

Timeline 2001 - 2010

Social Statement on Human Sexuality

Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality

This timeline can be found on the Web site www.elca.org/faithfuljourney

This timeline includes the key points of process and decision-making leading to consideration by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly of an ELCA social statement on human sexuality. Its purpose is to assure common understanding about the steps involved and to invite the broadest participation possible.

Please note especially the detail on the processes of 2007-2008

2001

Churchwide Assembly authorizes a churchwide study on matters related to homosexuality and ministry, and to bring a report and recommendations to the 2005 Churchwide Assembly. It also, in a separate action, authorizes the development of a social statement on human sexuality.

Upon recommendation of the boards of the divisions for Church in Society and Ministry, Church Council establishes the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality to implement both actions.

2002

Task force meets twice to prepare study for church deliberation and discussion, which focuses on the common convictions that this church holds related to human sexuality.

Task force publishes *Journey Together Faithfully, Part 1 - a study of the ELCA's Message on Sexuality: Some Common Convictions* (August) and calls for response.

2003

Task force meets twice to prepare study for church deliberation and discussion, which focuses on homosexuality.

Task force receives responses from the church on *Journey Together Faithfully, Part 1*.

Task force publishes *Journey Together Faithfully, Part 2 - The Church and Homosexuality* (August) and calls for response.

2004

Task force meets three times.

Task force receives responses from the church on *Journey Together Faithfully, Part 2 - The Church and Homosexuality*.

Task force hosts hearings throughout the ELCA on *Journey Together Faithfully, Part 2 - The Church and Homosexuality*.

2005

Task force issues its report and recommendations regarding the rostering of individuals in committed same-sex relationships, and the blessing of same-sex couples in committed relationships. (January)

ELCA Church Council receives the task force report and recommendations, and creates three recommendations for consideration at the Churchwide Assembly. (April)

Churchwide Assembly acts on the Church Council recommendations. (August)

Task force meets to begin development of a social statement and recommends an extension of the timeline to 2009 for this purpose. (September)

ELCA Church Council authorizes an extension until the 2009 Churchwide Assembly for consideration of the social statement on human sexuality. (November)

2006

Task force meets three times to prepare a study for church deliberation and discussion, which focuses on human sexuality.

Study three in the Journey Together Faithfully series is published (December). *Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk about Human Sexuality* becomes available in printed version and on the Web site; Lutherlink opens a Web discussion.

2007

February 16-18 Task force meets.

April Third study becomes available online in Spanish: *Libres en Cristo para servir al prójimo: Los luteranos hablan acerca de la sexualidad humana*.

August 6-11 ELCA Churchwide Assembly includes Bible study on the book of *Galatians* and Luther's *Freedom of the Christian*; receives task force report.

ELCA Churchwide Assembly refers memorials to the task force.

ELCA Churchwide Assembly directs the task force to specifically address and make recommendations to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly on changes to any policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church.

September Youth version of the third study published: *Free in Christ to Care for the Neighbor: Lutheran Youth Talk about Human Sexuality*. (Web resources follow in October.)

October 5-6 Task force meets jointly with the Conference of Bishops.

November 1 Deadline for responses to the study on human sexuality.

November 9-12 ELCA Church Council meeting receives report.

December 1 Task force has an online meeting to work on draft text.

December 15 Deadline for the youth responses to study.

2008

January 4-9 Conference of Bishops Academy receives a report.

January 25-26 Task force meets to finalize work on the draft of a social statement on human sexuality.

February 29 Church in Society program committee receives a report.

March 6-11 Conference of Bishops meeting receives confidential review of the draft.

March 12, noon **DRAFT** social statement on human sexuality becomes available for confidential review to rostered leaders on a designated Web site.

March 13, noon **DRAFT** social statement on human sexuality is released. It will be available at www.elca.org/faithfuljourney and a copy will be mailed to every rostered leader.

NOTE: This draft is NOT the proposed social statement that will be prepared for release in February 2009. Responses to the draft are to be shared through synodical hearings or sent directly to the task force. This feedback will assist them as they consider revisions for the proposed social statement.

April 11-13 ELCA Church Council meeting receives report.

April to October	Synods hold hearings on the draft social statement on human sexuality; task force members participate and gather feedback.
September 26-27	Church in Society program committee meets.
November 1	Deadline for responses to task force concerning the draft social statement on human sexuality.
November/December	Task force meets to consider revisions to the draft social statement on human sexuality.
November 14-17	ELCA Church Council meeting receives report.

2009

January/February	Task force meets and “signs off” on PROPOSED social statement on human sexuality, implementing resolutions, and roster recommendations to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly regarding changes to any policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church.
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February/March	<p>Proposed social statement on human sexuality, implementing resolutions, and roster recommendations are made available for confidential review to rostered leaders on a designated Web site.</p> <p>Proposed social statement on human sexuality, implementing resolutions, and roster recommendations made are available to all ELCA members and public on designated a Web site.</p> <p>Press conference on the proposed social statement on human sexuality, implementing resolutions and roster recommendations is held.</p> <p>Conference of Bishops meets to review proposed social statement.</p>
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March 13-14	<p>Church in Society program committee advises the program unit for Church in Society regarding the text of the proposed social statement on human sexuality and implementing resolutions.</p> <p>Executive director of Church in Society recommends the proposed social statement on human sexuality and implementing resolutions to ELCA Church Council.</p>
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[Note: Task force recommendations regarding changes to any policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church go directly to the Church Council.]

February-April	Synod councils may bring resolutions to the ELCA Church Council related to the proposed social statement on human sexuality, implementing resolutions, and roster recommendations.
March 27 - 30	ELCA Church Council reviews text of proposed social statement and acts to <u>recommend</u> social statement on human sexuality, implementing resolutions, and roster recommendations, and directs that these be placed on the Churchwide Assembly agenda.
April	RECOMMENDED social statement on human sexuality, implementing resolutions, and roster recommendations are available to the church for discussion and response through synod assembly actions.
April to June	Synod assemblies respond to the recommended social statement on human sexuality, implementing resolutions, and roster recommendations through memorials to the Churchwide Assembly.
August 17-23	ELCA Churchwide Assembly considers the recommended social statement and accompanying implementing resolutions. ELCA Churchwide Assembly considers the recommendations regarding changes to any policies that preclude practicing homosexual persons from the rosters of this church.
November	ELCA social statement on human sexuality is published. (Spanish translation will follow.)
August	<u>2010</u> Church in Society publishes a study guide to the social statement on human sexuality. (Spanish translation will follow.)