

Memorial on Advancing Recommendation 1 of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

Whereas, the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) established the **Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC)** with the charge to “reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism”; and

Whereas, the CRLC undertook an extensive process of discernment, consultation, and listening across the ELCA, resulting in a final report in early 2025 that included **Recommendation 1: Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism**; and

Whereas, the CRLC’s Recommendation 1 states:

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church recommends that the ELCA Church Council immediately begin identifying and acting upon mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination. These measures and incentives shall be guided by the recommendations outlined in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit and the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity.

To ensure timely action, all constitution and bylaw amendments needed for the development and implementation of these accountability measures and compliance incentives must be developed and advanced in time for consideration by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly. If by that time such measures and incentives have not been adequately identified or enacted, we recommend the ELCA Church Council call for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to evaluate and enact necessary constitutional revisions that will enable and advance the ELCA’s commitment to anti-racism work.

Whereas, the Church Council of the ELCA received the recommendation with appreciation and took action to encourage internal processes and reports, but **did not adopt** the full substance of Recommendation 1 — including **the mechanisms for mutual accountability, compliance incentives**, or the **provision for calling a special Churchwide Assembly in 2028 if progress stalls**; and

Whereas, the failure to act on the full scope of Recommendation 1 limits the authority of the Churchwide Assembly to directly consider and vote on a proposal that speaks to the heart of the ELCA’s commitment to anti-racism, and undermines the urgency and structural accountability called for by the CRLC; and

Whereas, the Churchwide Assembly is the highest legislative authority of this church and must be able to deliberate on recommendations that concern the spiritual and institutional integrity of the ELCA in the face of systemic racism and exclusion; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod Assembly adopt this memorial and submit it to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, urging it to **consider and debate the full text of Recommendation 1** of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as part of its agenda; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to adopt the CRLC's Recommendation 1 in full, including its call for the establishment of mutual accountability measures, compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA, and, if these measures are not implemented by 2028, the convening of a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the church's governing documents; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod express its deep commitment to structural change in service of becoming an anti-racist church, and that the work of dismantling racism shall be pursued not only as a moral and spiritual imperative, but as a matter of ecclesial governance, institutional design, and gospel faithfulness.

Submitted by Christopher Vergara, VP Metropolitan New York Synod

The Committee on Reference and Counsel recommends adoption of this Memorial.