

Adult Summer Sunday School
9:30 and 10:45 am
ELCA Social Statements

June 22 Church in Society (1991)

Amy Johnson

Director, Lutheran Office for Public Policy

This social teaching statement was the first social statement adopted at the second Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1991. This statement sets forth affirmations and commitments to guide this church's participation in society. It seeks to be true to this church's mandate to confess and teach both law and Gospel as the whole Word of the Triune God. This church witnesses to the living God -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- who in love creates, judges, and preserves the world and redeems, sanctifies, and brings it to fulfillment in God's reign.

June 29 Education (2007)

Gene Gray and Steve Koch

Retired Principal and Educator, Middleton-Cross Plains School District
and Educator and Retired Public School Superintendent

The calling of Lutherans and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in education is closely tied to a Lutheran understanding of vocation. Lutherans understand vocation as a calling from God that encompasses all of life for all the faithful. Vocation involves God's saving call to us in baptism and life lived in joyful response to this call. In Jesus Christ we are loved by a gracious God who frees us to love our neighbor and promote the common good; in gratitude for God's love, we live out our vocation in our places of responsibility in daily life—home, congregation, work place, neighborhood, nation, and global society. Education belongs to our baptismal vocation.

July 6 Race, Ethnicity, and Culture (1993)

Rev. Heather Lampert

Scripture speaks of one humanity, created by God. It recounts our rebellion and enslavement to sin. Scripture tells of a diverse people reconciled to God through the blood of the cross, a people set free for the work of reconciliation. It heralds a new freedom and future in one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Christ brings together the scattered children of God (John 11:52). The Holy Spirit breathes the freedom of the Gospel into the Church, where every people under heaven is represented. A humanity enslaved to sin has been set free; a Church has been gathered in freedom. Cultural differences still matter, but they can be seen for what God intends-- blessings rather than means of enslavement.

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July 13 How do we write a Social Statement?

Rev. Jerry Folk

Former director, Division for Church in Society of the ELCA

Social statements are social policy documents, adopted by an ELCA Churchwide Assembly, addressing significant social issues. They provide an analysis and interpretation of an issue, set forth basic theological and ethical perspectives related to it, and offer guidance for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, its individual members, and its affiliated agencies and institutions. They are the product of extensive and inclusive deliberation within this church. Since 1991, the ELCA has adopted nine social statements.

July 20 Human Sexuality (2008, draft statement)

Pastor Katya Ouchakof

In 2001, the Churchwide Assembly authorized the development of a social statement on human sexuality. This social statement addresses the question: What does it mean for us as sexual creatures to love our neighbors as ourselves and thus fulfill God's law of love in this time and society? (Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14; 6:14).

July 27 Health & Health Care (2003)

Rev. Terry Peterson and Linda Peterson

Retired ELCA pastor and former nurse

Health is central to our well-being, vital to relationships, and helps us live out our vocations in family, work, and community. Caring for one's own health is a matter of human necessity and good stewardship. Caring for the health of others expresses both love for our neighbors and responsibility for a just society. As a personal and social responsibility, health care is a shared endeavor.

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August 3 Environment (1993)

Dr. Peter Bakken

Coordinator for Public Policy, Wisconsin Council of Churches

Participant in the task force on the social statement for Environment

Christian concern for the environment is shaped by the Word of God spoken in creation, the Love of God hanging on a cross, the Breath of God daily renewing the face of the earth. We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are deeply concerned about the environment, locally and globally, as members of this church and as members of society. Even as we join the political, economic, and scientific discussion, we know care for the earth to be a profoundly spiritual matter.

August 10 Death Penalty (1991)

Chaplain John Mix

MALC Chaplain, Dane County Jail

Violent crime is as ancient as the human family. Since Cain slew Abel, the blood of countless victims has cried out to the Lord (Gen 4:10). Our hearts, too, cry out to the Lord who gives life. We grieve with the family and friends of the victim--the violated one. While we all look to the Word of God and bring our reason to the death penalty issue, we can and do assess it with some diversity. As a church united in resistance to hate (Luke 6:27), we minister to an often vengeful society. As a Church united in joy over the good news of God's healing grace, we minister to a battered society. As a church heeding the call to do justice (Jer 22:3), we minister to a broken society. As a church united for mission, we organize for ministries of restoration.

August 17 Peace (1995)

Rev. Jon Enslin

Former Bishop, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

Bishop representative to the task force on the social statement for Peace

We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America share with the Church of Jesus Christ in all times and places the calling to be peacemakers. In the liturgy of Holy Communion we pray "for the peace of the whole world," asking, "Lord, have mercy." Our petition unites faith in the Triune God with our world's sufferings and hopes. This statement recalls that the basis of the Church's peace-calling is in God's final peace, the peace of God's eternal reign. That calling is to proclaim the Gospel of God's final peace and to work for earthly peace. This statement understands earthly peace to mean relationships among and within nations that are just, harmonious, and free from war. It offers direction as we act to keep and to build earthly peace on the eve of a new millennium.

Copies of the Social Statements are available at the Information Center, or online at:
<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements.aspx>.

The sessions are not cumulative; come to one or to all as you are able!