND RESEARCH?
- 4) WHAT ARE THE TASK FORCE'S RECOMMENDATIONS?
- 5) **SUMMARIZE WHAT HAPPENED AT THE 2025 CW ASSEMBLY AS IT RELATES TO WHAT WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT**

OUR PASTORS

- **AT THIS JUNCTURE, I WOULD ALSO ISSUE A PLEA THAT YOU DO NOT ENGAGE OUR PASTORAL STAFF ABOUT THESE ISSUES.**

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- THIS PLEA IS DONE TO PROTECT OUR PASTORS.
- THEY CAN BE DISCIPLINED OR DE-ROSTERED FOR “INCITEMENT.”
- **BE ASSURED THAT OUR CALL AND CONTRACT WITH THE PASTORS IS SOLELY THROUGH OUR CONGREGATION AND IS NOT GOVERNED BY ANYTHING THE ELCA OR SYNOD HAS TO DO WITH THEM.**

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- **THE PASTORS MAY REMAIN OUR PASTORS IF WE SHOULD CHOOSE TO MAKE THE DECISION TO LEAVE THE ELCA.**

BACKGROUND

**WHAT IS THE ORGANIZATIONAL
STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE
3 EXPRESSIONS OF THE ELCA?**

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CHURCHWIDE COUNCIL

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**CHURCHWIDE COUNCIL
SYNODS**

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CHURCHWIDE COUNCIL

SYNODS

CONGREGATIONS

BACKGROUND - CHURCHWIDE

CHURCHWIDE COUNCIL COMPOSITION:

- **PRESIDING BISHOP, OFFICERS, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS, 32-45 OTHER MEMBERS.**

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- PROVIDES FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY
- **AND PROVIDES A PUBLIC VOICE ON SOCIAL ISSUES**

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- **FUNCTIONS**
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 - **ASSISTS CONGREGATIONS IN THE CALLING, CREDENTIALING AND ORDINATION OF THEIR PASTORAL STAFF**

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 - **AND ARE A FUNDING SOURCE FOR CHURCHWIDE BODY AND COUNCIL**

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- **TO PROVIDE LOCAL AND DISTANT MISSION SUPPORT**

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- **AND VIEWS REPORTS FROM PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

FLC TASK FORCE: PURPOSE

GENERAL PURPOSE OF THE TASK FORCE:

- TO RESEARCH UPCOMING CHANGES IN THE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE OF THE ELCA AND HOW IT MAY AFFECT FLC.**

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- **MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE: MICAH ABERSON, SHAD CARNEY, JOHN HEGG, DEB NELSON, MARILYN VANDEMARK, MASON VAN ESSEN, BARNEY BRANDENBURG**

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- 2) TO ASSESS WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THAT RELATIONSHIP.**
- 3) TO CONSIDER WHETHER IT IS STILL IN THE BEST INTEREST OF FLC TO CONTINUE THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ELCA.**

FLC TASK FORCE: OUR PROCESS

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- 3) TO REVIEW THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY.**

FLC TASK FORCE: OUR PROCESS

4) TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS FOR 2025.

FLC TASK FORCE: **OUR PROCESS**

- 4) TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS FOR 2025.
- 5) TO REVIEW THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE RENEWED LUTHERAN CHURCH (CRLC) AND THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE CW COUNCIL.**

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- 6) TO REVIEW OTHER PERTINENT DOCUMENTS AND VIDEOS DISCOVERED THROUGH OUR INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS.**

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- 6) TO REVIEW OTHER PERTINENT DOCUMENTS AND VIDEOS DISCOVERED THROUGH OUR INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS.
- 7) WE ALSO CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS AND VIEWED A WEBINAR WITH BISHOP HAGMAIER.**

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

**AS A TASK FORCE,
WE FELT THERE WERE A SERIES OF QUESTIONS
THAT WERE IMPORTANT TO ANSWER IN ORDER
TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS**

QUESTIONS THE TASK FORCE SOUGHT TO ANSWER

- 1) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE GOVERNED LOCALLY AND NOT BY A CENTRAL AUTHORITY, MEANING WE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE FULL CONTROL OF WHAT IS IN THE FLC CONSTITUTION?**

QUESTIONS THE TASK FORCE SOUGHT TO ANSWER

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- 3) **DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND ALLOWED TO INDIVIDUALLY HOLD OUR OWN PERSONAL VIEWS ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MATTERS, AND THAT PREACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL VIEWS NOT BE MANDATED?**

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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

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- **WORDS HAVE MEANING**

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- **WHEN A CONTRACT (CONSTITUTION) IS AMENDED, IT SHOULD REQUIRE THE AGREEMENT OF ALL THE INVOLVED PARTIES.**

THE ELCA CONSTITUTION

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 - WHEN A CONGREGATION AMENDS ITS OWN CONSTITUTION, THE CHANGES MUST ALSO BE AUTHORIZED BY THE SYNOD.
- **FLC CONSTITUTION WAS LAST AMENDED IN 2017.**

OUR CONSTITUTION

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- THIS IS INDICATIVE OF THE DESIRE FOR THE ELCA TO CONTROL THE LOCAL CONGREGATIONS IN A HIERARCHICAL FASHION.
- **IF WE DON'T CONTROL THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF OUR CONSTITUTION, WE DON'T CONTROL OUR PURPOSE OR OUR FUTURE.**

HOW IS THE ELCA CONSTITUTION CURRENTLY AMENDED?

2 METHODS

HOW IS THE ELCA CONSTITUTION CURRENTLY AMENDED (2 METHODS)?

METHOD 1: 6 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE CW ASSEMBLY, THE CW COUNCIL CAN OFFER AN AMENDMENT. IT IS SENT TO THE SYNODS FOR “DISCUSSION.” AFTER CONVERSATION, IT GOES TO THE CW ASSEMBLY. IF IT PASSES BY 2/3 MAJORITY, IT IS ADOPTED.

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QUESTION: WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME OUR CONGREGATION WAS INVOLVED IN “DISCUSSION” ABOUT AMENDING THE ELCA CONSTITUTION?

HOW IS THE ELCA CONSTITUTION CURRENTLY AMENDED (2 METHODS)?

METHOD 2: AT THE CW ASSEMBLY, 25 MEMBERS CAN BRING A “FLOOR” AMENDMENT TO THE BODY. IT IS SENT FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW FOR APPROPRIATENESS. IT IS VOTED ON WHEN IT IS DEEMED APPROPRIATE AND PASSED BY A 2/3 MAJORITY. IT THEN GOES BACK TO THE CONGREGATIONS FOR 3 YEARS FOR FEEDBACK. IT RETURNS TO THE CW ASSEMBLY AND IF PASSED BY A 2/3 MAJORITY AGAIN, IT IS ADOPTED.

CALL FOR CHANGE

- **SUGGESTED PROPOSAL:** A FLOOR AMENDMENT CAN BE BROUGHT BY 25 MEMBERS OF THE CWA. IT IS REVIEWED BY A COMMITTEE, AND IF VALIDATED, IT IS VOTED ON BY THE ASSEMBLY. IF A FLOOR AMENDMENT PASSES BY 2/3 MAJORITY, IT MAY GO TO THE CONGREGATIONS AND BACK TO THE CW ASSEMBLY IN 3 YEARS,

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- **THIS “FAST TRACK” PROPOSAL DID NOT PASS AT THE RECENT CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY DESPITE THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE CW COUNCIL, AND THE CRLC. (49.4% IN FAVOR, 50.6% OPPOSED)**

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- **WHILE THIS SUGGESTED PROPOSAL DID NOT PASS AT THE CWA THIS YEAR, THE PROCESS ITSELF IS TELLING FOR THE STANCE OF THE CW COUNCIL.**

CALL FOR CHANGE

- **DURING THE DEBATE ON THE FLOOR FOR THE AMENDMENT PROCESS, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THOSE IN FAVOR OF FAST TRACKING IT FELT THAT THEY WANTED THE ELCA TO MOVE MORE QUICKLY TO ADVANCE THEIR AGENDA.**

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- **THERE WAS OBVIOUS FRUSTRATION WHEN THE SUGGESTED AMENDMENT FAILED TO ADVANCE BY JUST 7 VOTES. (764 OF THE 803 DELEGATES VOTED).**

CALL FOR CHANGE

- DURING THE DEBATE ON THE FLOOR FOR THE AMENDMENT PROCESS, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THOSE IN FAVOR OF FAST TRACKING IT FELT THAT THEY WANTED THE ELCA TO MOVE MORE QUICKLY TO ADVANCE THEIR AGENDA.
- THERE WAS OBVIOUS FRUSTRATION WHEN THE SUGGESTED AMENDMENT FAILED TO ADVANCE BY JUST 7 VOTES (746 OF THE 803 DELEGATES VOTED)
- **THE CRLC CO-CHAIRMAN STRONGLY ENCOURAGED THAT THE ASSEMBLY “GET THIS DONE THIS YEAR.”**

CALL FOR CHANGE

- AS A RESULT, A *SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT* WAS PROPOSED.

CALL FOR CHANGE

- **THE SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT IS AS FOLLOWS: “A FLOOR AMENDMENT CAN BE BROUGHT BY 25 MEMBERS OF THE CWA. IT IS SENT FOR REVIEW BY THE REFERENCE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE. IF VALIDATED, IT IS VOTED ON BY THE CWA. IF IT PASSES, IT MAY GO BACK TO THE NEXT CWA IN 3 YEARS TO BE VOTED ON UNCHANGED TO BE RATIFIED.**

CALL FOR CHANGE

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- OR THE AMENDMENT MAY BE PROVISIONALLY EFFECTIVE BY A 2/3 VOTE OF THE CW COUNCIL TAKEN WITHIN 12 MONTHS OF ADOPTION BY THE CWA. THE PROVISIONAL STATUS WILL BE REMOVED ONLY BY RATIFICATION OF THE AMENDMENT BY THE CWA IN 3 YEARS. IF THE CWA FAILS TO RATIFY, THE PROVISIONAL EFFECTIVE STATUS OF THE AMENDMENT SHALL BE REVOKED.

CALL FOR CHANGE

- **RESULT: THE CW ASSEMBLY DELEGATES VOTED TO REFER IT BACK TO THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE CW COUNCIL.**

CALL FOR CHANGE

- RESULT: THE CW ASSEMBLY DELEGATES VOTED TO REFER IT BACK TO THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE CW COUNCIL.
- **THIS MEANS IT WILL BE BROUGHT BACK TO THE CW ASSEMBLY IN 2028.**

CALL FOR CHANGE

- RESULT: THE DELEGATES VOTED TO REFER IT BACK TO THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE CW COUNCIL.
- THIS MEANS IT WILL BE BROUGHT BACK TO THE CW ASSEMBLY IN 2028.
- **THE SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT WOULD GIVE THE CW COUNCIL THE AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT THE AMENDMENT IN THE 3 YEARS BETWEEN ASSEMBLIES (BEFORE RATIFICATION AT THE NEXT CW ASSEMBLY).**

RAMIFICATIONS?

- **THERE WAS A MEMORIAL PROPOSED TO ENFORCE ADOPTION OF THE MODEL CONSTITUTION BY ALL CONGREGATIONS.**

RAMIFICATIONS?

- THERE WAS A MEMORIAL PROPOSED TO ENFORCE ADOPTION OF THE MODEL CONSTITUTION BY ALL CONGREGATIONS.
- **THAT MEMORIAL WAS WAS REFERRED BACK TO THE “TASK FORCE ON INTERDEPENDENCE AND PURPOSE” AND IS TO BE VOTED ON IN 2028.**

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

1) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE GOVERNED LOCALLY AND NOT BY A CENTRAL AUTHORITY, MEANING WE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE FULL CONTROL OF WHAT IS IN THE FLC CONSTITUTION?

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

1) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE GOVERNED LOCALLY AND NOT BY A CENTRAL AUTHORITY, MEANING WE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE FULL CONTROL OF WHAT IS IN THE FLC CONSTITUTION?

- **PRIOR TO THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, THE CONGREGATION DID NOT HAVE FULL CONTROL OF THEIR CONSTITUTION.**

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

1) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE GOVERNED LOCALLY AND NOT BY A CENTRAL AUTHORITY, MEANING WE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE FULL CONTROL OF WHAT IS IN THE FLC CONSTITUTION?

- PRIOR TO THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, THE CONGREGATION DID NOT HAVE FULL CONTROL OF THEIR CONSTITUTION.
- **AFTER THE 2025 CW ASSEMBLY, THERE IS OBVIOUS MOVEMENT TOWARD EVEN LESS CONTROL WITH TASK FORCES IN PLACE TO MAKE CHANGES FOR CONGREGATIONS.**

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

**THIS IS A CONFIRMATION OF THE ELCA'S
SHIFT FROM A CONGREGATIONAL BASED
STRUCTURE TO ONE OF INSTITUTIONAL
HIERARCHY.**

QUESTIONS THE TASK FORCE SOUGHT TO ANSWER

- 1) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE GOVERNED LOCALLY AND NOT BY A CENTRAL AUTHORITY, MEANING WE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE FULL CONTROL OF WHAT IS IN THE FLC CONSTITUTION?
- 2) **DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE FULL CONTROL OF OUR ASSETS AND PROPERTY?**
- 3) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND ALLOWED TO INDIVIDUALLY HOLD OUR OWN PERSONAL VIEWS ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MATTERS, AND THAT PREACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL VIEWS NOT BE MANDATED?

PROPERTY AND ASSETS

- **THE FLC AND ELCA CONSTITUTIONS SAY THE CONGREGATION HAS SOLE AUTHORITY OF ITS PROPERTY AND ASSETS.**

PROPERTY AND ASSETS

- THE FLC AND ELCA CONSTITUTIONS SAY THE CONGREGATION HAS SOLE AUTHORITY OF ITS PROPERTY AND ASSETS.
- **BUT, THE ELCA CONSTITUTION HAS AN EXCEPTION CLAUSE:
S-13.24(D). (THIS IS IN THE SYNOD SECTION OF THE ELCA MODEL
CONSTITUTION.)**

PROPERTY AND ASSETS

- BUT, THE CONSTITUTION HAS AN EXCEPTION CLAUSE: S-13.24(D)
- **THAT CLAUSE STATES: “THE SYNOD MAY TAKE CONTROL IF THE CONGREGATION IS DEEMED THAT IT CANNOT FULFILL THE *PURPOSE* FOR WHICH IT WAS ORGANIZED.”**

PROPERTY AND ASSETS

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- THAT CLAUSE STATES: “THE SYNOD MAY TAKE CONTROL IF THE CONGREGATION IS DEEMED THAT IT CANNOT FULFILL THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS ORGANIZED.”
- **THE CLAUSE ABOUT “PURPOSE” WAS ADDED IN 2019.**

PROPERTY AND ASSETS

- “THE SYNOD MAY TAKE CONTROL IF THE CONGREGATION IS DEEMED THAT IT *CANNOT FULFILL THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS ORGANIZED.*”
- **THIS CLAUSE MAY TRIGGER “SYNODICAL ADMINISTRATION” WHICH HAS ACTUALLY HAPPENED TO SEVERAL ELCA CONGREGATIONS AROUND THE COUNTRY.**

PROPERTY AND ASSETS

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- THIS CLAUSE MAY TRIGGER “SYNODICAL ADMINISTRATION” WHICH HAS ACTUALLY HAPPENED TO SEVERAL ELCA CONGREGATIONS AROUND THE COUNTRY.
- **IN SYNODICAL ADMINISTRATION, THE SYNOD COUNCIL ASSUMES CONTROL OF A CONGREGATION’S GOVERNANCE AND ASSETS.**

PROPERTY AND ASSETS

- THE CRLC AND THE CW COUNCIL HAVE CREATED A TASK FORCE TO STUDY A UNIFIED PURPOSE STATEMENT FOR ALL EXPRESSIONS OF THE ELCA.

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- THIS CLAUSE HAS BEEN ENFORCED BY SEVERAL SYNODS ACROSS THE COUNTRY REQUIRING LITIGATION.
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- THIS CLAUSE HAS BEEN ENFORCED BY SEVERAL SYNODS ACROSS THE COUNTRY REQUIRING LITIGATION.
- AT THE SD SYNOD ASSEMBLY, ELCA PRESIDING BISHOP EATON ASSURED THAT THE “ELCA IS NOT COMING FOR YOUR ASSETS,” **BUT IT HAS HAPPENED BECAUSE THE CONSTITUTION *ALLOWS* FOR IT TO HAPPEN.**

PROPERTY AND ASSETS

2) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE FULL CONTROL OF OUR ASSETS AND PROPERTY?

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- **BEFORE THE 2025 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, THERE WAS A RISK TO CONGREGATIONAL CONTROL OF THEIR OWN ASSETS BECAUSE OF S13.24(D).**

PROPERTY AND ASSETS

2) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE FULL CONTROL OF OUR ASSETS AND PROPERTY?

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- **AFTER THE 2025 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY, THERE IS STILL A RISK TO CONTROL OF OUR PROPERTY AND ASSETS FROM S13.24(D).**

QUESTIONS THE TASK FORCE SOUGHT TO ANSWER

- 1) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE GOVERNED LOCALLY AND NOT BY A CENTRAL AUTHORITY, MEANING WE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE FULL CONTROL OF WHAT IS IN THE FLC CONSTITUTION?
- 2) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE FULL CONTROL OF OUR ASSETS AND PROPERTY?
- 3) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND ALLOWED TO INDIVIDUALLY HOLD OUR OWN PERSONAL VIEWS ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MATTERS, AND THAT PREACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL VIEWS NOT BE MANDATED?

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

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 - THIS HAS BEEN OUR CULTURE SINCE BEFORE WE MERGED AS AN ALC CONGREGATION TO THE ELCA.
 - **WE HAVE A RICH HERITAGE OF THINKING INDEPENDENTLY: SIOUX VALLEY HOSPITAL, LSS, THE BANQUET, ST FRANCIS HOUSE, OTHERS.**

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 - THIS HAS BEEN OUR CULTURE SINCE BEFORE WE MERGED AS AN ALC CONGREGATION TO THE ELCA.
 - WE HAVE A RICH HERITAGE OF THINKING INDEPENDENTLY: SIOUX VALLEY HOSPITAL, LSS, THE BANQUET, ST FRANCIS HOUSE, OTHERS.
 - **THE FLC CONSTITUTION STATES IN 9.09.01 “THE SENIOR PASTOR IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE THE CONGREGATION WITH VISION, GUIDANCE FOR LONG RANGE GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES...”**

RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT OPINIONS

- AT THE 2025 CW ASSEMBLY, THE “ELCA SOCIAL STATEMENT ON CIVIC LIFE AND FAITH” WAS ADOPTED:

“WHEN THEY (PASTORS) SPEAK ON PUBLIC ISSUES, THE WORDS SHOULD BE ROOTED IN SCRIPTURES AND ARE TO BE GOVERNED BY OFFICIAL ELCA TEACHING.”

RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT OPINIONS

- “WHEN THEY (PASTORS) SPEAK ON PUBLIC ISSUES, THE WORDS SHOULD BE ROOTED IN SCRIPTURES AND ARE TO BE GOVERNED BY OFFICIAL ELCA TEACHING”

**THIS PASSED OVERWHELMINGLY AT THE 2025 CW ASSEMBLY.
(98.3% IN FAVOR; 1.7% OPPOSED)**

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

- WE HAVE NOT NEEDED TO FOLLOW THE ELCA VISION AND DIRECTION FOR DECADES, BECAUSE WE WERE CONFIDENT IN OUR OWN MISSION AND PURPOSE.

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- **WE HAVE HAD THE INDEPENDENCE OF USING OUR OWN, LOCAL LEADERSHIP TO MAKE DECISIONS BASED UPON WHAT WE ARE HEARING FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD OF SCRIPTURES. (FLC CONSTITUTION 9.09.01).**

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

- WE HAVE NOT NEEDED TO FOLLOW THE ELCA VISION AND DIRECTION FOR DECADES, BECAUSE WE WERE CONFIDENT IN OUR OWN MISSION AND PURPOSE.
- WE HAVE HAD THE INDEPENDENCE OF USING OUR OWN, LOCAL LEADERSHIP TO MAKE DECISIONS BASED UPON WHAT WE ARE HEARING FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD OF SCRIPTURES. (SEE FLC CONSTITUTION 9.09.01).
- **THERE HAS BEEN NO METHOD IN THE ELCA CONSTITUTION TO DATE TO ENFORCE COMPLIANCE WITH THE VISION AND DIRECTION OF THE ELCA.**

INTERDEPENDENCE

- THE CRLC AND THE CW COUNCIL HAVE ESTABLISHED A TASK FORCE ON INTERDEPENDENCE AND PURPOSE TO CONSIDER A UNIFIED STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR ALL 3 EXPRESSIONS OF THE ELCA INCLUDING CONGREGATIONS.

INTERDEPENDENCE

- **THIS TASK FORCE IS CONSIDERING THE TERM “INTERDEPENDENCE” AND WHAT THAT MEANS FOR ALL 3 EXPRESSIONS OF THE ELCA.**

INTERDEPENDENCE

- **THIS TASK FORCE IS CONSIDERING THE TERM “INTERDEPENDENCE” AND WHAT THAT MEANS FOR ALL 3 EXPRESSIONS OF THE ELCA.**
- **“INTERDEPENDENCE” IS THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF INDEPENDENCE.**

INTERDEPENDENCE

- IF CONGREGATIONS DON'T FOLLOW CHURCHWIDE'S IDEAS ABOUT WHAT THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH SHOULD BE, WHAT WOULD BE THE EXPECTED RESPONSE FROM CHURCHWIDE?

INTERDEPENDENCE

- IF CONGREGATIONS DON'T FOLLOW CHURCHWIDE'S IDEAS ABOUT WHAT THE PURPOSE OF THE CONGREGATIONS SHOULD BE, WHAT WOULD BE THE EXPECTED RESPONSE FROM THE CHURCHWIDE?
- **MANDATES ENFORCED THROUGH THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM?**

ACTIONS OF THE ELCA

- **ONE TASK FORCE IS ALREADY WORKING ON ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND COMPLIANCE INCENTIVES IN RESPONSE TO THE CRLC'S RECOMMENDATION FOR "IMMEDIATE ACTION ON DISMANTLING RACISM".**

ACTIONS OF THE ELCA

- ONE TASK FORCE IS ALREADY WORKING ON **ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND COMPLIANCE INCENTIVES** IN RESPONSE TO THE CRLC'S RECOMMENDATION FOR "IMMEDIATE ACTION ON DISMANTLING RACISM".
- **THERE WAS A RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE 2025 CW ASSEMBLY THAT BY 2027 THE CW COUNCIL MUST IDENTIFY SPECIFIC MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES TO ACCOMPLISH THIS.**

RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT OPINIONS

- **IT APPEARS THAT WE ARE BEING ENCOURAGED TO FOLLOW THE ELCA TEACHINGS AND GUIDES WHEN OUR PASTORS ARE SPEAKING PUBLICLY RATHER THAN FOLLOWING THEIR OWN VISION AND GUIDANCE.**

RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT OPINIONS

- IT APPEARS THAT WE ARE BEING ENCOURAGED TO FOLLOW THE ELCA TEACHINGS AND GUIDES WHEN OUR PASTORS ARE SPEAKING PUBLICLY RATHER THAN FOLLOWING THEIR OWN VISION AND GUIDANCE.
- **“THE TEACHINGS OF THE ELCA” ALSO INCLUDE CONTROVERSIAL SOCIAL STATEMENTS.**

RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT OPINIONS

3) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND ALLOWED TO INDIVIDUALLY HOLD OUR OWN PERSONAL VIEWS ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MATTERS, AND THAT PREACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL VIEWS NOT BE MANDATED?

RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT OPINIONS

3) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND ALLOWED TO INDIVIDUALLY HOLD OUR OWN PERSONAL VIEWS ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MATTERS, AND THAT PREACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL VIEWS NOT BE MANDATED?

- **AFTER THE 2025 CW ASSEMBLY, OUR PASTORS' FREEDOM OF SPEECH HAS BEEN LIMITED.**

THINGS HAVE CHANGED

- **AFTER REVIEWING THE DOCUMENTS AND UNDERSTANDING THE POSITIONS OF THE ELCA COUNCIL, IT IS OUR FEELING THAT THINGS HAVE SHIFTED SINCE FLC JOINED THE ELCA IN 1988.**

THINGS HAVE CHANGED

- AFTER REVIEWING THE DOCUMENTS AND UNDERSTANDING THE POSITIONS OF THE ELCA COUNCIL, IT IS OUR FEELING THAT THINGS HAVE SHIFTED SINCE FLC JOINED THE ELCA IN 1988.
- **AN ORIGINAL INDEPENDENT, CONGREGATIONALLY BASED ORGANIZATION IS MOVING TOWARDS A TOP-DOWN HIERARCHY IN WHICH DECISIONS ARE MADE THAT ARE ABOUT TO BECOME MANDATORY.**

IT IS IN OUR HANDS

- **CURRENTLY, WE HAVE A CONSTITUTION WITH AN “ESCAPE CLAUSE.”**

IT IS IN OUR HANDS

- CURRENTLY, WE HAVE A CONSTITUTION WITH AN “ESCAPE CLAUSE.”
- **THERE ARE PROVISIONS TO LEAVE THE ELCA, BUT THE PROCESS REQUIRES 2 VOTES BY THE CONGREGATION. (SEE FLC CONSTITUTION 6.05)**

IT IS IN OUR HANDS

- **IT IS IN THE HANDS OF THE CONGREGATION TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THEIR OWN DESTINY WHICH INCLUDES GOVERNANCE, ASSETS, AND THE FREEDOM TO SAY AND THINK INDEPENDENTLY ABOUT THEIR OWN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VIEWS WITH NO MANDATE TOWARD ANY PARTICULAR VIEW.**

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- **IT ALLOWS THE PASTORS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL AS THEY ARE CALLED TO DO WITHOUT ADDING THE “TEACHINGS” OF THE ELCA FROM THE PULPIT.**

IT IS IN OUR HANDS

- IT IS IN THE HANDS OF THE CONGREGATION TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OF THEIR OWN DESTINY WHICH INCLUDES GOVERNANCE, ASSETS, AND THE FREEDOM TO SAY AND THINK INDEPENDENTLY ABOUT THEIR OWN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VIEWS WITH NO MANDATE TOWARD ANY PARTICULAR VIEW.
- IT ALLOWS THE PASTORS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL AS THEY ARE CALLED TO DO WITHOUT ADDING THE “TEACHINGS” OF THE ELCA FROM THE PULPIT.
- **IT IS A LEGITIMATE CONCERN THAT A PASTOR’S FREEDOM TO SPEAK BOTH PUBLICLY AND FROM THE PULPIT IS IN JEOPARDY IF THEIR STATUS AS A ROSTERED PASTOR CAN BE THREATENED DUE TO SOMETHING THEY SAY THAT COUNTERS THE ELCA PUBLIC TEACHING.**

IT IS IN OUR HANDS

- IT IS IN THE HANDS OF THE CONGREGATION AT FLC TO KEEP CONTROL IN OUR HANDS, BUT THAT WOULD MEAN WE WOULD HAVE TO PART WAYS WITH THE ELCA.

IT IS IN OUR HANDS

- IT IS IN THE HANDS OF THE CONGREGATION AT FLC TO KEEP CONTROL IN OUR HANDS, BUT THAT WOULD MEAN WE WOULD HAVE TO PART WAYS WITH THE ELCA.
- **WE ASK THAT YOU DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH AND MAKE THE DECISION PRAYERFULLY.**

IT IS IN OUR HANDS

- THE TASK FORCE HAS CONCLUDED THAT THESE CONCERNS ARE VERY SERIOUS AND VERY REAL.

IT IS IN OUR HANDS

- THE TASK FORCE HAS CONCLUDED THAT THESE CONCERNS ARE **VERY SERIOUS** AND **VERY REAL**.
- THE DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES ARE ON THE WEBSITE:
- **flcsf.org/governance**

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

- **IF WE LEAVE THE ELCA, CAN WE STILL DO THINGS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE ELCA, SUCH AS RELATIONSHIPS, LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF, CAMPS, QUILTING MINISTRY, MISSIONS, COLLEGE AFFILIATIONS, VARIOUS PROGRAMS, OR OTHER THINGS WE FEEL ARE IMPORTANT TO THE LIFE OF FLC, ETC?**

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

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- **ANSWER: YES. THE ONLY MAJOR THING WE ARE INELIGIBLE FOR IS VOTING IN ELCA ASSEMBLY MEETINGS.**

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

- WOULD LEAVING THE ELCA REQUIRE FLC TO CHANGE ANY OF ITS CURRENT POLICIES?**

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

- WOULD LEAVING THE ELCA REQUIRE FLC TO CHANGE ANY OF ITS CURRENT POLICIES?
- **ANSWER: NO.**

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

- ARE THERE ARE OTHER LUTHERAN ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE CONGREGATIONALLY BASED THAT WE CAN JOIN?

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

- ARE THERE ARE OTHER LUTHERAN ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE CONGREGATIONALLY BASED THAT WE CAN JOIN?
- ANSWER: YES THE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS IN MISSION FOR CHRIST (LCMC) AND THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH (NALC).

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

- ARE WE ALONE IN BEING CONCERNED ABOUT THIS PROBLEM?**

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

- ARE WE ALONE IN BEING CONCERNED ABOUT THIS PROBLEM?
- **ANSWER: NO, THERE ARE MANY CONGREGATIONS NATIONALLY WHO ARE CONSIDERING THIS CURRENTLY. THERE ARE SEVERAL CONGREGATIONS IN SD WHO ARE ALSO CAREFULLY REVIEWING THE INFORMATION. AND THERE IS “BUZZ” ABOUT THIS AMONG OTHER CONGREGATIONS IN SF.**

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

- WHY AREN'T ALL CONGREGATIONS LOOKING AT THESE ISSUES?**

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

- WHY AREN'T ALL CONGREGATIONS LOOKING AT THESE ISSUES?
- **ANSWER: MANY PASTORS ARE THE LEADERS OF THEIR CONGREGATIONS, AND THE CONSTITUTION PREVENTS THEM FROM LEADING THE CHARGE WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING DE-ROSTERED. AND FRANKLY, THIS HAS NOT BEEN WELL PUBLICIZED TO CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP.**

QUESTIONS WE HAVE ALREADY HEARD

- WHY AREN'T ALL CONGREGATIONS LOOKING AT THESE ISSUES?
- **ANSWER: IN ADDITION, THERE SEEMS TO BE A GROWING NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS WHO ARE BECOMING CONCERNED WITH THE DIRECTION OF THE ELCA MANIFESTED IN THE RECENT VOTE REGARDING 22.11B AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION WITHOUT CONGREGATIONAL INPUT.**

WHO WE ARE

- WE UNDERSTAND THAT *CHANGE* IS DIFFICULT TO ENDURE. BUT, SOMETIMES CHANGE OCCURS TO YOU EVEN IF YOU DO NOTHING!

WHO WE ARE

**WE BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE A WONDERFULLY DIVERSE
(OPINIONS) COMMUNITY OF FAITH.**

WHO WE ARE

WE BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE A WONDERFULLY **DIVERSE**
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WHO RESPECT EACH OTHER'S IDEAS, AND

WHO WE ARE

WE BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE A WONDERFULLY **DIVERSE**
(OPINIONS) COMMUNITY OF FAITH.

WHO RESPECT EACH OTHER'S IDEAS, AND

PROMOTE THE DIGNITY THAT COMES WITH BEING SINFUL
BEINGS WHO HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN BY THE GRACE OF GOD,
THROUGH FAITH.

WHO WE ARE

- WE BELIEVE THAT WE ARE BEST SERVED WHEN ***GOD'S HOLY WORD IS THE MESSAGE SHARED IN OUR WORSHIP.***

WHO WE ARE

- WE BELIEVE THAT WE ARE BEST SERVED WHEN GOD'S HOLY WORD IS THE MESSAGE SHARED IN OUR WORSHIP.
- AND THAT CONTROVERSIAL MESSAGING IS DIVISIVE AND DOES NOT HONOR OUR HERITAGE.

WHO WE ARE

- WE BELIEVE THAT WE ARE BEST SERVED WHEN **GOD'S HOLY WORD IS THE MESSAGE SHARED IN OUR WORSHIP.**
- AND THAT CONTROVERSIAL MESSAGING IS DIVISIVE AND DOES NOT HONOR OUR HERITAGE.
- THERE IS A DEFINITE ADVANTAGE TO BEING AN INDEPENDENT CONGREGATION WHICH SETS OUR OWN PURPOSE, VISION, DIRECTION, GOALS AND POLICIES AS WE HEAR THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

EVERYONE'S OPINION HAS VALUE

- **IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THIS HAS GIVEN YOU THE INSIGHT INTO THE RESEARCH NEEDED TO MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION.**

EVERYONE'S OPINION HAS VALUE

- IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THIS HAS GIVEN YOU THE INSIGHT INTO THE RESEARCH NEEDED TO MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION.
- **THE RESEARCH IS NOT EASY, BUT THE INFORMATION IS “EYE-OPENING.”**

EVERYONE'S OPINION HAS VALUE

- IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THIS HAS GIVEN YOU THE INSIGHT INTO THE RESEARCH NEEDED TO MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION.
- THE RESEARCH IS NOT EASY, AND THE INFORMATION IS "EYE-OPENING."
- **YOUR CONGREGATION'S LEADERSHIP HAVE REVIEWED OUR MATERIALS AND CONCLUSIONS, AND HAVE ADVISED CONGREGATIONAL INFORMATION BE DISSEMINATED.**

EVERYONE'S OPINION HAS VALUE

- IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THIS HAS GIVEN YOU THE INSIGHT INTO THE RESEARCH NEEDED TO MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION.
- THE RESEARCH IS NOT EASY, AND THE INFORMATION IS “EYE-OPENING.”
- YOUR CONGREGATION'S LEADERSHIP HAVE REVIEWED OUR MATERIALS AND CONCLUSIONS, AND ADVISED CONGREGATIONAL INFORMATION BE DISSEMINATED.
- **EVERY MEMBER HAS VALUE AT FLC AS DOES EVERY OPINION. WE WANT TO KEEP THAT CULTURE AND MENTALITY.**

QUESTIONS WE WILL NEED TO CONSIDER

- **QUESTION: HOW DO WE BEST:**
 - **MAINTAIN ALL THAT WE LIKE ABOUT FLC.**

QUESTIONS WE WILL NEED TO CONSIDER

- **QUESTION: HOW DO WE BEST:**
 - MAINTAIN ALL THAT WE LIKE ABOUT FLC.
 - **MAINTAIN OUR INDEPENDENCE TO DECIDE OUR OWN FUTURE.**

QUESTIONS WE WILL NEED TO CONSIDER

- **QUESTION: HOW DO WE BEST:**
 - MAINTAIN ALL THAT WE LIKE ABOUT FLC.
 - MAINTAIN OUR INDEPENDENCE TO DECIDE OUR OWN FUTURE.
 - **MAINTAIN OUR CONTROL OVER OUR PROPERTY AND ASSETS (WITHOUT RISK OF LOSING OUR LEGACY).**

QUESTIONS WE WILL NEED TO CONSIDER

- QUESTION: HOW DO WE BEST:
 - MAINTAIN THE FREEDOM OF OUR PASTORS TO PREACH ONLY THE SCRIPTURES AND THE GOSPEL OF FORGIVENESS OF SINS BY THE GRACE OF GOD THROUGH OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

THANK YOU

**THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR ATTENTION
TO THIS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT MATTER.**

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST FOR THE COUNCIL

- 1) WHAT QUESTIONS AND / OR CONCERNS DO YOU HAVE AS A RESULT OF THIS CONVERSATION?
- 2) WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS / POSITIVE OUTCOMES RESULTING FROM THIS CONVERSATION?
- 3) DOES THIS CONVERSATION MAKE YOU AFRAID OR HOPEFUL?
- **4) GIVEN WHAT YOU KNOW TODAY, HOW DO YOU THINK FLC SHOULD PROCEED?**
 - A) REMAIN WITH THE ELCA?
 - B) EXPLORE DISAFFILIATION FROM THE ELCA?

QUESTIONS THE TASK FORCE SOUGHT TO ANSWER

- 1) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE GOVERNED LOCALLY AND NOT BY A CENTRAL AUTHORITY, MEANING WE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE FULL CONTROL OF WHAT IS IN THE FLC CONSTITUTION?
- 2) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE FULL CONTROL OF OUR ASSETS AND PROPERTY?
- 3) DO WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND ALLOWED TO INDIVIDUALLY HOLD OUR OWN PERSONAL VIEWS ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MATTERS, AND THAT PREACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL VIEWS NOT BE MANDATED?